

Three-step approach will get you to the Latino market

By **Jim Kendall**

Daily Herald Small business

Posted Monday, August 20, 2007

Three-step approach will get you to the Latino market

The 1.8 million Latinos in the Chicago market – a majority of whom live in the suburbs – may not be high on your radar screen. On the other hand, your business probably doesn't show on their radars either.

Maybe both situations should change.

As last week's column explained, the first step to the economically growing Latino market – "Latino" is a more inclusive term than "Hispanic" – is to commit to explore the opportunities. When that's done, it's time to explore tactics.

Tactics, Jerry Campagna says, involve a simple "Latino three-step approach" to the market: People, promotion and pachanga – the festival-based marketing activities that put your business squarely in front of potential Latino customers.

Pachanga is the most fun, but it's definitely the third of the three steps.

"You have to be at the festivals," says Campagna, presidente of MST Latino, Inc., Bartlett, and former publisher of *Reflejos*, a bi-lingual weekly newspaper owned by Paddock Publications, Inc., which also publishes the *Daily Herald*.

"The cultural perspective still lives (in the Latino marketplace), even among the second generation," Campagna continues. "They will want a face-to-face experience" with your business.

That's simple event marketing, but with a Latino flavor. There's work to be done before you sign up for the local festivals, however. First, Campagna says, you must "hire culturally sensitive staff."

If your business is banking, for example, you need Latinos on the teller line and in the loan department – people who can explain the details of a step-rate CD or a mortgage loan to customers who often are more comfortable speaking Spanish.

"You want people who understand the Latino culture," Campagna says. "Maybe someone who has spent time in Los Angeles. (Definitely) individuals who want to be personally involved in marketing your products and services."

If finding people is a problem, Campagna suggests connecting with the local community college. "Seek a direct interface with Latino student groups." In addition, he says, there are employment agencies that specialize in the Latino community and Latino networking groups.

Once you have the people – and once they've become familiar with your business and its products – think about promotion, most likely advertising. Don't think a simple translation of your ads will work, however.

You need "market specific messages," Campagna says – in other words, ads and other promotional materials that speak directly to Latino consumers, in Spanish. Your brochures, contracts and product information sheets also should be in Spanish, and knowledgeable Spanish-speaking employees – the ones with that Latino cultural background – need to be on hand to answer questions and guide consumers to (hopefully) a purchase.

Then you're ready for the third step, the festival marketplace. That's where your business makes the face-to-face contact Campagna describes. Being there really isn't that tough – and the payoff can be big if, Campagna says, you "invest the time, money and resources."

E-mail questions, comments to Jim Kendall, JKendall@121MarketingResources.com.

For more info regarding MST Latino:
jcampagna@mstlatino.com
Jerry Campagna
224.217.8741



Trumpeters, both mariachi & traditional, practice a three step at Arlington Park's 6th Annual Fiesta In The Park.