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**THE CONVERGENCE
OF CULTURE, CAPITAL,
AND CONSCIOUS LUXURY
BUILDING LEGACIES, NOT
JUST BRANDS**



**James
Ordonez**
Chairman / President

Tayrona

Capital Group

TAYRONA

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In an era defined by global inequalities, climate change, and the widening gap between economic progress and human well-being, the role of business is undergoing a profound transformation. No longer is success measured solely by profit margins or shareholder value; today, the most visionary enterprises are those that align purpose with performance to create meaningful, measurable social impact.

James Ordonez
Chairman / President



COVER
STORY



Social impact ventures are the catalysts of this new economic paradigm. These are businesses built not just to generate income, but to solve real-world problems, be it poverty, education, gender inequality, sustainability, or access to healthcare. They operate at the intersection of innovation and empathy, where entrepreneurship meets human dignity.

Far from being a philanthropic footnote, social impact has emerged as a strategic imperative. Consumers now expect brands to stand for something more than their products. Investors are increasingly directing capital toward ventures that promise not just returns, but regenerative value for society and the planet. Governments and NGOs look to these enterprises as agile partners in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At their core, such ventures represent the conscience of capitalism, proving that profitability and purpose can coexist, and that business can be a force for inclusive and enduring change. In the same vein, we found a standalone organisation that has emerged as one of the most impactful brands in the last decade, as per our set criteria-Tayrona Capital Group. With an exemplary convergence of finance, hospitality, and cultural innovation, the group has redefined what it means to be a purpose-driven global conglomerate. Steering the wheels of its resounding success and global expansion, James Ordonez leads the way as the president and CEO of the group.

In an era where entrepreneurship often draws a rigid line between finance and creativity, James Ordonez stands as a shining exception. A Canadian citizen born in Colombia to a Spanish father and Middle Eastern mother, James represents a confluence of cultures, perspectives, and missions. His story is not just one of business evolution, but of preserving history, championing community upliftment, and revolutionizing impact investing on a global scale. His fantastic journey and multifaceted personality drew our attention, and we sat down for a one-on-one virtual discussion with him. During our conversation, he unveiled a treasure trove of lesser-known insights about Tayrona Capital's extraordinary journey, tracing its roots from a hospitality-focused venture to a multifaceted global powerhouse. From its humble beginnings to its bold rebranding and visionary expansion, he offered us an insider's view into the ethos, evolution, and market projection of the enterprise. What follows is not just a story of a company, but a blueprint of impact, innovation, and legacy.

A Heritage Rooted in History

James' story begins with a family legacy that is as much about preservation as it is about innovation. His grandfather, a Spanish civil engineer and architect, embarked on a unique mission: to locate and restore abandoned Spanish colonial buildings across the jungles of South America. These centuries-old haciendas, once constructed by the Spanish crown to facilitate missionary work during the colonization of indigenous tribes, lay forgotten amidst dense foliage.

Driven by a deep respect for history and architecture, James' grandfather sought to breathe new life into these relics by converting them into heritage hotels. Upon his untimely death at 55, James' father took the mantle forward, completing the transformation of these structures into thriving hospitality ventures by the late 1960s.

A Leadership Immersed in Culture and Cinema

James was born in 1974, five years after the family's first hotel launched in Cartagena. Raised amidst the intersection of hospitality and film, his childhood was a masterclass in immersive learning. Movie stars frequented the family hotels, and soon, the business evolved into film production as well. His father intuitively offered hospitality services to international film crews in exchange for production stakes, leading to decades of involvement in global cinema. This led to the evolution of their business model, which exposed James to the world of Hollywood, paving the way for a path untrod.



From serving as a water boy to producing and directing numerous movies himself, James' hands-on exposure to both hospitality and film shaped his entrepreneurial DNA. The family's business model enabled them to co-finance numerous movies, including Indian blockbusters like *Kites* and *Singularity*. One notable milestone came with *The Mission* (1985), starring Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons, which was shot in Colombia's Tairona National Park and won the Palme d'Or at Cannes. With over three decades of experience in financing ventures across hotels, films, and entertainment-driven projects, James Ordonez has cultivated a distinguished career at the crossroads of business, creativity, and global impact. Formerly the Director of the International Business Program at Rosario University, he has also served as a guest lecturer at prestigious institutions worldwide, sharing his expertise with the next generation of leaders.

