

Hispanic Market Overview.

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The advertising and marketing industry's
annual State of the Industry report



KEEPING IT REAL

Authenticity. It's a word that was unavoidable at the 2024 Hispanic Marketing Council Annual Summit. Are advertisers and CMOs phoning it in when it comes to seeking U.S. Latinos? Sadly, that seems to be the case with some companies.



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AMPLIFICAR

Enlarge. Extend. Broaden. BLOW UP.

These are some of the definitions of the word “amplify,” a key theme of the 2024 Hispanic Marketing Council Annual Summit, held April 11 in New York. Yet, another buzzword couldn’t be avoided at the well-attended event.



From start to finish, the standing-room only crowd heard about “authenticity.”

To some, it may seem like an obvious insight — why be *inauthentic*?

Sadly, even in 2024, multicultural marketers continue to present diverse consumers with generic and perhaps gaffe-laden marketing initiatives because of assumptions, efficiencies and a full lack of understanding of the target audience.

Then, there is what **Luis Miguel Messianu**, Founder, President and Chief Creative Officer of newly formed shop **MEL (Messianu Edelman Lerma)** calls “Latino Coating.”

As creative director of the campaign, Messianu even had black T-shirts printed and available for HMC Summit attendees to take that sported the new hashtag #StopLatinoCoating. The intention of this effort? To give Hispanic marketing the weight it deserves.



LOUIS
MALDONADO



TOM
MARSILLO



ALEX LOPEZ
NEGRETE

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Oh, and there's that "authenticity" again. As Messianu sees it, one needs to "connect authentically or kiss your careers goodbye."

To be clear, the concept of "Latino Coating" is defined as a superficial marketing approach "coating" products, campaigns, media or entertainment with Latino elements for the appearance of diversity without genuine understanding or respecting Latino culture.

Is this the "nod" we've all heard about in recent Hispanic Market Overview annual reports, where positive commentary about that Hispanicity being woven in to a total market spot was accepted by many across the U.S. Latino landscape?

Perhaps that's the case, but for reasons that have less to do with cultural appropriation by non-Hispanic marketing campaigns and more to do with dollars: Today, the U.S. Hispanic population comprises one-fifth of the total and represents \$3.2 trillion in Gross Domestic Product. This makes the U.S. Hispanic consumer, if it were its own nation, the fifth-largest economy in the world.

Yet, Messianu shares, "brands continue to miss opportunities by investing less than 4% (based on data from SMI and GroupM) of their advertising budgets on Hispanic-targeted efforts."

Could that disparity be the symptom of what Messianu terms "surface-level attempts at inclusion, such as incorporating stereotypical imagery, language, or cultural elements into marketing campaigns, without a deeper connection or meaningful representation?" He's convinced, noting, "It's akin to whitewashing, greenwashing, or rainbow washing, but it preys on Latino identity—offering a mere illusion of inclusivity by adding Latino elements on the surface. It's activating during Hispanic Heritage Month and patting yourself on the back."

"[Latino Coating is] akin to whitewashing, greenwashing, or rainbow washing, but it preys on Latino identity—offering a mere illusion of inclusivity by adding Latino elements on the surface." – Luis Miguel Messianu

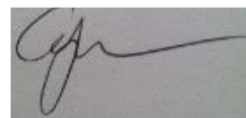
Just how serious is the "Latin Coating" conundrum? Messianu cites data from McKinsey & Co. indicating that more than a third of Latinos are dissatisfied with current products or value propositions being offered. Could it be due to a lack of authenticity?



"Authentic engagement builds lasting relationships based on trust and mutual understanding," says Zubi VP of Media Integration and Hispanic Marketing Council Chair Isabella Sánchez. "Research shows that when consumers feel genuinely represented, they're more likely to support and advocate for brands. It's time for CMOs to wake up, treat us as we are: the fifth largest global economy."

Interestingly enough, Messianu's #StopLatinoCoating pitch to HMC Summit attendees was sandwiched between perhaps the most dynamic group of client-side marketers seen at a Hispanic advertising-focused event in recent memory. Presentations from Colgate-Palmolive and TikTok opened the daylong event, as Greg Gallagher, VP of Brand Marketing for the Beer division at Modelo and Corona parent Constellation Brands, was a midday panelist. Then came 2024 HMC Marketer of the Year Pepsi, and Esperanza Teasdale, VP/GM of the Hispanic Business Unit at PepsiCo Beverages North America. Our Portada in this year's report features an in-depth interview with Teasdale. We also chatted with Steven Wolfe Pereira, the fiery EVP/Chief Client Officer at TelevisaUnivision and host of other influential individuals ensuring that today's Hispanic consumer – regardless of language – is properly spoken to.

Amplifying the authenticity appears to be the recommended solution some 4 1/2 years into the 2020s.





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MARKETING MASTERY

Through Art and Science

How PepsiCo practices multicultural marketing has been a topic of global conversation over the last 12 months. Now, Pepsi is being honored as the 2024 Marketer of the Year by the Hispanic Marketing Council. Today, much of Pepsi's success in the multicultural space – and with U.S. Latinos – is tied to the efforts of Esperanza Teasdale.



For 21 years, Teasdale has ensconced in marketing and brand stewardship at PepsiCo, serving as VP/General Manager of PepsiCo Beverages North America's Hispanic Business Unit since October 2019. As a college student, perhaps such a career was not in her immediate thoughts. "In high school I was a science/math person, and my Physics teacher was the one who recommended to go to engineering school and helped me do all of that," Teasdale says. Her parents are Latin American immigrants; their knowledge of getting into college was limited. The importance of her teacher's help is perhaps immeasurable, and the teacher even attended her wedding.

As a college student at Rutgers University in New Jersey, Teasdale started out taking few if any business classes, as she focused on engineering studies. "We took them with relation to operations research, or 'Economics for Engineers' – things that that," she recalls. "It wasn't in my purview necessarily as I was more focused on technical things."

Then came work at a plant, for a bakery. “It involved steel-toed shoes and a helmet,” Teasdale says. With a uniform to go along with the safety-minded wardrobe, Teasdale decided one day to pursue a Master’s in Business Administration. She’d attend the University of Connecticut in 1993, with the American Institute of Baking giving her scientific knowledge of bakery technology while gaining her first post-collegiate role as a Project Engineer for what is today Unilever Bestfoods.

Seeking an MBA fully immersed Teasdale into the world of business, where she gained knowledge of product development and marketing strategy and even accounting. Don’t think for a minute she was bored with her studies. “I thought, ‘This is really fun!’,” she recalls. “I really enjoyed learning it.”

By the summer of 1998, Teasdale was now managing direct store delivery sales in Fairfield and New Haven Counties of Connecticut for Unilever. “That’s when I truly said, ‘Wow, I love marketing,’ because marketing has such an effect on sales. I felt frustrated that the marketers at that time didn’t know what was going on, as I was selling their stuff.”

That passion has hardly ebbed, with mentorship and key allies giving Teasdale the tools to launch a career allowing her, in her words, “mix art and science.”

PASSIONATE EXECUTION

With an easel and a paintbrush fueled perhaps by scientific reasoning, Teasdale in October 2019 took on the responsibility of directing the overall Hispanic strategy for PepsiCo’s North American beverages unit, focusing on strategy, engagement and sales. What does she believe have been the PepsiCo unit’s most impactful effort when it comes to Hispanic market impact and resonance?

Teasdale points to two initiatives, in particular a sister program to the “Better with Pepsi” initiative – “Mejor con Pepsi.” She notes, “It is all about recognizing the importance of food within culture and clearly in the Latino culture it is absolutely diverse and vibrant.”

This diversity has generated conversations on which Hispanic culture makes a dish such as Arroz con Pollo better – Mexican, Cuban or Puerto Rican? While there’s no definitive answer, the engagement level from Latino consumers has been rewarding. “Food is just so inherent as a passion point among Latino consumers,” Teasdale says.

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“What our job is to really help build the equity of Pepsi in moments where you are eating and sharing with other people. We’ve had a lot of fun with that work.” The campaign has seen consistent creative since 2022.

Teasdale also points to the 2023 “Muévelo con Pepsi” initiative, which saw the first-ever launch of dedicated cans of Pepsi focused on five music genres and bringing a music experience to life in the metaverse, where one could master dancing to tunes from the various types of Latin genres featured in the campaign. With music “such a beautiful way” of being a part of Hispanic culture, this, Teasdale says, was celebrated through the “Muévelo” effort. “It was a great way of building the equity of Pepsi through another passion point, which is music,” Teasdale says.

Then, Teasdale takes note of a Día de los Muertos effort conducted in the fourth quarter of 2023 that involved Pepsi’s Rockstar energy drink brand, the Brisk ice teas under Lipton, and apple soda brand Manzanita Sol, which continues to grow its footprint north of Mexico. “It was all about being proud a los huesos – being proud to the bone,” Teasdale says. Artist Joaquin Nava created special Día de los Muertos artwork on the cans.

