

WEBB Banks' in-market personnel leads to impressive growth



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Focused on the “away from home” experience, WEBB Banks (WEBB) develops brands across the Caribbean, Central America and travel retail. A premium wine and spirits distributor, WEBB is said to act as an extension of its suppliers and “enhance the connections that travelers make throughout their journey; from their departure at the airport to their return home.”

Since WEBB Banks represents a wide range of established international brands that are well-known in many key markets around the world, the company considers the traveling consumer as an opportunity. Jose Castellvi, Chief Operating Officer at WEBB Banks, notes that WEBB capitalizes on the success of its brands across U.S. domestic markets – and the travel patterns of Americans – in order to also succeed across local markets within the Caribbean Basin. Offering an example, Castellvi refers to a leading brand in the WEBB portfolio, Tito’s Handmade Vodka. Originally catering to the American traveler, Tito’s Vodka has become a favorite among tourists and locals alike. With this in mind, WEBB continues to build brand loyalty and drive local consumption across the region.



Jose Castellvi, Chief Operating Officer, WEBB Banks

A winning strategy

Setting WEBB Banks apart from the competition, it currently has 12 team members located in-market across the Caribbean and Central America. The plan is to increase this number as WEBB continues to grow. Entrepreneurial in nature, the company values autonomy and is made up of a decentralized team. Calling the strategy a win-win, Castellvi says this arrangement enables WEBB to better understand the local market and the expectations of its suppliers with local distributors.

“Our strength is a combination of our local team working in unison with our local distributor networks. This coupled with our strong suppliers’ relationships allows us to manage and adapt to constantly changing needs in very diverse and challenging regions.

“Our decision to add more local in-market personnel along with additional WEBB Banks support staff was instrumental in helping us grow our business and share within the Caribbean, Central America and travel retail during these challenging times.

“Our objective is to continue adding in-market personnel in key, strategic markets; this will allow us to dedicate the time and resources our suppliers expect of WEBB Banks,” he explains.



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Travel retail & cruise market trends

Describing the dynamics of the business, Castellvi points out that due to the close proximity of the Caribbean to the United States in many cases brand performance across the region is often a bi-product of American success stories. In addition to the growth of Tito’s Vodka across travel retail and the cruise market reflecting its growth in the U.S., WEBB has seen progression within the liquor segment and the premium aged rum and American whiskey categories. Experiencing “phenomenal growth” with its Disaronno Amaretto and Disaronno Velvet, Illva Saronno S.p.A. remains committed to investing in both channels. WEBB has also been able to broaden the stories of brands like Bumbu Rum and Templeton Rye Whiskey to the “away from home” traveler.

From a new category perspective, the company is pleased with the reception of Skrewball Peanut Butter Whiskey. The new and innovative brand launched last year in Puerto Rico and has already taken off.

According to Castellvi, feedback from key customers within the cruise industry say business has bounced back to almost pre-pandemic levels. Considering the continued addition of new cruise lines, he believes there is opportunity for this channel moving forward.

Growing & reflecting

Having become accustomed to facing existing hardships within the Caribbean and Central America, WEBB relied on the strength and experience of its management team to overcome the pandemic. Benefitting from the early re-opening of select markets in the Caribbean and its small team and in-market personnel, WEBB Banks doubled its business over the last two years.

“Our management team has vast experience working in highly volatile and challenging markets throughout most of their careers. When others see challenges and risks, we pride ourselves in finding ways to turn these events into opportunities,” says Castellvi.

In addition to the company making the most of “the rest of the world being shut down,” WEBB Banks took an aggressive position pre-pandemic to warehouse product and stock up on its core brands. This allowed the company to minimize supply chain issues throughout COVID-19.

Looking ahead, with the return of low season in the Caribbean this year, travel and tourism across the region is returning to its standard cycle. With the industry stabilizing, WEBB can spend more time focusing on other areas of its business such as WB Canna Co. & Wellness. Launched in 2021, this division of WEBB Banks manages a well-established line of CBD and wellness products and is essential to the company’s mid-to-long term strategic plan.