



NEWS

CEREZA COFFEE JOINS AGIBLOCKS COMMUNITY

A BIT OF
HISTORY OF
CEREZA
COFFEE

JOEY WEIN SAW
AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR CHANGE, AND
CEREZA COFFEE
WAS BORN.

"AN IMPORTANT PART OF
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CONSISTENCY, LONG-TERM
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APPROACH TO
SOURCING."

CASES

AGIBOO

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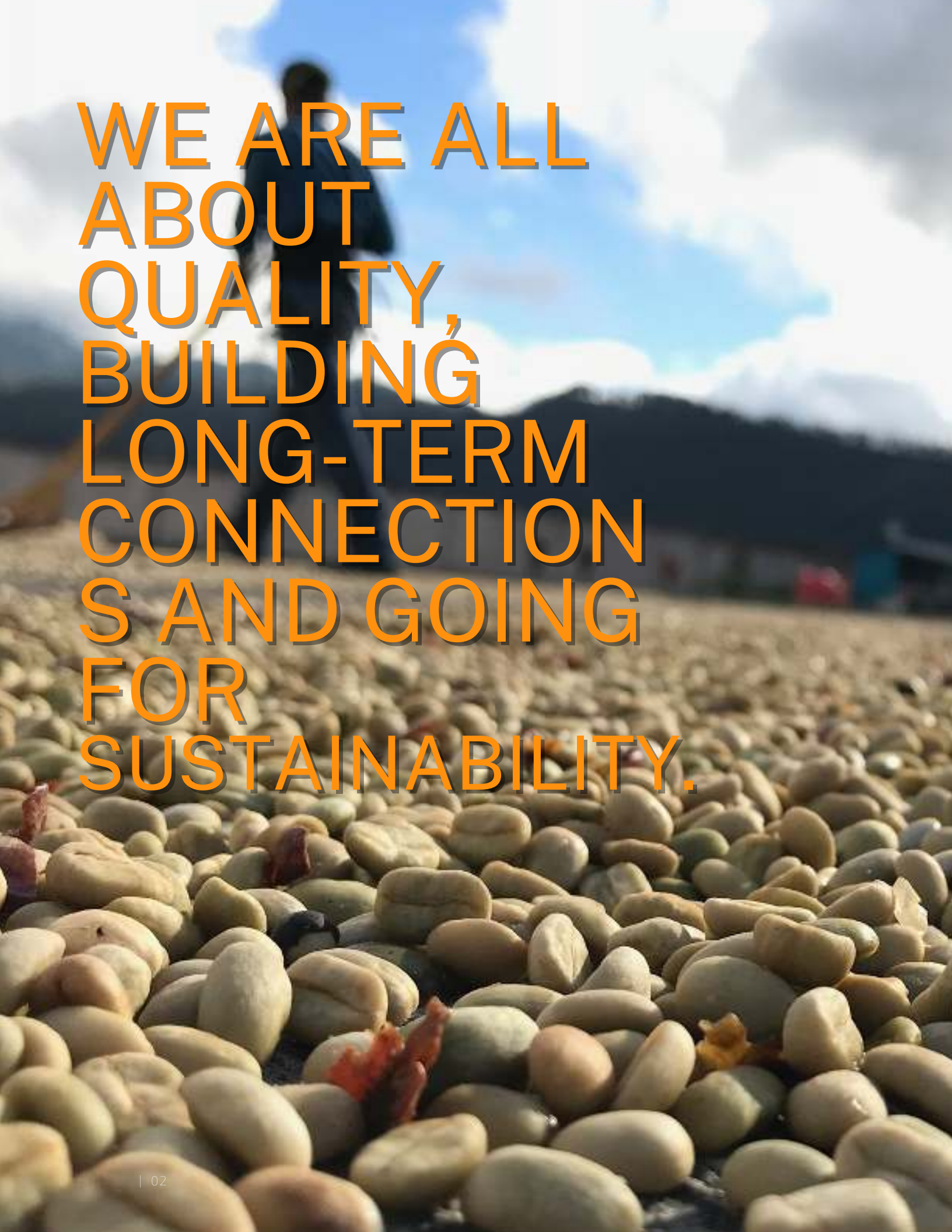
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A person is standing on a beach covered in smooth, light-colored stones. The background shows a cloudy sky and distant mountains. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