SUCCESS THROUGH SEGMENTATION

Engagement with Hispanics depends on various factors. What’s the biggest learning lesson one can glean from PepsiCo’s efforts over the last five years? Teasdale responds, “The secret to success is understanding the consumer. Everything we do is grounded in a segmentation that our agency, Alma, created many years ago. It is really game-changing because in the past the questions surrounding Hispanic marketing were about whether it was in Spanish and if the consumer was acculturated or unacculturated.”






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With those the key focal points of a campaign, along with whether or not creative could simply be translated from English, enmeshed in the Hispanic marketing of the past, today Teasdale notes, "There is so much more to the consumer in understanding attitudes and behaviors and passion points, and all of that just helps to make you more authentic."

With the Hispanic market far from a monolith, Teasdale reminds us that there are more than 20 different countries of origin within the U.S. Latino landscape, all with their unique touchpoints. That's why taking a multi-layer approach has been one of the biggest game changers for any company – "our company for sure," she says. "It drives engagement through authenticity. It is an absolute for us to be cultural anthropologists. That's what has changed the most significantly."

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The fact that Teasdale describes her and her team as “cultural anthropologists” is another indication that the U.S. Hispanic market, and seeking these consumers, have each changed significantly over the last 15 years. How have Pepsi’s marketing strategies in the U.S. Hispanic market evolved? And, is there one thing that stands out for Teasdale that is a reflection of a changed marketplace?

She points to PepsiCo Beverages North America’s dedicated team for the Hispanic consumer. “Some companies may have a ‘Center of Excellence’ or a team that is really a consultant/advisor but maybe can’t make the decisions,” she says. “With our team, with our structure, we can make the decisions on what we do on the Pepsi brand, for example, for marketing. It is connected to the brand strategy, of course. We know the tonality of the brand. But we also have the cultural fluency to make things more inclusive or do work that’s more dedicated. We have the funding for it. We have the people for it. That’s a really big difference. Otherwise, someone might have wonderful insights and influence but they don’t handle the execution, and that’s where it may fall apart. They need people dedicated to it ... We are not just translators. We are really in tune with the consumer and understand the need for more personalization in this space.”

MESSAGE ALIGNMENT

The Hispanic Business Unit at Pepsi Beverages North America is approaching its eighth anniversary. With Omnicom Media Group, alma and BODEN all at the same table, what has been the biggest eye-opener as it pertains to campaign development and execution?

For Teasdale, it comes down to having well written briefs. “So we will start with Process,” she says. From there, it comes down to working with an inspiring group of strategists and creatives and come up with incredible ideas while understanding the consumer.

The BODEN team came on to work with PepsiCo on the Juntos Crecemos effort, tied to a \$50 million commitment aimed to provide short and long-term support to Hispanic small businesses – specifically, restaurants, bodegas and carnicerías, over five years. Help includes grants, mentoring, tailored marketing support, access to capital and operational assistance to enable immediate and lasting improvements. “It was important for us to have an agency that was also diverse-owned be part of the ecosystem,” Teasdale says of BODEN, founded by Natalie Boden. “They, too, as small business owners were much closer to what we are trying to solve for entrepreneurs and bodega owners. There was a real special connection to that platform, which has been successful and continues to be.”

Working with Omnicom has also been rewarding for Teasdale’s team. “They have been along this journey on media planning and investment and the different strategies that we can implement in order to reach the consumer in the right way,” Teasdale says. “They’ve been really great partners.” Again noting Alma’s work, she concludes, “We’re pretty lucky to have the roster of partners who are very creative and talented. That comes with time.”



Looking ahead into 2025, what's ahead for PepsiCo Beverages North America in the U.S. Hispanic market, and how does Teasdale bring to life a multi-faceted strategic effort that takes into account multiple challengers in the beverage space?

AI will prove to be a valued aid. "Tech is our friend," she says. "When you think about AI and what it has in creative and personalization. We've already been talking about food, and what better way to leverage technology than to do multiple versions of food that are very targeted to the right person."

To illustrate her point, Teasdale points to an ad featuring a plate of Ecuadorian-style ceviche. In contrast, someone in Los Angeles may have a uniquely crafted brand message featuring a gordita. "The whole idea that tech can drive efficient localization and personalization is really powerful," she says, adding that she's hopeful 2024 will be the year her team begins using AI to deliver the most authentic creative get to the right people granularly.

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With passion fueling Teasdale's transition from engineering to marketing, what is the biggest thing she enjoys about being a Hispanic market champion for a multinational soft drink and snack food company?



"This role has been really unique for me," she says. "When I got the role, both of my parents had already passed away and I for sure was speaking less Spanish and was less in the culture. So when I got this role it was almost like a reminder that, hey, this is part of who you are. I find myself closer to my culture and certainly speaking better business Spanish, because I didn't grow up knowing it. As time as gone on, it is important for me to support all talent to help them achieve their aspirations to help our brands be as authentic and meaningful as possible. And with our community work, it is really about shining a light on Latinos. It is very rewarding to be doing all of those things.

My parents gave up so much for me to be here, for me to not work in a factory like they did or not worry about money. It is absolutely my responsibility and passion to just give it all back. It can be through other people, or through business or through the community. If people can see it, they can be it.

HMO

Pepsi joins Ford, Kellogg's, McDonald's, Molson Coors, Nestlé, Sprint, State Farm, Toyota and Walmart as an HMC Marketer of the Year.

Engagement, Response and Recognition

Pepsi's efforts in the U.S. Hispanic marketplace are the result of a strong collaborative relationship with public relations firm BODEN; OMD on the media side; and longtime U.S. Hispanic advertising agency Alma. **Isaac Mizrahi, CEO**, believes Marketer of the Year honors for Pepsi are not only deserved but timely. "They have been doing great marketing for Hispanics for the past few years," he says.



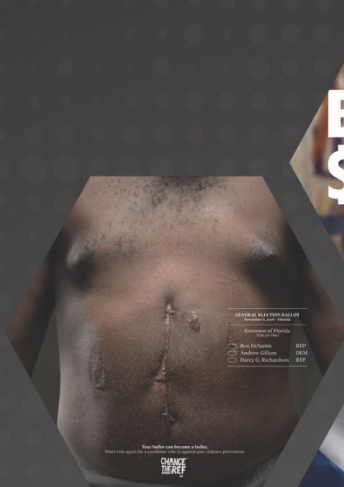
What sets Pepsi apart from its peers? "They have elevated Hispanic marketing from an advertising discipline to a business focus," Mizrahi says, noting that a business unit focused on Hispanic market was created that is today managed by Esperanza Teasdale and, before that, Marisa Solis. "That was a very important moment," Mizrahi continues. "If you look around, most of the advertisers see — or at least they act — when it comes to the Hispanic opportunity mostly in the advertising and the creative side sometimes. You'll see a little bit broader marketing muscles, but Pepsi has really elevated this to a business discussion."

That's why Mizrahi believes that while marketing and advertising may be the most visible consumer part of Pepsi's efforts to reach Hispanics, "they really mean business as they have elevated this to a business opportunity."

Alma has been working with Pepsi for more than six years on its latest window of marketing opportunities with the company.

"This is an effort that has been evolving and improving over the years," he says. This leads Mizrahi to put a spotlight on the partnership between the client and the agency that exists with Pepsi. "They do have subject-matter experts like Espy and many others. However, they still have respect and collaboration with their agency partners. They treat agencies as peers, almost as if we are a part of their team. They have created an environment where it is very easy to do business with them."

Among Pepsi's beverage brands that are most active with U.S. Hispanic market, Pepsi, Pepsi Max and Rockstar energy drinks have been joined by partnerships with the Frito-Lay team.



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'GREAT BEER, GREAT PARTNERSHIP

Molson Coors is another client of significance for Alma, with Miller Lite a heritage brand that remains consistently strong in a competitive marketplace.

How has Molson Coors, the 2023 HMC Advertiser of the Year, maintained its market position against such brands as Modelo? "First of all, Miller Lite is a great beer," Mizrahi says with a laugh. "I think people forget that, and that helps a lot when you're starting with a great product."

Similar to the relationship with Pepsi, Alma also benefits from a strong relationship with Molson Coors. Yet, it is very different from Alma's relationship with Pepsi.

"They don't have a multicultural marketing team, like a Center of Excellence," he says of Miller Coors. Instead, it has chosen to rely on Alma from a strategic insights standpoint and from a creative standpoint, too.

"This is an organization that knows about the opportunity and understands how to partner with an agency, and they put their money where their mouth is," Mizrahi says.

At present, an "all-star" campaign with "Big Papi" — baseball legend David Ortiz — is getting buzz. This comes after recent activities with reggaeton superstar J. Balvin. "They have a consistent appreciation for the Hispanic segment, are consistently investing, and getting great results."



While it seems complicated to some, Mizrahi concludes, "If you have a commitment, if you have a great product, if you have a partnership with an agency that can bring not only creativity but great insights, the results will come — and they have been coming for our clients."

BRINGING THE DOLLARS

With so many stories in the marketplace about the flood of marketing dollars to digital and social media and away from traditional, linear media, has this budget-shifting trend impacted Alma and its Hispanic market activities?

"It is undeniable that the social and digital share of the pie is growing," Mizrahi says. "However, I don't believe that the choice between digital, and social and linear has to be made. They are mutually exclusive."

