

\$46m in whiter teeth worth a smile

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Call it the Kylie Jenner and Conor McGregor effect.

At the age of only 22 and 24 respectively, Nik Mirkovic and Alex Tomic have used canny social media marketing practices and tapped into a consumer phenomenon among Millennials around the world to quickly build a business empire.

Their Gold-Coast-based HiSmile teeth whitening and toothpaste company has surfed online and social media endorsements from celebrities such as Jenner and mixed martial arts star McGregor to be on the cusp of achieving \$40 million in annual revenue only three years after starting the business.

Such has been the success of the business that the duo will debut on this year's Financial Review Young Rich List with an estimated joint fortune of \$46 million made by mainly targeting 15 to 25-year-olds with their online marketing nous.

The pair have a teeth-whitening range that includes a one-size-fits-all attachable mouth tray and LED kit that costs \$79.95, and also sell toothpastes, gels and coconut oil mouthwash. They also have close to 30,000 subscribers who pay between \$19.95 and \$29.95 a month to have their toothpaste and other products delivered, having only started the service in July.

"We saw a massive gap in the teeth whitening market," Mirkovic tells *The Australian Financial Review*. "We thought it was a pretty boring industry that didn't give the consumer much option."

Like other Young Rich Listers making money from the "business of beauty" at the early stages of their careers, Mirkovic and Tomic have gone global and used social media to drive interest in their brand.

The duo spend up to half their revenue on paying social media "influencers" like Jenner, part of the



HiSmile founders Nik Mirkovic and Alex Tomic. PHOTO: ROBERT SHAKESPEARE

famous Kardashian family of US reality television fame, who have large and loyal groups of social media followers.

Mirkovic and Tomic say they receive a boost in sales whenever a star posts about their use of HiSmile products, even if the goods are not always pictured.



HiSmile signed a deal with Jenner in October last year, with her first five Instagram pictures receiving more than a million views and 100,000 comments each.

The company also has paid the likes Big Brother contestant Aisha Jade and Australia's Next Top Model veteran Brooke Hogan to endorse their products, and more recently McGregor.

The company's instagram account

has 611,000 followers around the world, while its Facebook account has been "liked" by more than 1.3 million people.

"We just saw something that was not very appealing to people, even though it was widely used and thought we could create a brand with a great name. We wanted a one-word name and went through a lot of options.

Mirkovic and Tomic have knocked back offers to have their products stocked in mainstream retail outlets or sold via online e-commerce sites like Amazon, preferring to sell from their own website.

Next comes expanding the HiSmiles brand across other oral cosmetics products and continued growth around the world.

"We eventually want to get our sales to \$1 billion and be one of the top five consumer brands globally," Tomic says.

The 2017 Financial Review Young Rich List is published tomorrow in The Australian Financial Review Magazine and at afr.com