In the world of cinema, Ordonez wears many hats—writer, producer, director, and attorney. His name has been attached to some of Hollywood's most acclaimed productions. His portfolio includes celebrated titles such as *The Mission* (starring Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons), *Cobra Verde* (directed by Werner Herzog), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (directed by Francesco Rosi), *Nostromo* (with Albert Finney and Colin Firth), *Proof of Life* (starring Russell Crowe and Meg Ryan), *The Dancer Upstairs* (directed by John Malkovich), *Stuck* (with Stephen Rea and Mena Suvari), *Love in the Time of Cholera*, and the award-winning HBO super-production *Quo Vadis*, among others.

As a director, his credits include Reversal of Love, distributed globally by MGM, and the award-winning documentary The Siege of Cartagena for the History Channel. His directorial range extends to over 200 commercials for international giants like Budweiser, Sony, and Porsche, along with music videos for global superstars and high-profile entertainment campaigns, including for Sports Illustrated.

As a producer, Ordonez has helmed more than 30 television shows for Latin American and European markets and multiple award-winning international films such as *There Be Dragons: Secrets of Passion*, *Without Men*, *Singularity*, and *Kites*.

Today, as Executive Producer, Distributor, and President of Tayrona Entertainment Studios, he has played a pivotal role in the global distribution of over 300 international blockbuster films, cementing his reputation as one of the industry's most prolific and influential figures.

The Birth of Tayrona Capital

The name Tayrona carries a distinctive resonance, and naturally, we were intrigued to uncover the story behind its origin—a name that seems to echo legacy, culture, and purpose in equal measure. James elucidated that, inspired by the indigenous Tairona tribe of Colombia, whose name means "Sons of the Tiger," and the Chinese zodiac year of the tiger in which both James and his father were born, the company was aptly named Tayrona Capital. The brand symbolizes strength, legacy, and a deep connection to the land and its people.

By 1999, Tayrona Capital had drawn the attention of sovereign wealth funds and began managing large-scale investments. The original model of "investment in kind" using hospitality evolved into managing liquid capital to fund luxury hotels and

socio-economic projects that generated employment, taxation, and long-term economic value in developing regions.

Redefining Impact Investing Through Innovation

While Tayrona Capital's core remains hospitality, its portfolio now includes several pioneering ventures. James announced that they are now poised to unveil the hidden cultural gems of various nations to a discerning global audience. Each brand would bring out the best and the unknown resource of a particular country:

- **Quinto:** A groundbreaking initiative in Colombia's emerald mining industry. Despite Colombia producing 90% of the world's finest emeralds, much of its potential remains untapped due to outdated mining practices. Quinto aims to revolutionize this with AI, robotics, and drone technology while empowering local communities with education and employment. Soon, many outlets of this sophisticated brand will be established across the globe for people to access. Similarly, Nigerian Sapphires and Vietnamese Silk would be given global access to the world with luxurious boutiques, not with the aim to earn profits but to educate people about a country's proud heritage and lesser-known but best resources.
- **Ameria Riva:** When people think of the finest wool, Kashmere is often the first name that comes to mind. But contrary to popular belief, the warmest, lightest, and most exquisite wool comes from the majestic heights of Peru. Alpaca and Vicuña fibers, native to the Andean highlands, possess a quality unmatched in softness, insulation, and sustainability. Through Ameria Riva, our vision is to reposition global perception by bringing Peruvian wool to the center stage of luxury fashion and cultural storytelling. Soon, they'll be launching high-end boutique experiences that celebrate this textile excellence, fusing haute couture with indigenous craftsmanship. This endeavor extends beyond fashion; it's about curating a journey into cultural and culinary tourism, where each boutique becomes a gateway to Peru's rich heritage, elevated through five-star hospitality. We're doing the same with Colombia's exceptional leather, long overshadowed by Italian leather, despite surpassing it in durability, grain quality, and ecological footprint.
- **Tayrona Cacao:** Ecuador, a land touched by the equator, is home to the world's finest cacao that is rich in aroma, bold in flavor, and revered for its purity. Yet, this treasure often remains hidden behind mass-market chocolate brands. With Tayrona Cacao, we are changing that narrative. We are launching a global chain of luxury boutiques dedicated to educating the world on the unparalleled quality of Ecuadorian cacao. These are not just retail spaces—they are immersive sanctuaries that showcase how ethical sourcing, sustainable agro-innovation, and artisan processing can yield not only a premium product but also elevate farming communities.



Our mission is to make Equadorian cacao as celebrated as Champagne or Swiss watches—an international symbol of integrity, excellence, and terroir.

