



Interview to:



Jorge Vergel

Founder and Design Director at Kassani

Today we speak with Jorge Vergel, founder and Design Director at Kassani. Kassani is a Colombian company with over 30 years' experience in furniture design and a sponsor at CIFMers LATAM. In this interview, he shares with us the company's passion to facilitate the activities that take place in different spaces through design.

1. Jorge, could you tell us which are the main objectives Kassani currently has?

Our top objective is to actively participate in the purpose of people being happier developing their abilities and talents, because we understand that we can contribute from our specialization to make the space and atmosphere where they develop their activities favorable and stimulant. This way we consider that in office spaces as well as in teaching spaces, a suitable furnished place with good layout, ergonomics and design will actively contribute to achieve our objective.

2. Kassani develops many workplace projects, what are, in your opinion, the most important trends in workplace design?

Nowadays over half of our activity is focused on offices. What we have established is that the most innovative aspects are the ones related to light and visuals for everyone, work stations that are equivalent or adapted to functions and not to hierarchy, ergonomic and comfortable chairs that are different according to the function, mobility and flexibility in spaces, which become more “fresh” and “transparent”, which helps to get a new layout faster when needed. But maybe the idea that is applied more enthusiastically is bringing the concepts of home, office or learning spaces closer. This way new spaces start to show up: meeting rooms for just two people or little groups, areas with no precise purpose but that facilitate dialogue and informal meetings, little café areas or rooms for informal meetings furnished with stimulating furniture that help creativity or those areas called innovation areas, which are nothing but places where we can meet and exchange opinions in informal ways, with facilitators such as boards, writing tables, accessories to pass on ideas (playdoh, wood cubes, etc.). In general, using fun, rest and working closer with stimulating factors that helps us express our ideas and talents.

3. At Kassani you are also experts in teaching spaces, could you tell us about the International Meeting on Learning Spaces and Experiences: Aula 360°?

We have organized throughout the past ten years eight events that try to stimulate within this task of facilitating and communicating our role as facilitators of this purpose of collaborating in order to collectively search happiness, in this particular case, through our profession. In the case of education, in addition to forums and lectures, we have dedicated two books of the series “Design notes” to educational spaces and atmospheres. In these books many specialists from different disciplines have collaborated. Experts in ergonomics, acoustics, lighting, bioclimatics, Facility Managers, architects, and other professionals from the USA, Germany, Spain, Chile, Italy, and Colombia have shared their vision on education and the importance of space and atmosphere in the processes of knowledge appropriation and development through our books and lectures.

Our last meeting, with the active participation of David Martínez, Facility Management expert and CIFMERS GLOBAL Director, gathered nearly 400 professionals during an 8-hour conference with Spanish – English simultaneous translation, at the wonderful JTL University hall in Bogotá with the attendance of Cecelia María Vélez, former Minister of Education for eight years and currently University Dean. She and Rafael Orduz, former Senator and ETB President and currently Executive Director at Fundación Compartir, spoke about the state of education in Colombia. We also had interesting lectures from Peter Brown, furniture designer, Frank Locker, architect and teacher at Harvard University, and round tables lead by Alberto Miani, Architecture Chairman at Universidad de los Andes, and Peter Manjarre, form Sodexo, which were enriched by a very interesting group of specialists in different disciplines engaged in this activity.

4. How do you expect that CIFMers LATAM contributes to the sector?

In the end, teaching spaces, offices and hospitality spaces gather many activities, specialties and resources that usually end up scattered or that cause inefficiency. All of them need experts, building managers, services areas, etc., but until now the concept of a specialty focused on the search of efficiency in resources and coordinated work had been set aside as general services. Nearly everyone involved were aware of the need to apply Facility Management concepts to their spaces and organizations, but many didn't know that this discipline even existed. I think it will be very enriching for the audience to hear how this discipline can add value to their activities and organizations, understanding the contributions that can be made to improve their quality of life.