



Process vital for creativity

Russell Emmerson

IRONICALLY, it was Valmont's history as a construction company that gave it an edge to succeed as a national interior design business.

Marcel Zalloua (pictured) and Sergio Pires founded Valmont in 2004 as a construction company focusing on small tenancies but their design arm, established in 2006, attracted clients including Virgin and iiNet and gave the business the boost it needed for a national presence.

Zalloua says the firm expanded from Sydney to Perth and Brisbane on the basis of some good contracts, but still needed a way to balance the

qualities that could be identified with the company's style with those that would embrace local culture.

The answer, he says, is processes. "There is a distinct difference with each market – they all have their idiosyncrasies," he says.

"We have recruited locally and we make sure they are active in each project and we generally don't micromanage.

"We rely on procedures and we don't try to control their creative processes.

"But every project has processes to follow. They are not limited, they can introduce their own management style,

but there are processes that need to be followed to deliver every project.

"We need to have things in place to make sure what our staff are delivering, we would deliver ourselves."

But having the staff on the ground to implement those procedures – and to harness the creativity in each office – meant holding back on expansion plans, he says.

"It took us three or four years before we went into the Perth market.

"We had to deliver the product, but we also had to find the right person. But that was also our greatest success."



Picture: Bob Barker