

Interview with CEO Joshua Koh of Commune

'We have a strong focus on expanding globally, with Europe being the key market'

In this exclusive interview, Joshua Koh, CEO of the Singaporean brand Commune, shares the inspiring journey of establishing Commune and its premium brand, ALT.O. From the brand's inception 13 years ago to its strategic expansion into the European market, Joshua discusses the company's key strategies. How does the brand tailor its approach to the European market, and how have partnerships across Europe helped with the company's strategies?

Stay tuned for a deeper dive into the differences between the Singaporean and European markets in an upcoming article after the summer holiday.



Left: CEO Joshua Koh. Right: the Note Collection.

Can you tell us about the history of Commune and ALT.O?

'Commune was established 13 years ago with the mission to offer high-quality, well-designed furniture and lifestyle products at accessible prices for the mid-market segment. As our customers matured, and their tastes evolved, we recognised the need for more sophisticated offering. Thus, in 2019, we launched ALT.O by Commune, to cater to these discerning customers. ALT.O provides higher-spec, larger, and more sophisticated designs while maintaining the value-for-money principle that has been central to Commune since its inception. Commune has a strong focus on expanding ALT.O by Commune globally, with Europe being the key market.'

Human-centric design is a core belief at Commune. Can you share how this principle influences your design process and the final products you offer?

'Human-centric design is at the heart of everything we do at Commune, and this principle profoundly influences our design process and the final products we offer. We start our design process by deeply understanding our customers' needs, preferences, and lifestyles. We conduct extensive user research, including gathering insights directly from our customers. This feedback informs every aspect of our design, ensuring that our products are tailored to meet real-life requirements. Human-centric design is an ongoing process of learning and improvement. We continuously gather feedback from our customers and monitor how our products perform in real-world settings.'



The Linate Collection.

'Our designs prioritise ergonomics and comfort, ensuring that every piece of furniture supports the natural movements and postures of the human body. From the height and angle of seating to the texture and padding of materials, we meticulously consider how each element contributes to overall comfort and well-being. We focus on creating functional and practical designs that seamlessly integrate into everyday life. Our products are designed to be versatile and adaptable, providing multiple uses and solutions for various living spaces. Features like modular components, storage solutions, and easy maintenance are integral to our designs. While functionality is crucial, we also strive to create aesthetically pleasing designs that evoke positive emotions and enhance the living environment. We believe that beautiful, well-designed furniture can elevate daily experiences and create a sense of joy and satisfaction in the home.

Recognising that every individual has unique preferences, we offer options for personalisation and customisation. This allows customers to choose materials, colours, and configurations that best suit their tastes and living spaces, making each piece truly their own. We also embrace inclusive design principles, ensuring our products are accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities. This includes considering diverse physical needs and creating designs that are easy to use and enjoy by everyone, from children to the elderly.'

Can you elaborate on the specific strategies you are implementing to achieve success in the European market?

'Firstly, we are conducting extensive market research to understand the preferences and trends unique to different European regions. This allows us to tailor our products and marketing strategies to meet the specific demands of each local market. Secondly, we are forming strategic partnerships with local distributors, retailers, and designers to leverage their market expertise and networks. Collaborating with well-established local entities helps us to enhance brand recognition and trust. Together with our dealers & distributors, we are also expanding our showrooms in key European cities. These physical spaces allow customers to experience the quality and design of ALT.O by Commune products first-hand, fostering brand loyalty and trust.

Europe has a strong focus on sustainability, so we are also highlighting our commitment to eco-friendly practices. This includes using sustainable materials implementing environmentally responsible manufacturing processes, and promoting

our product's durability and longevity.'



The Note Collection.

You currently have dealers in France, Spain, Portugal, and Greece carrying Alto products. How have these partnerships impacted your brand presence and growth in Europe so far?

'Our partnerships with dealers in France, Spain, Portugal and Greece have significantly bolstered ALT.O by Commune's brand presence and growth in Europe. Some key impacts are:

1. Increased brand visibility: Collaborating with well-established dealers in these countries has greatly enhanced our visibility and credibility in the European market. Their local expertise and customer base have allowed us to reach a broader audience more effectively.

2. Market penetration: These partnerships have enabled us to penetrate key markets more efficiently, allowing us to introduce our high-sec, sophisticated products to a diverse range of customers across different regions.

3. Customer trust and loyalty: By aligning with reputable dealers, we have built trust and loyalty among European consumers. Their endorsement of our products has reassured customers to our quality and design excellence.

4. Sales growth: The presence of our products in multiple European countries has led to a notable increase in sales. The strategic locations of our dealers have facilitated higher product turnover and revenue growth.

5. Brand advocacy: Our dealers have become strong advocates for ALT.O by Commune, promoting our brand through their networks and marketing channels. This word-of-mouth promotion has been invaluable in establishing a solid reputation in Europe.

6. Market insights: Working closely with our dealers has provided us with valuable insights into local market trends and consumer preferences. This feedback has been crucial for refining our product offerings and marketing strategies to better suit the European market.'



The Axel Collection.

Stay tuned for more tips and market differences between Singapore and Europe in the next Commune article that will be published after the summer holiday!

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ALT.O

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