

We An Idea agency helping luxury brands prepare for business after travel stores re-open

Despite the dire impact on the travel retail sector from the curtailment of flights throughout the Americas, a number of companies are preparing exciting new innovative design displays at the point of sale for when flights begin to fly again.

We An Idea, a creative agency formed in 2016 by Juan Trelles and Ernesto Cajias, is continuing to work on several new projects during the coronavirus pandemic. The agency, made up of a team combining a diverse background in architecture, design and management, specializes in the creation, development and production of retail environments and solutions within the luxury goods industry in travel retail and domestic markets.

The company has produced projects in more than 40 cities and ships throughout the Americas, with production facilities in multiple countries, says Trelles.

Its impressive client list includes cosmetics brands from Chanel, Dior and Armani to YSL and Ralph Lauren, and spirits brands The Macallan, Hennessy, Glenmorangie, Chivas and Absolut, among others.

Cajias and Trelles bring solid backgrounds to the partnership: Cajias, a Venezuelan, has a degree in architecture and Industrial Design and experience in store design from stints at Bloommiami and Estée Lauder; and Trelles, a Colombian Industrial Designer with an MBA in Business, has worked at Diageo, Estée Lauder, Marlite and Global Design Solutions.

“It has been a very quick 3 ½ - 4 years, with very positive growth and great things happening,” comments Trelles. “With the knowledge that we have from the industry we are positioning ourselves as an agency for the whole Americas region.

“Leveraging our Latino backgrounds, we were able to develop great manufacturing partnerships with shops in South America. We manufacture in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador for south of the border projects, and we also manufacture in Mexico for this specific territory. We have our base for manufacturing for North America and Caribbean projects in Miami, where we work with highly skilled shops,” he explains.



Using a team of in-house Designers and Project Managers, We An Idea manages the production through its partnership with manufacturing shops, handling the projects from beginning to end.

“We know the value of project management – managing resources, and information on logistics for shipping and installation. We produce a project full turn-key. You know customers in travel retail and luxury goods are very demanding. They value companies that can cover this full service from beginning to end,” says Trelles.

“We see ourselves as an agency that has a different mind-set to approaching projects. We are very connected with our customers, we have a different approach to business with our team, with our employees and with the industry itself,” adds Cajias. “Even though we have both been in the industry for a while, we see ourselves as the new generation of company owners in the travel retail industry.”

Cajias and Trelles alongside their team, cover design and project management of

everything that happens at the shop -- material approvals, manufacturing options, and millwork; and handle all communications and support through its team.

This expertise and a service-oriented approach has allowed the agency to continue to work through the pandemic. It has several new projects in the midst of production now. These are currently being manufactured in Miami, and in Brazil, where two large projects for Sao Paulo airport are underway.

“There is definitely very important work happening this fall, some of which was contracted after the complicated pandemic situation began in the U.S.,” says Trelles.

Two current projects are for cruise ships, which were contracted before the pandemic. While the industry waits to see when ships will be allowed to sail again, Trelles notes that the agency had developed a very diverse mix of projects on cruise ships over the past few years.

“Cruises accounted for 20-25% of our business,” he notes.

Continued on next page.

Photos this page: the #MoetMoment installation on Norwegian Cruise Line's Great Stirrup Cay in The Bahamas.

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The agency has played a role in creating some of the most significant design projects in travel retail in the Americas over the recent past.

We An Idea helped Moët Hennessy develop a stunning on-trade project on Norwegian Cruise Line's Great Stirrup Cay in The Bahamas, which opened in the past few months.

"This was a beautiful and out of the ordinary project," comments Trelles.

Chanel is another main client and over the past three years We An Idea produced POS displays in key locations such as San Francisco, New York, Toronto, and Panama, among many others.

The highlight project for last year was the opening in May 2019 of the exclusive Chanel duty paid boutique in Toronto in Terminal 1, the first duty-paid Chanel boutique in an airport in North America. Opened in partnership with Dufry-owned Hudson Group, the stand-alone boutique is located in the main hallway of the airport.

In addition to the projects they

do for travel retail and the cruise industry, the agency also caters to the domestic market in Latin America for brands such as Chanel, Dior, Versace, Montblanc, Moschino and Bulgari, among others.

The agency is currently working on a very exciting and exclusive airport boutique for a major client: "We started production in May. We are sure it will generate a great impact in the industry when it goes live," says Trelles.

The key message is that the agency has had diverse projects underway in its shops at several locations throughout the summer.

"We wanted our network to see that there is work happening with different brands across the board. We want to show the great work being done at our manufacturing shops around the region. It is the right time to show the industry that they can look forward to seeing new and exciting displays in stores when they re-open. We think such positivity is contagious," said Trelles.

We An Idea: From abstract to reality

"The name of the company began as an abstraction and has been evolving as we grow," explains Ernesto Cajias.

"Initially, we wanted a name that made an immediate connection with the design and creative industry, but also meant integration. So the word 'We' was obviously key for us in that sense – an integration of work between our team and our clients, showing our common work. The name is also an abbreviation of the phrase: 'We have an idea, we are an idea, we work with ideas as a common group.' It was more abstract at that moment that we came up with the name, but now it is very familiar.

"Some of our clients abbreviate the name to WAI. It is interesting how the name has evolved – but it is a cool, fun name that gives us an opportunity to talk about the meaning behind it."

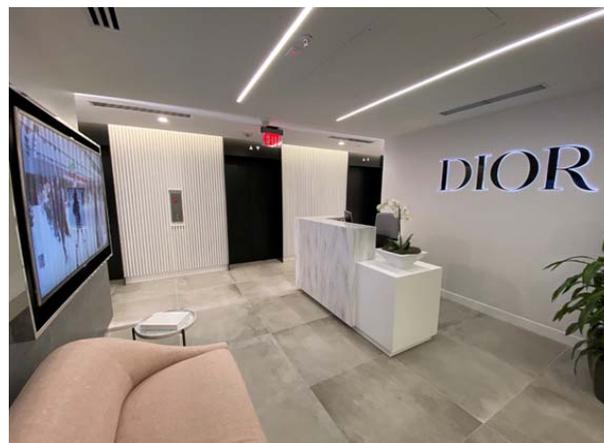
Adds Trelles: "The goal is to create a great relationship and connection with your customers. And when this happens, the name will endure and always have a great meaning."

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The Chanel duty-paid boutique in Toronto airport Terminal 1. Photo courtesy of Toronto Pearson International Airport.



We An Idea created Dior's stunning new corporate offices in Miami this year.