"This is an organization that knows about the opportunity and understands how to partner with an agency, and they put their money where their mouth is."

Mizrahi points to a study on Hispanic advertising ROI conducted by Nielsen in 2018 that shows the best media mix involved a combination of radio and TV with digital and social media. "I understand that some people see this as a mutually exclusive decision, given the nature of limiting resources and scarcity of budgets," he says. "However, if you really want to maximize your investment, you need to be looking at the work from an 'and,' not an 'or,' perspective when finalizing the media buy. That's the media mix that maximizes advertiser investments, based on real data and visible ROI."

Ensuring Cultural and Strategic Relevance

The 2024 Hispanic Marketing Council annual summit, held April 10-11 at Convene at One Liberty Plaza in lower Manhattan, proved to be one of the strongest gatherings of U.S. Hispanic-focused marketing and advertising leaders in recent memory.

A host of A-list client-side decision makers were in attendance, along with some of the Hispanic advertising industry's top leadership.

Following a Wednesday evening cocktail reception presented by Techint Labs, Thursday's slate of sessions began with **Diana Haussling**, SVP & GM of Consumer Experience & Growth for **Colgate-Palmolive North America**. Speaking with Michael Roca, Executive Director at Omnicom Media Group's ELEVATE, Haussling shared brand highlights and key takeaways from this legacy brand with three years of experience in her role.



"For our team, we really don't want to be complacent," she said, noting that she likes that the Hispanic consumer is an advocate for its brands, including traditional U.S. Hispanic market products such as Fabuloso. "We try to connect with consumers and tell stories that really have that one-on-one connection."

Importantly, Haussling believes Colgate-Palmolive does not have a Hispanic strategy. Rather, the company has a consumer strategy, and U.S. Hispanics are incorporated into that.

Focusing on engagement, Colgate-Palmolive wants to be a "best friend" to the consumer. To make that happen, Haussling believes it is important that the agency partner reflects the consumer they wish to engage. "Having people in the room to catch those nuances, to make sure you're not making a mistake" when seeking to connect with the Hispanic consumer is paramount, she says, with knowledge "as good as my team, but better" a winning trait.

Moving from reach to connection was also a key focus of the conversation, as Haussling poked fun at peers who had failed to properly seek Hispanic consumers who were now whining, "Why not me? Why not me? Because you were too scared, boo," she joked, with the crowd erupting in laughter and applause to conclude the session.

TikTok and **Estee Lauder Companies** then offered a discussion on brand connectivity via the social media app. “We think not about targeting, but about engagement,” said **Jennifer Rivera-Vega**, Multicultural Head of Industry for the social media app that’s come under scrutiny in Washington for its reported ownership link to the Chinese Communist Party.

Jaclyn Williams, Research & Insights Manager at TikTok, offered insight into how advertising should reflect, if at all, the need for Spanish-language content.

Curated content, and having conversations, is integral for TikTok’s brand partners, with product reviews and brand advocates put in the spotlight.

After a lengthy review of TikTok’s marketing attributes, **Alicia Romero**, Vice President of Integrated Brand Communications and Cultural Relevancy for The Estée Lauder Companies, took questions from Rivera-Vega as the session ran out of time.

A noon-hour “Fireside Chat” saw **Gian Pablo Kates**, Vice President of the **NBCUniversal/Telemundo Group**, speak one-on-one with **Greg Gallagher**, Vice President of Brand Marketing for the Beer Division at **Constellation Brands**.



Gallagher shared how Constellation focused on the core Mexican audience for its Modelo brand before broadening it over time, a strategy that has made Modelo one of the nation’s top-selling beer brands in a hypercompetitive marketplace.

For Gallagher, it came down to having the right focus and ... being really, really authentic. “Authenticity is at the core of everything we do,” he said. There’s also the need to be consistent, as this can build brands in a meaningful way over time.

Lastly, relevant and resonant messaging matters. For Modelo, Gallagher explains, the immigrant story played a key role. “The American Dream over time has become increasingly hard to realize, but self-made women and men know it is still out there if you work hard for it.”

Interestingly, Modelo arrived in the U.S. in 1982. It was hardly a brand anyone who wasn’t from Mexico knew; sibling Corona dominated with beer consumers, but these were largely Caucasian. With a “fighting spirit” similar to the recently arrived Hispanic from Mexico, Constellation Brands was able to build a strong and loyal foundation for a newly energized Model with Hispanics at its roots.

Incredibly, less than 10 years ago English-language advertising began. And, Gallagher says, the same insights are driving that effort as what was used in developing the Spanish-language creative. “It is a universal insight that can bring a broader audience in,” Gallagher said.

Lastly, Gallagher addressed Cinco de Mayo by noting that cultural appropriation, versus cultural appreciation, had been seen in the U.S. until recently. How it really does celebrate Mexican culture was an effort Gallagher’s team moved forward with, for Modelo.

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HISPANIC MARKETING COUNCIL 2024 ANNUAL SUMMIT



**HISPANIC MARKETING COUNCIL
2024 ANNUAL SUMMIT**





MEDICINE HAT

WHERE ARE THE
PHARMACEUTICAL
COMPANIES WHEN IT COMES
TO REACHING U.S.
HISPANICS?

IT IS A QUESTION VETERAN
HISPANIC MEDIA SALES
EXECUTIVE TOM MARSILLO
SEEKS IMMEDIATE ANSWERS
TO, WHILE OFFERING KEY
INSIGHTS ON BRIDGING THE
MULTICULTURAL GAP FOR
PHARMA.

In January 1997, 16 years after becoming an assistant media buyer at advertising agency Bates & Co., **Tom Marsillo** took a career pivot by joining Univision Communications as the manager of its national spot television office in New York. Overseeing a team of 18, he doubled the office revenue by 2001. He'd later serve as President of an independently owned-and-operated Hispanic television rep firm and from 2011 to 2013 headed up total market sales for South Asian television network ZEE TV.

Today, Marsillo heads **Emerging Networks**, representing more than 120 television networks focused on multicultural consumers. He's also heavily engaged in efforts to bring marketing dollars – and an advertiser commitment – to the U.S. Hispanic, South Asian and Arab marketplace from the pharmaceutical industry.

The Pharma Gap is striking. According to WARC Media global advertising spend forecasts for 2024, Pharma and Healthcare combined to become the third fastest-growing product segment, rising 11% to \$71.1 billion. That's behind only financial services and technology/electronics with respect to percentage growth. In the U.S., ad spend on Pharma and Healthcare is set to reach \$34.6 billion this year, rising an incredible 16.7% year-over-year.

HISPANIC MARKET OVERVIEW 2024

Yet, there's hardly a trickle of activity in the U.S. Hispanic market from Pharma, and Marsillo has spent more than a year actively trying to spark at least one pharma giant to commit to the Latino consumer.

Is there a severe disconnect between Pharma and U.S. Hispanics? "It is certainly at best spots and dots," Marsillo says. "From what we've been able to determine after focusing on this category for 3 years now is that there isn't a single pharmaceutical brand, company or product across the country that has a comprehensive multicultural strategy." That includes Black, Asian, LGBTQ and any other minority group under the sun.

To be clear, Marsillo is not saying that there is absolutely no presence or visibility. "But given the fact that nearly 43% of our country is multicultural, the investment from the media size is in the single digits. There is a severe, severe disconnect."

One could say that about many categories, Marsillo admits. But Pharma has a bigger obligation to the multicultural consumer, in his view. First, he points to decades of medical studies that show minority communities are at higher risk of just about every life-threatening disease and ailment out there. "These are consumers that are in greater need of the drugs that have been approved to either alleviate their pain and suffering and possibly save their lives," Marsillo says.

Then, there is something beyond the "runaway train" in growth and spending from Pharma that Marsillo finds particularly vexing.

"Our tax dollars, which don't discriminate, are being given to Pharma for research and development," Marsillo says. "This was understandable 20 years ago, when the margins in Pharma were 1/20 of what they are now."

Today? "The pharma companies have certainly had a much healthier bottom line, and because of the regulatory climate in our country right now is much more wide open than it was. Let's face it: Pharma wasn't even a category a few years ago in terms of ad spend on television. There were so many restrictions and limitations, and right now the FDA is approving dozens of new drugs each year. Most of these drugs come with multimillion-dollar advertising budgets."

Yet, multicultural marketing "remains back in the dark ages" when it comes to Pharma. It is one reason why Congress had to introduce a clinical trials act. However, that bill has been stuck in Congress with little movement toward a floor vote. While that frustrates Marsillo, he points out, "We as a nation had to come up with a piece of legislation for something that is supposed to be numbers and science with no subjectivity and prejudice and reflective of the communities they are supposed to represent, and yet minorities have historically never been a part of the clinical trials conducted for these drugs. We need legislation for this?"

"Given the fact that nearly 43% of our country is multicultural, the investment from the media size is in the single digits. There is a severe, severe disconnect."

According to Media Monitors Spot Ten Television reports, produced by a unit of iHeartMedia on a weekly basis, Dupixent has emerged as one of the biggest users of Spot TV, by spot count. Spanish-language activity includes a 60-second commercial, "Presumir," that debuted in January 2024. It's an adaptation of the English-language "Show Off" spot, using a young girl on a bike featured in the latter creative more prominently in the Spanish-language television commercial.