WE ARE ALL
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WHY PASSION ISN'T ENOUGH

The Colombian Eje Cafetero, or the slightly less poetic Coffee Triangle, is part of the Paisa region of the predominantly rural area of the South American republic. It is famous for growing and producing the majority of Colombian coffee, widely considered as one of the best in the world. It's also where Joseph Wein fell in love with coffee and decided to found Cereza Coffee, which just happens to be the latest company to adopt Agiblocks as the go-to CTRM solution.

We completely understand if you're already in holiday mode and can't wait to leave 2020 behind, but we're here to tell you that we can't let you go just yet. We still have some great news to share before you can discover what Santa stuffed into your stockings this year; Cereza Coffee has selected Agiblocks as the solution for their CTRM needs. We caught up with founder Joseph Wein and Operations Manager Pedro Benitez in their New York City offices – at a socially responsible distance of 3,650 miles – to talk Agiblocks & coffee.

THE HEART OF A CEREZA COFFEE

Cereza Coffee sources exceptional coffees and delivers them directly from farm to client in the most cost efficient, quality conscious, and personalized manner. By working directly with farmers, cooperatives, and dry-millers, the company is able to actively oversee quality control from start to finish and provide its roasting partners with a fully customizable product mix, resulting in the most competitive quality and price at every volume.

It should come as no surprise that Cereza places coffee front and center in all company endeavors: 'cereza' is Spanish for cherry, as in the cherry of the coffee plant that is host to the seeds we more commonly refer to as the beans that kickstart our mornings.

A BIT OF HISTORY

For Joey Wein, a Manhattan-based financial analyst at the time, the journey started in Marsella – very much in the heart of the Eje Cafetero. “I came to meet two farmers, one of whom had a sister in New York who connected us. Soon thereafter I move out there, where they taught me everything there is to know about coffee – from seedling nurseries to fermentation, picking and drying. The plantation was a 5-minute ride by motorbike from the nearest town, where a small roastery went to work on the goods produced.” In other words, it was very much a complete picture, from farmer to final consumer.

As he lived in the small coffee town and spent his days on farms, he got to analyze that bigger picture as well. After experiencing the links in the chain – farmers, local buyers, political organizations, exporters/importers, distributors, roasters – he was shocked by the number of times coffee is bought and sold before reaching consumers. “What surprised me most was the pricing inflation all along that chain, leaving producers with just a small portion of final prices.” He saw an opportunity for change, and Cereza Coffee was born.



QUALITY CONTROL

“It’s very hands-on, very value-based”, adds Joey. “What you see in our industry in general is often far less personal, and much more focused on volume. We are all about quality, building long-term connections and going for sustainability.” To the both of them, those aren’t shallow marketing phrases. An important part of the Cereza philosophy is consistency, long-term relations and true sustainability, with a very intentional approach to sourcing. Roasters or indeed any parties along the supply chain are viewed as partners. “We aim to be at the forefront of industry disruption and will continue to maximize value to partners on both the production and consumption sides of the supply chain. We are proud to support their individualized needs, regardless of their volume.”

As it turns out, there was a lot of potential for growth when you prefer quality over quantity, with more than a few Colombian and Honduran partners joining the Cereza network – always looking to improve quality. The full picture now includes ventures into Peru last year, as well as future plans into Eastern Africa – Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya.

Daily practice & future expectations

As much as we would love to share a more in-depth experience of their daily Agiblocks routine, the observant reader has already noticed Cereza Coffee has become part of the Agiboo Community within days(!) of finding out about our product in the first place. Which goes a long way to advertise their sparked interest, but makes it difficult to dive into daily observations and outcomes. Any expectations then?