- Rudis Sylva: Rudis Sylva is a rising Swiss luxury brand that we are proud to support and mentor under the Tayrona umbrella. While the company began modestly over a decade ago, its roots in precision, elegance, and artisanal craftsmanship resonate deeply with our ethos. Today, we are guiding Rudis Sylva toward global prominence, helping it scale without losing its essence. This partnership reflects our broader strategy: empowering niche, culturally rich brands to expand with integrity. By leveraging our background in hospitality and investment—particularly our work in kind for the film industry—we create platforms for these brands to grow without being diluted. Rudis Sylva is one such example of excellence in motion, where Swiss tradition meets global opportunity.

Legacy-Driven Leadership

For James, leadership is deeply personal. Having grown up within the ecosystem he now steers, his approach is rooted in continuity, resilience, and social consciousness. He defines Tayrona Group not as a financial empire, but as a vehicle to uplift communities through self-sustaining, culturally rooted economic ventures. The legacy he continues to drive today stands firm on creating a social impact rather than business expansions focused on monetary benefits. His vision is sharply defined, which is to establish a dominant presence in every niche where he chooses to expand, setting new benchmarks across each vertical.

Despite the demands of a globe-trotting life, James remains grounded in family values and empathetic leadership. His humility is evident in every facet of his narrative, be it speaking about his heritage, his cinematic contributions, or his passion for community transformation.

Sagana: A New Chapter Rooted in Legacy

When a venture spans five decades and more than sixty properties across continents, change isn't merely about rebranding but about redefining legacy. This is exactly what James's visionary leadership at Tayrona Capital is ushering in with the launch of Sagana. It's not a new hotel chain, but the soulful consolidation of a 50-year-old hospitality lineage under a single, purpose-driven brand.

The name "Sagana" draws from the Tagalog word for "abundance," and coincidentally echoes the Sanskrit-rooted Hindi word "Sampanna" – conveying not monetary wealth but a deeper richness of spirit and soul. This synchronicity of meaning across cultures isn't accidental; it reflects the ethos of a global enterprise rooted in emotional intelligence, community upliftment, and cross-cultural storytelling.

"Sagana is not another Four Seasons or Ritz-Carlton. It's a philosophy of service – where everyone, everywhere, is treated like royalty," asserted James, shedding light on the deeper meaning of the rebranding of the whole venture's image.

What Sets Sagana Apart?

Sagana isn't built from scratch; it's the culmination of decades of innovation and hospitality excellence. Yet what makes it revolutionary isn't just its scale – it's its human-first approach to luxury.

- 60+ hotels and mini-cities worldwide – from Vietnam to Peru, Malta to Colombia.



- Fully immersive destination management, including restaurants, resorts, and cultural properties.
- Signature "Privileged Luxury Club" concierge experience that continues even after check-out, offering services and emotional connection long after the physical stay ends.
- Seamless integration of film, art, and storytelling into hospitality, creating cinematic experiences for guests that go beyond conventional five-star offerings.

With Sagana, James isn't just creating a hotel brand – he's crafting a lifestyle movement, one that allows travelers to be emotionally served, spiritually elevated, and consistently connected to the places they've been touched by.

Nation-Building is the Deeper Mission

Tayrona Capital has never confined itself to commercial expansion. James measures his success by socioeconomic transformation, but the ability to shift global narratives, elevate forgotten geographies, and humanize luxury.

He recalls Vietnam as a case study: "Twenty-five years ago, it was labeled as a poor, communist, dangerous country. Today, it's a thriving tourism hub, and we've proudly invested a significant effort and funds to catalyze that growth."

Other regions where Tayrona Capital and its hospitality ecosystem have redefined possibilities:

- Ecuador & Peru – Transforming underutilized coastlines into global hospitality landmarks.
- Colombia – Reframing the nation's image through its cultural treasure: emeralds.
- Malta – Leveraging its cinematic legacy (Troy, Gladiator, Game of Thrones) to position it as a luxury media and tourism capital.

This strategy of impact investing through hospitality has turned Tayrona's vertical into a force for national transformation, not just tourism revenue.