While this is a welcome sign, it is few and far between, Marsillo points out.

"We've certainly generated a lot of attention, but what we haven't generated up to this point is action," Marsillo says. "There is a gap about 100 miles wide between interest and investment. We've got a lot of pharma companies interested in what we have to say and drawing all of these inequities to their attention. We've had record open and click-through rates for all of our marketing efforts when you evaluate every pharma campaign we've had."

Thus, Marsillo believes the Pharma industry is aware of the Congressional efforts exist yet has not done enough to prevent the one thing no one wants – a government mandate with guidelines for Pharma marketing. "If that happens, the days of Pharma companies printing money are over," Marsillo predicts. Therefore, acting today by developing a multicultural marketing effort before the U.S. government forces it is something Marsillo believes is pertinent.

And, once one big Pharma company makes a major move, others will follow the leader, Marsillo says. "Something is broken, and it needs to be addressed."

Efforts to help spread the message have seen Rep. Michael Lawler (R-N.Y.) and the famed Dr. Sanjay Gupta team up for efforts created by Emerging Networks designed to show how the pharma industry is underserving several of the country's largest high-risk groups.

Looking ahead, what is the best path toward bringing Pharma activities to multicultural consumers at a level that matches what's been seen in the total market? Moving past acknowledgment and taking action is the No. 1 need, Marsillo concludes. "The awareness is there. There is some dialogue. But until they actually act, we are trying to amplify our efforts and gain visibility. We need partners to have success."

HMO



Vitamins, Minerals and Supplements: A \$40 Billion Sub-Category

While Pharma is an underrepresented category in the U.S. Hispanic market, WARC Media finds that there is significant year-over-year growth on Amazon for vitamins, minerals and supplements.

Specifically, sales in the U.S. are up by 38%, with vitamins (+6.81%) and herbal supplements (+6.34%) leading the charge. **Amazon, Walmart and Costco** are among the retail companies building partnerships with health insurers and medical service providers to capture a larger share of the healthcare consumer's dollar online and off. Amazon and Walmart have both seen over 35% growth in the category since Q2 2020.

While U.S. Hispanics were not specifically mentioned in the WARC report, released in mid-January, it does include two key multicultural points that could impact the Latino consumer:

- Millennials are prioritizing their health and wellness more than any other generation. They are, however, dissatisfied with the range of products currently available on the market.
- Approximately 60% of Black consumers in the U.S. are prioritizing their wellness more

The Hispanic elder American consumer is also a prime marketer opportunity, given sales growth for healthcare products among consumers aged 65 and older.

Engagement, Response and Recognition



The latest Charter Spectrum U.S. Hispanic efforts have generated applause from across the multicultural marketing and advertising landscape. Is this being fueled by new learnings about Latino TV/internet consumption or how Spectrum wishes to grow in a world of cord-cutting? Liz Castells-Heard, CEO and Chief Strategy Officer at INFUSION, shares how the multichannel video programming distributor continues to grow.

One big plus for Spectrum is that it continues to offer streaming options for Hispanics to customize their experience based on their lifestyle, budgets and language preference while getting instant access to live TV and apps in one place. "They continually invest in their network infrastructure and technologies to be future-proof and all their products and services are designed to work better together for seamless connections," Castells-Heard shares.

Hispanics, among the highest streamers and long mobile-first in their usage, have turned to Spectrum as a matter of brand trust, she adds. To communicate this message to all Latinos, INFUSION consistently applies key strategic principles to its efforts. This, Castells-Heard says, is designed to generate engagement, response and recognition.

Doing so sees INFUSION leverage "the right influencers" like actress and model Gaby Espino and Dominican counterpart Clarissa Molina for broader appeal. There's also the need to tap into meaningful consumer insights and applying best practices. Meanwhile, employing an omnichannel approach to marketing, incorporating Digital Video, TV, Connected TV, Radio and on-demand audio to Search Engine Marketing, E-mail, and direct mail has proven to be a winning strategy.

For Spectrum, Hispanic market efforts come in both Spanish and English work. To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, a Q4 2023 "Spectrum One" brought Mexican pop/rock band Reik, formed in 2003, to take a song from their catalog and remix it for Spectrum under the theme "Conéctate." Stickiness and advocacy were the goal; a free exclusive customer concert experience at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles with Reik was the consumer lure, working with partners Tarima, Sony and Univision.



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INFUSION
by castells



Spectrum has been a loyal advertiser in the U.S. Hispanic market. What has been the biggest thing looking back over the years that Castells-Heard can say is the hallmark of this commitment?

“The pivotal point was the 2016 merger of Charter, Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks, which created Spectrum, she says. “That’s when they made the multicultural business imperative a top-down priority, creating a new Multicultural Center of Excellence (COE) with the right team and strategic framework, tools and metrics foundation to inculcate it into the fabric of the company.”

Working with cross-functional teams, the COE ensured equitable metrics, resources, and research to develop relevant products, operations and marketing initiatives that addressed Hispanics’ cultural, language, income and lifestyle needs.

“The hallmark of this commitment was in mid-2017 when I saw Hispanic relevance and innovation applied across the board,” Castells-Heard says. That’s when Spectrum opened their largest new bilingual call center, deployed multiple custom video packages, and entrusted INFUSION to create 360-degree campaigns with Hispanic media partners, Hispanic Direct Marketing with AR-embedded Videos, and adapt a Hispanic concept for the total market.

“They continue to walk the talk,” Castells-Heard says of Spectrum. “Their commitment and cultural fluency continues to thrive, activated from a national to a local basis, across media, digital and social channels.”

There are also DEI and community impact programs across the diverse Hispanic communities Spectrum serves; the New York Tri-State Area and Southern California are among the biggest markets, thanks to the legacy Time Warner Cable franchises it now owns.

Castells-Heard also notes that Spectrum recently centralized and enhanced its “Spanish-language Customer Experience” across the company.

At INFUSION, the agency’s dedicated Spectrum Multicultural staff has grown from 15 to 70 employees – led by Hispanics. “Together with Spectrum, we develop progressive, culturally relevant strategies and initiatives that evolve with the category, competitive and consumer shifts,” Castells-Heard says. “We are very proud of our work together and cherish this unique partnership. And, it’s really not work when you love what you do and work with the best.”

As part of the preparation process for the 2024 Hispanic Market Overview report, we reviewed the 2014 edition. One decade ago, the conversation was about how “HISPANICS LARGELY PREFER ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA.” What can Castells-Heard say about that statement through the 2024 lens, and if that insight was perhaps misleading and even damaging?

“Yes, it was damaging and misleading to the many Fortune 500 not doing or fully invested in Hispanic marketing to have another excuse to let their mainstream ads do the job sub-par,” she says. “But no, it did not alter the course for smart marketers who added English cultural ads on top of unique Spanish efforts to fill the gap in bicultural reach and maximize their total Hispanic impact – and even improve their total market response, given Hispanics’ sizable share of English viewing, especially in top markets.

"A Hispanic marketing cultural strategy was and continues to be vital in both Spanish and English media to properly reach and impact Hispanics. That's the conversation."

“The tricky part to doing more of that is the management of English media among some clients and media agencies, in that they evaluate Hispanic spillover as effective regardless of relevance and re-allocation of funds to ‘English Hispanic creative’ turns into turf wars,” Castells-Heard concludes. “The other part that plays a key role in this is the relationship of language and culture, and what factors have changed or are the same today.”



Over 60% of Hispanic viewing still goes to English-language media, Castells-Heard shares. But, top viewed content and channels remain in Spanish. “Cultural engagement is intrinsically linked to higher response in any language,” she notes. “While Spanish-language plays a strong role even among younger Hispanics, they are increasingly bilingual and ‘code switch’ daily based on content, situation and context – and culture trumps language. This was evident in 2014 and magnified in 2024. Spanish-language only advertising is not and has never been an effective Hispanic marketing strategy.”

Castells-Heard also believes wireless and social connectivity has fueled cultural ties and an explosion of dual-language Hispanic content, increasing engagement and media consumption, more than doubling the digital time spent with five-times the growth in ad-supported platforms.

“Hispanics view dual-language content across the most connected devices,” Castells-Heard says. “At a time when cultural identity and openness to diversity in mainstream ads are both at their highest point, Hispanics are also much more vocal about not being satisfied with their portrayals, demanding more English-language mainstream ads with people who look and act like them, and brands that culturally address them in both languages.”

As such, Castells-Heard concludes, “Hispanic marketing cultural strategy was and continues to be vital in both Spanish and English media to properly reach and impact Hispanics. That’s the conversation.”

HMO

The Hispanic Ad Agency Report: Evaluating Efficiencies, Leading With Linear Media

It seems that, in recent months, every advertising trends report produced by experts in their field has presented the exact same conclusion: Digital and social advertising dollars will grow at a breakneck pace, while linear media dollars have all but peaked, with five-year trends offering a sober portrait for broadcast radio and TV. Are similar trends being seen in the U.S. Hispanic market?

