

# Tapping into Latino market is a whole other tune

By Jim Kendall

Daily Herald *Small business*

Posted Monday, August 13, 2007

*Tapping the Latino market requires new 'sheet music'*

There's a huge local Latino market out there – 1.8 million people in the six-county metro market, more than half of whom live in the suburbs. Most of us have no idea how to reach these potential buyers of the goods and services we sell.

“The assumption is that (a business') general marketing strategy will work – that all you have to do is translate your ads,” says Jerry Campagna. But ads, he says, aren't even where you start.

Campagna is worth listening to. For one thing, experience indicates that Latinos can be extremely loyal customers — once you earn their trust.

For another, demographic trends indicate that Latinos will account for virtually all of the net population growth in the market over the next decade. We'll all have more potential customers; more of them will be Latino.

Finally, Campagna knows the Latino marketplace inside and out. Until he retired in June, Campagna was publisher of *Reflejos*, a bi-lingual newspaper that in Campagna's tenure went from a 5,000 circulation monthly to a 100,000 circulation weekly. Campagna sold *Reflejos* to Paddock Publications, which publishes the *Daily Herald*, in 2000.

Today, Campagna is presidente of MST Latino, a Bartlett consulting firm that specializes in the Latino market. (Campagna says the term “Latino” is more inclusive than the more common “Hispanic,” which he says “is a word invented by the U.S. Census Bureau to describe Spanish-speaking people.” Not every Latino speaks Spanish, he notes.)

Understanding what it takes to create a presence in the Latino community — so you then can determine whether the potential rewards are worth the effort — starts at the top.

“If you own the corner restaurant and simply want to attract more of your Latino neighbors for lunch, the process is fairly simple,” Campagna says. “The restaurant owner has his business, and his plan, in his head. A couple of hours of one-on-one coaching” may be enough.

But other businesses — from banks to auto dealers to any company seeking to sell to Latinos — likely will need to “reorchestrate the sheet music.” Because the process almost inevitably requires some cultural change for a business, Campagna insists that writing new sheet music must involve the people at the top.

In practice, exploring opportunities in the Latino marketplace is little different than exploring other growth opportunities. Whether you're considering a new location, an acquisition or targeting a new demographic, mission, strategy and tactics – the MST in MST Latino – are key.

“There's no magic wand,” Campagna says. “The strategic plan, the sheet music, comes first.”

Implementation is where things will be different – and challenging. Think marketing meringue, what Campagna describes as a “Latino three-step of effective niche marketing” that involves people, promotion and pachanga – which loosely translates as party time.

That's next week's column.

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

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



*Jerry Campagna, second from left, with musicians at Arlington Park's 6th Annual Fiesta In The Park.*