“Personally, I’m expecting a smooth transition to an automated process with faster access to data, increased transparency that allows for better decision-making and planning, and the necessary means of scaling our business”, says Joey. “Oh, and don’t forget the cloud! Agiblocks allows you quickly keep up with developments and, more importantly, to work from anywhere, or at least from any device that has a browser. That’s a major benefit.”

“I imagine it will help us to focus [more] on the things we need to keep the business going as well”, adds Pedro. “Our approach takes time, but it’s valuable time.” Hours wasted in Excel are hours that could be spend on the road, on the farms or basically anywhere along the supply chain that Cereza Coffee aims to support.

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COFFEE – COFFEE EVERYWHERE

After Colombia came Honduras, which is where he met his now operations manager. “Again, it was a bit of a coincidental connection, through a college classmate with family in the coffee industry.” Pedro was at the time working at an exporting company, focused mainly on a combination of statistics and field works. “My interests matched really well with Joey’s”, says Pedro, who notes Joey and him have a sort of similar background as well.

“There’s definitely an outspoken fondness of Latin America, stemming from a profound trip to Colombia I’ve once had.” There was never really a professional curiosity in coffee necessarily, or at least at first, but his entrance into the industry for sure comes from a desire to work in rural and developing countries. “And once I found it, I started loving it.” At the Honduran company he worked for, he too came to experience the full picture from the cherry all the way to the cup, much like Joey described it. “We travelled together a lot, discovering both the coffee scene and the real potential of our business model”, he says.

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Agiblocks-o-clock

It's good that we've now come up to the present – or almost present – as crossing paths with Agiblocks is very much a tale of recent history. "We spoke to Jan (van den Brom, Managing Partner, ed.) just last week", says Joey. "There was an immediate personal connection, but we also saw the power and opportunity of the software. He gave us an extensive walk-through of all that Agiblocks has to offer, which was both impressive and a breath of fresh air compared to other presentations."

"Because we are growing so quickly, despite COVID's best efforts, we were focused on finding efficiency gains", says Pedro. "Up until now, we have been reliant on solutions like Excel and QuickBooks, but have pretty much reached the ceiling of their usefulness for the scope of our daily needs. At the same time, it was a challenge to find the right solution. We're dealing with a very specific commodity, and a lot of specific variables. Then along comes Agiblocks, ticking all the boxes. We were like, 'how are we going to do this, how are we going to do that, we need landing cost, we need insurance fees, we need... – ow, it's all right here!' As it turns out, Agiblocks caters to all that, and more."

"The comprehensiveness is unrivaled", adds Joey. "We can easily understand all the positive referrals we've had. It's exactly that very specific functionality that used to be the showstopper for other software solutions. They simply fell short. Agiblocks does not."



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CEREZA VALUE PROGRAMS

HIGH CUPPING SPECIALTY MICRO-LOTS

Cereza is a proud member of an alliance of Colombian coffee farmers that is taking an alternative approach to exporting Specialty Micro-lots. Through strategic partnerships and a direct trade framework, they curate the export of high-cupping Specialty Micro-lots and help farmers maximize their earnings. “We offer high cupping Specialty Micro-lots at competitive prices, while maximizing farmer income.” In addition to those Value Optimization Programs, Cereza offers containers of coffee directly to roasters with customizable preparations and the most competitive differentials to the market.



AGIBLOCKS DEMO

Agiblocks is the first CTRM software solution that simplifies the daily practices of commodity trade professionals. It has been developed with the single goal of making your fixed routine of commodity trading and risk management more efficient. Its clean user interface is simple with fast access to key functions. For every task, from creating a contract to evaluating your risk, all required information is readily available. It is as powerful on smartphones and tablet computers as it is on the desktop, so it's accessible anytime, anywhere.

Experience our CTRM software solution for free and get a front-row seat to all the benefits Agiblocks has to offer with our free demo. The full range of Agiblocks functionality is available within the demo environment for your browsing leisure. Familiarize yourself with the tools and features of our powerful and agile software solution and find out how you can make the daily practices of commodity trade and risk management more efficient.



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