"I think we are seeing similar trends," says **Louis Maldonado**, Partner and Managing Director of **d expósito & Partners**. "Clients continue to seek efficiencies, and Hispanics and other multicultural audiences continue leading in their enthusiasm for digital media. While media efficiencies and performance continue driving investment decisions, linear TV and conventional radio still enjoy a special bond with Hispanics."

Maldonado points to Nielsen's latest Hispanic audience report, which shows that U.S. Hispanics aged 18 and over spend 50% of their viewing time watching broadcast TV. Furthermore, 94% of U.S. Hispanics can be reached through conventional radio. There's more: some 89% of Hispanic adults trust Spanish-language media, while nearly 70% agree with the statement that local news is a reliable information source. "Including local TV and radio in media plans can greatly enhance a brand's community presence while offering activations and retail drivers that are not available through digital platforms."



Each channel and format, in Maldonado's view, brings value in how brands connect with consumers. "Trusted environments with high cultural affinity should be considered, along with efficiency and more performance-driving media, when making investment decisions," he says. Those environments very much include Hispanic-focused broadcast radio and TV.

Of the clients d expósito & Partners works with, is there one within a particular ad category that is outperforming, with respect to ROI measures?

"We see outperformance in ROI across several of our clients and categories," Maldonado comments. "This is particularly the case for those with full-funnel marketing plans where Hispanics and other multicultural audiences are driving their businesses."



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“While savvy and astute media investment is certainly a driver, relevant creative strategies and messages combined with authentic and compelling storytelling that taps deep cultural insights have often proven to be the most impactful at optimizing ROI.” — Louis Maldonado

Maldonado continues, “While savvy and astute media investment is certainly a driver, relevant creative strategies and messages combined with authentic and compelling storytelling that taps deep cultural insights, have often proven to be the most impactful at optimizing ROI.”

BEYOND CUES AND NUANCES

With “authenticity” an omnipresent theme in 2024 for marketers seeking multicultural consumers, one cannot ignore the increased presence of “Spanglish” and that “wink and a nod” in total market creative – some of which is now fully bilingual. While some may cheer the increased amount of Hispanic-targeted messaging on the nation’s total market media, are Spanish-language media consumers seeing this creative, too? Are they accepting of it?

“The reality is there is a lot of winking and nodding happening in both languages,” Maldonado says. “This doesn’t have to be a bad thing when it genuinely reflects a diverse U.S. and our increasingly cross-cultural nature. In fact, there are many examples of great, culturally insightful storytelling that is told in a way that organically reflects our cross-cultural lifestyles.” As an example, he points to an episode of NBC’s “Saturday Night Live” with Bad Bunny as a guest host and iconic entertainers Mick Jagger and Lady Gaga joined cast members in dialogue that was fully in Spanish.

“The issue we see, and where things often go awry, is when cultural cues and nuances are used in lieu of more insightful strategies that drive deeper relevance because they are short-cuts to gain efficiencies in creative development and production,” Maldonado says. “The same applies to bilingual creative. It’s not just about toggling back-and-forth between languages, where every word is understood but the overall message gets totally lost. These are risky moves that can foster negative brand perceptions – even rejection – because it shows the brand really doesn’t understand the Latino audience.”

Does Maldonado think that, in some ways, U.S. multicultural marketing has regressed to an environment where translations and transcreations are more abundant than ever? Or, are there wholly U.S. Hispanic efforts in abundance?

“While many advertisers invest in original campaigns that are Hispanic-targeted or cross-cultural, many have gone backwards,” Maldonado says. “There is no doubt a driving reason is often production efficiencies, but I have to ask: Could our own industry have contributed to this situation? For roughly a decade, the priority placed on advertising in-culture while being language-agnostic has reduced the use of Spanish to being a tactic. How many times have we heard that? While not intended, is it possible the emphasis on advertising in-culture may have contributed to the overuse of superficial cultural cues and nuances in advertising? This unfortunate trend in advertising is exactly what HMC’s “Stop Latino Coating” campaign is working to confront. **Language is not a tactic.** Vuelvo y repito ...

“Again, language is central to our individual identity and shapes how we interact with our world. It is essential to how we express ourselves and can be used to add emotion, color and emphasis while simultaneously fostering a deeper, more personal connection with an audience.

“This is true across all generations of Latinos,” Maldonado concludes. “The ongoing – and perhaps accelerating – reclaiming of language and culture requires marketers and advertisers to reassess their advertising investments and reflect on whether they could be leaving money on the table. One thing is clear and irrefutable: the opportunity is going nowhere and is just waiting to be had.”

BACK TO MADISON AVENUE?

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The Hispanic Ad Agency Report: The ‘Welcoming and Inclusive’ Client Partner

“To be candid, it’s not that this campaign is that different to other work we have created for this brand.” That’s what **Alex López Negrete**, President/CEO of **López Negrete Communications**, has to share when asked about the latest effort his Houston-headquartered agency created for **Hyundai**. The Ioniq 6 campaign has gained many industry accolades, to which Negrete says, “We are fortunate that our client partners at Hyundai not only allow us, but depend and charter us to embed culture and actionable cultural insights into the work – **all** the work.”

For López Negrete, success has come since its first campaign for the auto maker, with the launch of “Éste es el Viaje de tu Vida” as an over-arching branding platform. He says the relationship with Hyundai and how the auto brand works with the agency is largely responsible for how this particular campaign earned a bit more notoriety. “It takes a known cultural element, which are ‘Cautionary Tales,’ as the campaign is called, and gives them a new, fresh spin,” Mr. López Negrete shares. “It’s a new twist for a very new product.” He also believes that being able to thread insights in an omnichannel approach played a significant role in consumer resonance.



Then, there’s the “just plain good storytelling” seen in the Ioniq 6 creative that comes “without having to sacrifice facts, benefits and sheet metal eye candy.” Mr. López Negrete concludes, “Yes, we’re very proud of the work and, of course, the results. The campaign has earned above-normal scores in the categories of attention, information, consideration and relevance.”

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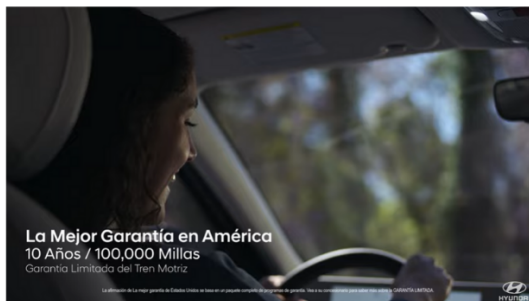
From a sales perspective, the first month of the campaign resulted in a 48% sales volume increase. That improved to a 77% increase in the second month.

Better yet, Hyundai enjoyed what López Negrete calls a 234% sales increase in the second half of 2023, compared to the first six months of the year.

THE STRATEGIC PARTNER

Asked to describe relationship between Hyundai and LNC a bit further, and why the Ioniq 6 was selected for a focused Hispanic marketing effort, Mr. López Negrete says, “Hyundai leadership has been welcoming and inclusive from the very beginning, and not just as a creative agency but as a strategic partner. It also doesn’t hurt that Hyundai has an extraordinarily diverse leadership team as well. They understand the potential of the Latino consumer to their growth and brand, and they understand that truly bespoke communications deliver better results.”

As such, Hyundai supports its presence and involvement from the earliest strategic and planning phases through the presentation, production and work approval stages. “It’s a model built for today’s America, and it’s wonderful to see them honor and respect the ideas as well as the audience,” Alex López Negrete says. “They also deeply care who executes the work behind the camera – their commitment to and understanding of what diversity is, does and means to the end product is refreshingly deep and unwavering.”



Alex López Negrete continues, “If a marketer wants a different, improved outcome, then they must be willing to have a different process. The Hyundai leadership team knows this and is willing to embrace a different, more inclusive process end-to-end.”

He also explains that the Ioniq 6 “seemed to be the star of the show” although the “Cautionary Tales” campaign featured Hyundai’s entire roster of electric vehicles.

ONGOING ACHIEVEMENT

Other clients López Negrete Communications works with include Mattress Firm, Bank of America, McDonald’s and Total Wine & More. “In the case of Bank of America, this is a relationship that is now over 32 years old and as strong as ever,” Alex López Negrete says. “From the beginning, they have allowed us to be deep in their system, their communications, and even their processes.”

Work for Mattress Firm began in 2020. “This was the first time they were speaking directly and overtly to the Hispanic consumer and they let us in all the way,” Alex López Negrete comments. “We have started the same journey with newly acquired client Total Wine. The opportunity they have with the Hispanic consumer is huge. They have an extraordinary footprint and we plan to have a lot of fun with them.”

There is a common thread between these three brands.

Alex López Negrete concludes, “They appreciate the audience both in terms of cultural uniqueness and bottom line contribution, they understand what happens when you do the right work as opposed to just ‘window dress’ mainstream executions, and they make the best use of their Hispanic agency partner and use us fully. This is special, and we, as partners, know it ... and never take it for granted.”