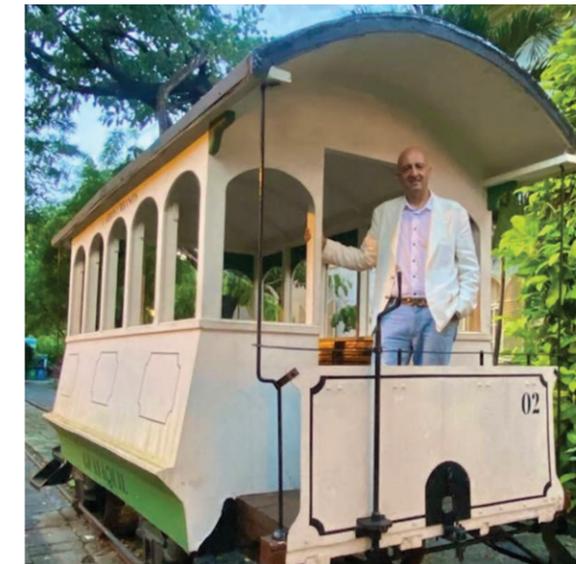
The proud accomplishment

In this phenomenal journey, James has come a long way, making a ground-level impact. We asked him to share the achievements made by the establishment that he feels proud to share with us. To this, he responded, "When I reflect on the journey we've taken, one of the things I'm most proud of is that we've managed to achieve something many governments and institutions often struggle to deliver—sustainable socio-economic transformation at scale. Through our ventures, we've catalyzed employment, nurtured local industries, and helped countries reimagine their global identity—not through policy, but through purposeful investment and creative vision.

Take Vietnam, for instance. Twenty-five years ago, Vietnam was widely labeled as poor, communist, and dangerous. That was the perception, and perception matters. Today, however, Vietnam stands tall among the world's most vibrant tourism economies. Its hospitality sector is thriving, its culture celebrated, and its economy surging with new opportunities. We've been honored to invest billions in this beautiful nation, not just in hotels, but in experiences, ecosystems, and people. To know that Tayrona Capital has played a role in that transformation is deeply fulfilling.

And Vietnam is just one example. We've supported Ecuador, Peru, and Indonesia—nations with rich cultural fabric yet untapped global potential. Our goal has never been to just build hotels. We co-finance dreams, build platforms for expression, and create opportunities where few thought they could exist.

In Malta, a tiny island often overlooked, we helped ignite a cinematic revolution. From Gladiator to Troy to Game of Thrones, productions filmed entirely on its soil, our film services helped reposition Malta as a global hub for storytelling. That kind of soft power visibility isn't just economic; it's cultural capital.



And now, with Colombia, a country often shadowed by narratives of violence and narco-trafficking, we are working to bring forward its true gem – its emeralds. By promoting the beauty and integrity of this national treasure, we are helping reframe the global story around Colombia, from conflict to culture, from risk to radiance.

These moments are more than accomplishments to me – they're manifestations of a belief: that with the right intention, business can be the most powerful vehicle for peace, pride, and prosperity."

Building the Third Global Luxury Powerhouse

Looking into the future ahead, James sees Tayrona Capital evolving into a global luxury consortium by 2030, akin to LVMH Group and Richemont Group. But here, he emphasizes that their defining difference would be: luxury not for ego, but for impact.

Sagana is envisioned to become the most recognized luxury hospitality brand globally within five years, not fifteen. The company's marketing partnerships, deep-rooted service culture, and culturally inclusive leadership – notably with Indian executives leading key verticals – are already shaping its trajectory.

"I don't want personal recognition. I want our products to be remembered like Mickey Mouse. Not for fame, but for the happiness and dignity they bring to people," stated James

Resonating with Walt Disney's Philosophy

At the heart of this business empire lies James's deeply personal inspiration. He is always inspired by what Walt Disney has created in human history. He believes in the power of humble beginnings and storytelling to create universal legacies.

"Disney began with a mouse. We began with a hotel. But both are rooted in emotional experience, and we aim to serve humanity with the same intent."

As he envisions the next chapter, James is focused not on stock value or IPOs, but on how many lives are elevated, how many communities are empowered, and how many countries find a new global identity through Tayrona's investment and Sagana's immersive hospitality.

India on the Horizon

Though discreet for now, the entry of Sagana into the Indian market is imminent. With Indian leadership at the helm of the hospitality brand and a clear admiration for the country's culture, Tayrona Capital is preparing to contribute to India's rise as a global luxury and socio-cultural powerhouse, just as it did with Vietnam. They are planning to launch several joint ventures in collaboration with esteemed business groups in India in the next five years.

Entering the Indian landscape, James shares a dream: "Just like we helped reframe Vietnam's global identity, we're ready to contribute to India's story, not just in luxury, but in soul-driven prosperity."

The Soul Economy in Action

Tayrona Capital under James is more than a business group; it's a soul economy. One where luxury is not exclusionary, impact is not an afterthought, and brands are vehicles for dignity, not just profit.

In consolidating his lifelong work into Sagana, James has set the stage for a hospitality revolution, not built with bricks and mortar, but woven through the stories, souls, and smiles of the people it touches.

James' journey redefines what it means to be a modern entrepreneur. It's not merely about scaling businesses, but about honoring history, embracing cultural richness, and leveraging enterprise to fuel societal growth. Through Tayrona Capital, James continues to bridge the old with the new, transforming forgotten colonial missions into global missions of impact.