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A Higher Purpose

Techint Labs Moves Higher Education Marketing Further With Hispanics

No, it's not a factory for the latest pharmaceutical brand to gain FDA approval. But, it would be perfectly pleased with handling its marketing and advertising efforts. Denver-headquartered **Techint Labs** is gaining notice as a full-service advertising agency that creates "custom strategies to accelerate brands."

For President **Adam Lee**, who since January has doubled as Chief Business Development Officer for ad tech platform **AdCellerant**, growing its digital advertising footprint in the U.S. Hispanic market while offering meaningful media and data analytics is a priority.

Its first focus area: moving higher education outreach, marketing and advertising efforts forward when it came to the Latino community. "Within higher education we started to work with a few different clients that were really focused on underserved communities and reaching different levels of decisionmakers within families, to help with research and decision making on continuing education," Lee says. Those efforts took flight five years ago.

At the time, launching a multicultural effort focused on higher education saw Techint Labs "take on just another client with a challenge that they wanted to overcome." As Lee and his team started to dig in, "we realized that there was something there."

Lee elaborates, "We knew that, as an agency, the tools and technology that we built in-house as well as some of the third-party relationships that we have that we were uniquely positioned to



better understand the need of some of these communities, and start to reach them in influential ways."

Relationships then expanded into CPG, travel and tourism, retail and e-commerce, hospitality and healthcare. Thanks to the work in higher education, a more robust Hispanic market offering emerged for Techint Labs.

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WHERE TO GRAB FUTURE GRADS

The COVID-19 pandemic “flipped higher education on its head,” Lee believes.

Across the U.S., a reevaluation of tuition costs, and curriculum choices, created a highly unstable atmosphere for both two-year and four-year colleges. For Techint Labs clients, which include two-year school Broward College in South Florida, combating an across-the-board decline in enrollment was a critical campaign need. Attracting consumers in a more competitive environment created from a smaller student pool also emerged as a concern. This saw Techint Labs hone in on the right message for the Hispanic marketplace.

“They are taking longer to make their decision, and are doing far more research, and at the end of the road they do not always choose education as the end option,” Lee says of the higher education conundrum within the Hispanic segment of U.S. consumers. Ensuring the “right fit” results from its marketing efforts became the No. 1 priority. “We’re focused on making sure that we’re going after a student that is looking for something that’s a perfect fit for where they want to go in their career, as opposed to having them fill out a form and moving on to the next student.”

Techint Labs is steeped in digital. But, does this mean its clients aren’t active in linear media, which continues to overindex with Hispanic consumers? “We have some clients in the hospitality and travel and tourism space that are in the South and are also here in Colorado and further north, and we’ve realized that we cannot just separate out one campaign and translate. The Hispanic and multicultural audience needs to be included in that general campaign because they make up such a large portion of the population that they shouldn’t be segmented out. In fact, they should be a primary target. They are traveling at similar if not higher rates than the general market.”

That’s why Techint Labs is including a multicultural perspective in the research it conducts and in the creative it brings to market.

For Techint Labs, one of the biggest pieces of a successful campaign execution involves the media mix. In Lee’s view, segmenting the Hispanic and total market strategies are a thing of the past. “We’re able to reach these communities that are going to help drive tourism forward through the same channels that the entire market is trending toward – things like TikTok and Snapchat can help and be very visual.”

LinkedIn, Pinterest and YouTube, which can be highly target, are also noted. With that, paid search and out-of-home are suggested. “We’re trying to be much more holistic and go after the most qualified audience, regardless of what their background is.”

Given the digital-first approach of Techint Labs, where are U.S. Hispanics when they are online? There’s no definitive answer for Lee, with geography a determinant. “This can play a role in learning how much of the audience is consuming [Spanish-language media],” he says. “Age is going to play a huge part as well.” The conclusion? In-language media is still highly consumed, but, Lee adds, “The younger you go, the less it overindexes.”

As Techint Labs continues its Hispanic market efforts, it will do so with the guidance of Hispanic market veterans Margot Bradley (formerly of Hola Networks) and Berry Jasin (once SBS’s Chief Revenue Officer). Lee cites Jasin’s ability to grow and enrich relationships as a key plus to the company, while Bradley “brings decades of experience within the U.S. Hispanic marketplace, and her knowledge on how to position our team gives us an immense amount of quality control for any of the work we are doing. We are better off for having both of them.”

“We’re focused on making sure that we’re going after a student that is looking for something that’s a perfect fit for where they want to go in their career, as opposed to having them fill out a form and moving on to the next student.”

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Engagement, Response and Recognition



When asked to share his current business title at TelevisaUnivision, Steven Wolfe Pereira says he considers himself to be “the Ambassador of the Latino community in our beloved industry.”

Full of energy and a leader to disdains e-mail and is best reached by text, Pereira is hitting all cylinders just months after arriving at the company in the role of EVP/ Chief Client Officer.

Since November 2023, Steven has served in a newly created role designed for one chief reason — to accelerate the company’s outreach to advertisers who may not invest heavily in Spanish-language media. Specifically, he’s tasked with helping advertisers create new partnerships that use the TelevisaUnivision portfolio. How Steven got to TelevisaUnivision involves many years in the tech sector — and a two-year stint from 2008-2010 as a marketing VP at the old Univision Communications. That experience was under a wholly different organization, and before a nearly four-year run at Publicis Media, as EVP/Managing Director. He later served as Chief Marketing Officer for Datalogix, acquired by Oracle; he would remain following the acquisition by becoming VP of Brand Strategy and Marketing Solutions for the Oracle Data Cloud. Then came roles at Neustar and Quantcast, respectively. After that, in January 2016, he co-founded Encantos, described as “a global creator platform where kids can learn from the world’s best storyteachers.” That experience likely helped Steven become a Save the Children board member.

As Steven meets with clients in his new role, he has a big plus — brand familiarity. That said, CEO Wade Davis has seemingly put a focus on ViX, the company’s streaming platform rooted in Latin America that has grown significantly since its U.S. market entry and acquisition by TelevisaUnivision. Steven doesn’t necessarily believe ViX is the primary platform, or marketing priority, for the company. “We are in the platform era,” he says. “Amazon is a commerce platform. Meta is a communications platform. TelevisaUnivision is a *culture* platform. When you view it from that lens, my responsibility is to represent the voice of clients internally and obviously help clients externally engage with the community.”

Indeed, Steven says that this very much includes getting the client to engage with the audience in an *authentic* way.



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VIX

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That “authentic” engagement could involve ViX. Or, it could see the client take a streaming or digital route, or perhaps with social, or creators, or in the linear media space TelevisaUnivision is rooted in. “It doesn’t really matter, in a weird way, because those are all means to an end,” Steven says. “The end is how you truly engage with the audience. And, every brand is going to be different, whether it is Procter & Gamble, or Colgate or JP Morgan Chase. Everyone has a different business challenge and they are at different stages of their journey.”

Thus, ViX is part of a portfolio approach to ensuring audience delivery and maximized ROI for its clients. Don’t think for a minute that the Univision and UniMás networks are diminished media assets – even as NewFront and Upfront messaging of late has been largely focused on ViX. Steven comments, “I think it’s a mistake to say that. A lot of people get caught up in channels. ViX is our newest brand in the portfolio. People want that. There’s a demand for streaming.”

Client interest in streaming platforms is also driving the growth, Steven acknowledges. But when it comes to a big tentpole event such as the Copa América soccer tournament, an omnichannel approach will be pitched, given associated content found on broadcast television brands Univision and UniMás, cable television network Galavisión, audio content creation and distribution brand Uforia and ViX.

Then, there are clients like P&G, which have different priorities for different product categories. With home and fabric care priorities differing from those in its beauty product line, where to focus the marketing messages also comes down to platform.

“Each are going to be at a different level of investment and brand development,” Steven says. “Every one has a different psychics problem, and we have the portfolio. The way I look at it, we are the LOS – the Latino Operating System – for this country.”

AM, FM ... WHERE ARE YOU?

As seen at the 2024 NAB Show in Las Vegas in mid-April, the radio industry is doing more to make the in-dash audio entertainment system in vehicles today more like a tablet than ever more. The 2024 Subaru Crosstrek’s dashboard screen is twice the size of an iPhone and can access Apple Car Play wirelessly.

Given these advancements, how can Radio – in particular Spanish-language radio – keep its presence front and center for consumers on the road?

“This is actually one of the things I’m super excited about,” Steven replies. “Uforia is one of those brands that, when people realize there is iHeartMedia, Uforia and everyone else, the importance of Latin music and has transcended culture makes our audio business powerful. And, our brands are going through the roof. Marketers understand the power of audio, whether it is a podcast or a radio brand. There are so many cool things that are happening, and we actually see the local trends in the local community through digital data coming through the Uforia app.”

Furthermore, Uforia air talent are viewed by Steven as creators, making talent that through their celebrity also makes them an influencer.

Asked what the top desire of the TelevisaUnivision client is today, Steven replies, “I don’t like to think in generalities and I’m not sure there is a No. 1 takeaway. When you think about what the competitive advantage really is today, very few companies have moats. We have that. When you think of every single media company, they are pretty much interchangeable when it comes to audience, except us. We have something that no one else has – cultural authenticity. It is by Latinos, for Latinos, and we do it everyday.”



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'Authentically Latino' ... With New Fuel

Estrella Media's Next Chapter Arrives With Intellectual Proper

On the morning of April 18, as many media industry leaders were in recovery mode from the 2024 NAB Show, confirmation of an intriguing asset sale agreement had arrived via a report in the Radio + Television Business Report.

Estrella Media, the company that rose from the ashes of the former Liberman Broadcasting under CEO **Peter Markham**, had just completed the sale of its network, content, digital, and commercial operations.

The buyer? A publicly traded company known as "MediaCo Holding Inc." Its Chair is Deb McDermott, known for her role overseeing Standard Media's TV stations. An option to acquire Estrella Media's radio and television properties at a later date is in her possession.

Meanwhile, Markham has exited the company. Serving as interim CEO is **Jacqueline Hernández**, most recently the CEO and Founder of New Majority Ready, a multicultural marketing and content strategy firm. For Hispanic market professionals, she's widely remembered for her role as Chief Marketing Officer of NBCUniversal Hispanic Enterprises.

What do all of these changes mean for advertisers and marketers? With Estrella Media participating in the 2024 IAB NewFronts on May 1 to discuss the digital consumer and how Estrella's calling card has been being "authentically Latino," Chief Revenue and Local Media Officer **Steve Mandala** is excited about what lies ahead for the company.



"This is, indeed, big news," he says, noting that the Estrella Media brands will be joining New York's "HOT 97," an iconic hip-hop brand, and top-rated Adult R&B radio station WBLS. "The stated intention is to build the biggest and best media company serving U.S. multicultural viewers, users and listeners."

Mandala calls this "a validation of Estrella Media's multi-platform approach to speaking to U.S. Hispanics, and doing so with a special focus on Mexican Americans. "It's also great recognition by MediaCo of the vital importance of the multicultural consumer to marketers and our desire to help marketers speak to consumers in culturally relevant ways."

With three years as Estrella Media now entering a transition phase, what does Mandala believe are the biggest differences in the market and the way Estrella delivers results for advertisers?

“There are two dynamics that I think are most profoundly changing our market,” he says. “First, there is a greater acknowledgment than ever by marketers and their agencies of the critical importance of speaking to the Hispanic consumer, both in-language and in-culture. Marketers are more readily recognizing that share and volume growth for their businesses are most easily created through speaking to under-served consumers, and Hispanic consumers are a top opportunity for their brands’ growth.”

Secondly, he continues, “There is acceptance that media consumption habits continue to evolve in really predictable ways. We see today that Hispanic viewers, users and listeners prioritize great content that resonates with and reflects their lives, but they also want the choice of when and where to consume that content. Increasingly, that is in an always-on digital world, which has made us more focused than ever on growing our leading digital platforms.”

‘FAST’ LOVE

Estrella Media was a pioneer in the area of FAST channels, and making content omnichannel has been a hallmark of the company since 201. How has this helped with the overall advertising picture and impacted content production?

“We view ourselves as a content company that distributes its content everywhere our viewers, users and listeners want to enjoy it,” Mandala says. “It’s incredibly anachronistic to talk about media as methods of distribution, i.e., linear, TV, digital, etc. For Estrella Media, we develop and produce video and audio content that is in-language and in-culture to a very specific audience. The method of how we reach the consumer is nowhere near as important as the content we offer to that consumer.”

For many years, Estrella Media relied exclusively on in-house production for the network. Today, it continues to produce roughly 2,500 hours of original content per year. However, acquisitions have been seen of late, including prime-time entertainment phenomenon “El Hormiguero,” from Spain’s Antena 3.

Accessing the programming doesn’t require tuning to a local broadcast station. Estrella Media was a pioneer with its FAST channels in the U.S. Hispanic space, and Mandala says viewers have responded – year-to-year “uniques” have grown 28% across the Connected TV business. “Thanks to our digital leader, **Rene Santaella**, we have some exciting announcements to make during our NewFronts presentation regarding additional content partnerships that will enable more FAST channels.”

AUDIO ENGAGEMENT

The Hispanic audio story is one that is clouded by linear advertising tales of woe. What can Mandala share with respect to the performance of Estrella Media’s radio stations?

Let’s start with the big picture,” Mandala says. “Radio is alive and well, and more important than ever in a successful media mix. We are enthusiastically committed to the audio content business – distributed terrestrially and digitally. Somehow those of us in the media business seem to revel in tales of woe that make our industry feel smaller. I’ve never understood this. I see radio as a media that deserves better than what it gets.”

For Estrella, creating “fandom” by understanding what listeners want has helped EVP/Radio Programming Eddie Leon in creating strong properties in Los Angeles, Dallas and Houston. “Personally, I love the way terrestrial radio feels like the most local media we offer to our marketer partners,” Mandala concludes.



**Authentically Latino,
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When it comes to Hispanic market growth in the audio media arena, there's perhaps no company that has seen such a rapid ascension while starting from scratch than Costa Media, parent of Nueva Network and radio stations with the Boston and Washington, D.C., DMAs. Also under the Costa Media umbrella is Fútbol de Primera Network, the audio home for World Cup soccer matches founded by Andrés Cantor.

Directly steering Costa Media and Nueva Network to new heights is Managing Partner **José Villafañe**, who cut his teeth at Entravision from 2010-2017 and as a Univision Radio National Sales Manager and Local Sales Manager in Atlanta during the mid-2000s. Following a dinner celebration in Miami attended by **Emilio Estefan**, the Latin recording industry icon, *Hispanic Market Overview* caught up with Villafañe to take the pulse of Costa Media in an environment where total market peers continue to face "macroeconomic headwinds" and potential bankruptcy filings as Audacy Inc. emerges from its own debtor-in-possession retooling.

HMO: In a world where the focus seems to be on streaming audio and video, you created a broadcast company focused on radio, targeting markets such as Boston and Washington, D.C. What are the early results of your efforts?

JOSE: We went into these markets strategically because there was no major dedicated Hispanic media company servicing these markets. There is iHeartMedia in Boston and Audacy in Washington, but we don't consider them Hispanic media competitors. We believe that having cultural know-how provides us an advantage over these other companies. Second, we choose Radio as our "main dish" because it works. It's a daily live connection point to the Latino consumer, and clients get instant results through our loyal audience. Our growth year to year has been over 25%, and we kept most of the local programming intact to better serve the community while improving overall operations. We know streaming and digital are important to our overall growth, but we wanted to make sure our broadcast offering was well-positioned before investing in other offerings such as streaming, podcast and social media.

Editor's note: Nueva Network on April 19 announced the launch of Nueva Plus, created through a partnership between Nueva Network and multicultural content distributor Zeno Media, known for its proprietary streaming and digital services.



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HMO: With radio stations competing against these big publicly traded companies, how has your sales team been able to grow as the audience learns about your products and consumes your stations more?

JOSE: I think it is an advantage to be small and nimble. While the big traded companies are working for the investors and sacrificing growth by trying to meet Wall Street, we have better results by sticking to our strategy and making tweaks along the way to secure short and long-term growth. I believe a company's soul is its employees. We have a small workforce, but everyone has a buy-in and wants us to succeed. It's not perfect, but I like the start-up mentality in which everyone matters and we are all moving in the same direction for the success of the company we are building. That is a result of daily communication to the team on what we are trying to accomplish and how they fit into the overall 10-year plan.

HMO: How do you define Nueva Network and what it is designed to bring marketers and consumers in 2024?

JOSE: Not to sound funny, but we are all experienced sales and marketing executives who were done with Corporate America. We are pirates in this industry; we work hard and play hard. When I grew up in this business in 1997, it was a fun time for media. There were Upfronts, and dinners and client lunches, all while putting in long hours and getting rewarded with competitive compensation. Twenty-seven years later that has all changed. This means our job has become more demanding and, sometimes, more complex. By super-serving our clients, we can best meet their expectations.

HMO: Do you believe Hispanics remain underserved when it comes to their media choices, in particular on the audio side?

JOSE: Absolutely yes. While we continue to increase in population and Spanish remains a strong language preference we are definitely underserved. But, serving Latinos doesn't need to be in-language. Look at the success of movies such "A Million Miles Away" and "Encanto."

In terms of audio, I think radio continues to be relevant because it provides trusted news and information sources. The big opportunity is in podcasting. I'm still waiting for the big Spanish-language podcast wave to arrive so I can say, "I told you so!"

There are good Spanish-language media companies out there. Yet, there is no one dominant player in the podcast space.

HMO: What music are you enjoying right now, and does radio do a good enough job of delivering that content?

JOSE: I am a music junkie. I like 1990s-era salsa, Bruce Springsteen, Miley Cyrus, Beyonce's county album, Marc Anthony, Bad Bunny, Green Day, Annie Lennox, B.B. King ... the list can go on and on. Yes, radio delivery of new music and content can be done. Air personalities are in tune with what's happening and what's coming.



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THE 2024 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL RACE IS LOCKED IN FOR REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS. NOW, DOWN-BALLOT AND ISSUES-ORIENTED OUTREACH IS PRIMED TO LAUNCH. ARE HISPANIC MEDIA CONSUMERS IN THE POLITICAL ADVERTISING MIX?



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It's no secret that the current political environment in the U.S. is highly divisive. Tune to FOX News, MSNBC, Newsmax or CNN, and there's bound to be at least one roundtable of talking heads pontificating and bashing their ideological opposites.

For political candidates seeking to win on the November 2024 ballot, and for those pushing a particular amendment, referendum vote or Proposition, media advertising matters more than ever.

Are Hispanics being included in those messages? **Michele Córdoba** and **Ana Fernandez-Rockwell**, Founding Directors of **Culture IQ Group**, are helping to bring greater insights and access to the U.S. Hispanic marketplace to the political landscape.

"We've been in this space for six cycles now — 12 years — and we take a unique approach to Hispanic political because we do insights-based strategic marketing and try to start with research as much as we can," says Córdoba. "We are tailoring our messages directly to the voters that we're trying to speak to, whether they prefer English or Spanish, and what media they consume and what their priorities are."

POSITIVES ... AND ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Culture IQ's analysis of Hispanic political advertising comes from a largely Democratic perspective, based on the clients it has worked with over the last 12 to 15 years. That said, it does have insights into Republican efforts to lure Hispanic voters. Overall, Córdoba and Fernandez-Rockwell can confirm an increase in spending over the last 12 to 15 years. This largely reflects the Congressional campaigns and select issue-advocacy work Culture IQ has conducted in the U.S. Hispanic market.

But, the big takeaway for Culture IQ is that a push to have advertising start earlier in the election cycle has transpired. According to Córdoba, activity would begin just three weeks before Election Day when Culture IQ first opened its business. "We now have comprehensive four-month campaigns and primary campaigns dedicated to the Latino voter," Córdoba says. "That's an improvement."

Fernandez-Rockwell adds, "When we first started it as almost as if Hispanic work was to check a box. Now they are putting a lot more thought into it. Greater spending is the obvious change but doing more research and understanding they need to speak to Latinos earlier in the cycle has been a noticeable and welcome change."

Meanwhile, Córdoba wishes to erase the notion that U.S. Hispanics are "low propensity" voters by changing the narrative, as she considers them to be "low information" voters.

"They have told us time and again, especially with down-ballot races, that if they don't know the candidates and they don't understand what is at stake, they will not vote," Córdoba admits. "That impacts down-ballot races, especially in presidential years. We need to get them to commit to voting down-ballot, and research-based creative is important there. The goal is to get people to feel comfortable voting."

Fernandez-Rockwell comments, "Even though the Latino voter may not be the majority they may play a big part in that margin of victory they may need. They are starting to realize that this makes a difference."

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

With the 2024 U.S. presidential election and down-ballot races heating up, where are the political dollars in the U.S. Hispanic market and which media are seeing the most activity?

Córdoba points to Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Georgia, while Congressional races in California and Florida attracted spending. In contrast, the California U.S. Senate primary saw very little money spent. Why? "They were looking for Republican voters."

Should one assume, however, that all Latinos in the Golden State are Democrats? When one travels through communities such as Lemoore, Merced, Planada and Los Banos, shouldn't a GOP candidate consider the potential Latino voter that may not be getting all of the literature they need to make an informed vote? "It's a very good question," Córdoba notes.

While Culture IQ doesn't work with Republican Party candidates, a group that chooses to do so may have a strong opportunity to build the GOP's Golden State Latino voter rolls.

"I don't think anyone assumes that any Latino in California is an automatic Democrat, especially in the Central Valley" Córdoba says.

In fact, a 2022 Congressional race in California's 13th District that saw Republican John Duarte win against Democrat Adam Gray yielded some intriguing insights following Election Day. "Duarte won that race by 545 votes," Córdoba says; her team worked on the Gray campaign. "He spent twice as much as we did in Spanish-language media. He had fabulous creative. He was able to win that race because he had addressed the Latino market."

A rematch between Duarte and Gray is set for November. Going beyond stereotypical divides could make or break each candidate's campaign. For Córdoba, having a message that resonates is core to a successful political advertising effort. "No party can take the Latino vote for granted," she says. "You have to have a message."

Culture IQ spent all of 2021 researching Latino views on abortion and reproductive justice and how to talk to Latinos about it. "The assumption was that Latinos were not going to vote for pro-choice candidates because they are anti-abortion. What we heard time and again was that while one may not have personally wanted an abortion or have their daughter have one, there was much resistance to the idea of the government telling their neighbors what to do."

Fernandez-Rockwell believes Democrats can learn from Republicans with respect to grass-roots efforts that have been done in the last few years. This includes the GOP getting Puerto Ricans leaving the island after Hurricane Maria registered to vote in their new mainland electoral district.

And, while the Republican party messaging may still be seen as contrary to what many may believe is the norm among U.S. Hispanics, Córdoba can say that the days of having the only political ad on Spanish-language radio are long gone.

According to eMarketer, political ad dollars going to the U.S. Hispanic market in 2024 are expected to be four-times as large as they were in 2016. However, 60% of those dollars are expected to go to digital platforms.

Does this mean that there is more of a challenge for Spanish-language radio and TV to get the political ad dollars they've been clamoring for? "I think it is a challenge but I don't think it is insurmountable," Córdoba says. "Again, it all comes back to what Ana was saying, that 'the spend is the spend,' right? Digital is a great place to reach U.S. born Latinos of immigrant parents."

In contrast, she adds, "You still need Spanish-language radio and television to reach people who aren't using social media or digital to the same extent. The challenge is not having the money to do all of it, and not leaving people behind."

GET OUT AND VOTE ... y más

A piece of the electorate just turned 18. There are newly naturalized Hispanic voters. While both groups are new to the voting process, an education process about the candidates and why it is important to vote remains critical to Hispanic voter outreach.

This can help to combat misinformation that may filter through social media.

"There's still clarity that needs to happen, so we have to do persuasion and motivation by telling them to get out the vote and *why*," Córdoba says. "They need to understand that this truly makes a difference and impacts their lives." Fernandez-Rockwell adds, "That need is still there. We hear it in our focus groups."

Looking at the campaigns Culture IQ has been involved with, does one stick out as being a particular success story for Córdoba and Fernandez-Rockwell? Córdoba notes that 7 of the 8 Congressional races it was worked on were successful; education on reproductive justice issues proved to be the pivot, demonstrating that the abortion issue as Hispanic voters see it directly contributed to reshaping Congress.

Says Córdoba, "We are responding to a need, and that helped us win."

Locality and Canela Media Join Forces To Amplify Hispanic Political Engagement

Local video solutions provider **Locality** has forged a partnership with Hispanic digital media company **Canela Media** that will see Locality act as Canela's exclusive political ad sales arm and oversee political campaign engagement strategies targeted toward Hispanic audiences this election year.

The collaboration will facilitate reach among the U.S. Hispanic audience through Canela Media's streaming inventory. Locality will be called on to ignite its digital inventory for political campaigns. "This collaboration acknowledges the growing and important Hispanic population of eligible voters in the upcoming November 2024 election," the companies say.

According to Pew Research, more than 36.2 million Hispanic Americans will be eligible to vote, constituting 14.7% of all eligible voters, an increase from 13.6% in 2020.

"We're excited to join forces with Canela Media to help transform how political advertisers are reaching underrepresented communities," said Stacey Perry, Vice President of Political Streaming at Locality. "This partnership comes at a time when it's more important than ever to reach Hispanic voters across all communities. By combining our political media expertise with Canela Media, we're coming together to ensure local political advertisers can connect with Hispanic communities across all media avenues and keep them educated during this election cycle."

Andrés Rincón, Senior Vice President of Sales at Canela Media, commented, "Canela Media's expansive reach and scale uniquely position us to connect with over 50 million U.S. Hispanics through our comprehensive OTT/Connected TV and online offerings."

Canela Media has a proprietary data solution offering, Canela Connect, which is centered on an OTT first approach that helps identify U.S. Hispanic audiences in both English and Spanish language "over-the-top" platforms.

"NO PARTY CAN TAKE THE LATINO VOTE FOR GRANTED. YOU HAVE TO HAVE A MESSAGE." — MICHELE CORDOBA

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Adam R Jacobson has served as the publisher and content director for the *Hispanic Market Overview* series of reports since its debut in 2010. In addition to this annual report, the HMO brand extends to the *Hispanic TV Programming Report*, the *Hispanic Market Thought Leaders* report and *Hispanic Content, Data and Social Media* reports produced exclusively for HispanicAd.com. He began his career in the U.S. Hispanic market as an editorial assistant at HISPANIC magazine in fall 1993, and assisted in the 1994 launch of *Latina Style Magazine*. From 2006-2009, he served as a senior reporter and editor at *Hispanic Market Weekly*. His work has appeared in *Latin Trade*, the *Miami Herald* and *VISTA* magazine.

Adam has also served as a multicultural analyst for Mintel, and in various advisory and outreach roles for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's South Florida Chapter.

Outside of the U.S. Hispanic market, Adam serves as the Editor-in-Chief for the *Radio + Television Business Report*. In this role, he hosts the *InFOCUS Podcast*, focused on the radio and television business.