

A Balancing Act in the Windy City

The almost even split between Latinos who live in the city of Chicago and those who live in the suburbs of the city presents area media executives with a balancing act, which centers on how to remain relevant and interesting to both groups. Jerry Campagna, former Publisher of *Reflejos* and current founder/principal of the marketing firm MST Latino notes, “The Chicago DMA, whose Hispanic purchasing power lies at \$35 billion, has dramatically shifted in the last 10 years from a city-centric market into two distinct lifestyle markets—with the majority of Latinos now living in the suburbs vs. the city of Chicago.” He adds that, as of 2006, approximately 55% of Chicago’s Latinos live in the suburbs.

The result is that media executives must face the challenge of remaining relevant to two distinct Latino audiences: the urban and the suburban. Also, because the suburban Latino demographic is usually more acculturated, the language preference must also be considered. Print Media, radio and event marketing are effective ways to reach the Hispanic consumer.

Radio and Events

According to Campagna, “Radio is effective—for certain segments such as entertainment, impulse retail purchases and branding. I strongly believe many marketers are also underutilizing the effectiveness of live radio remotes (not “call-ins”), by not more actively participating with their own “street teams” during the broadcasts. Event marketing, whether the marketer creates their own venue or participates in a regional fiesta, are also excellent opportunities to directly connect and build trust with the Latino community.”

“When I do event marketing, it often includes a mass market element, such as FSIs or ROP to publicize it,” says Dave Gaston, a Chicago-based event marketing specialist, and principal at Gaston Media.

One saying in event marketing is

that ‘Mass media is bought at a mass public scale, but consumed at a small 1:1 scale.’ We know we’re sending these to millions of people, many of whom might not be interested. But it reaches out very effectively to those who are.”

The Printed Page

Hoy distributes 62,000 copies Monday-Thursday in racks and newsstands, and 100,000 copies on Friday. The paper is distributed in 133 zip codes. *Hoy* also has a weekend product, *Hoy Fin de Semana*, a free home-delivered entertainment and lifestyle saturation product with a circulation of 280,000 copies per week. The weekend product is distributed in 155 zip codes in the Chicago area. In terms of content, the paper has a strong local focus—approximately 40%—while concentrating more heavily on national news, which accounts for the other 60%. Its advertising ratio is flipped, with about 63% local businesses and 37% national. The paper’s main ad-categories are: Automotive, Financial/Mortgage, Legal Services, Recruitment and Healthcare. Apart from the paper itself, *Hoy* publishes *Padres de Hoy*, a monthly parenting magazine (160,000 circulation) that opens new opportunities to our existing and potential advertisers. *Padres de Hoy* is the only local Spanish-language parenting publication in Chicago.

The paper sources content various newswires: “We use AFP, EFE and Notimex. We also use *Chicago Tribune* stories and photos that are relevant to our readers. Wire stories are on national issues as well as reports from Mexico and Latin America,” says Alejandro Solorio, marketing manager at *Hoy*. In terms of its website, Solorio comments: “It is very important for us that our readers can reach us by different means. That is why our website has been complementing the paper as an additional outlet for our content. We are constantly working to improve and add new features to our website as blogs and

video to bring more readers to it. In addition, our readers can also reach *Hoy* on their cell phones on our WAP page hoyinternet.com. All local content is posted in our website. Also we post stories from wire feeds,” says Solorio.

La Raza is a Spanish-language paper with a circulation of 198,199. Its weekend product distributes 204,278 every Sunday, many of them home delivered. *La Raza*’s coverage is heavily weighted toward national news stories, which comprise 90% of its content, according to Brian Baase, National Sales Manager at *La Raza*. Like *Hoy*, the majority of *La Raza*’s advertising—approximately 70%—is national. Its main advertising categories are: Entertainment, Automotive, Sports, Health, Finance, Travel, Packaged Goods and Liquor. *La Raza* offers its advertisers post-its, shadow advertising and newsstand box advertising, in addition to standard ROP and FSI advertising.

Reflejos is a bilingual publication that distributes 105,000 copies weekly. Seizing upon the opportunity to target the large suburban Latino population, the paper bills itself as “The Voice for Suburban Latinos,” and distributes in all the suburban counties that are outside the city of Chicago: Will, Kendall, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Du Page and Cook. *Reflejos* is bulk-delivered to newsstands and businesses/establishments that have requested the product for their customers. *Reflejos* is also delivered to all the school districts that they serve. “Approximately 12,000 copies are used in classrooms, as our bilingual format allows teachers to use us as a language acquisition tool – grade school through college, in ESL classes as well as Spanish language classes,” says Siete. “*Reflejos* is in its 18th year of serving this community and our content is relevant to the lives of our readers—more feature-focus than traditional newspaper content. We look to educate, motivate and inspire through the written word.”

Reflejos’ advertising is about 70%

local – 30% national in ROP – FSI’s are 30% local and 70% national. “Over 50% of our readers look for and look at inserts in *Reflejos*, which makes us a strong avenue for reaching this suburban consumer,” says Sales and Operations Manager Linda Siete. The paper’s content is 80% local to 20% national. “As a weekly, timely news is not what our readers look for,” says Siete. “They look to *Reflejos* for things happening in their communities, things back home and sports – mostly educational information on health and their children – ways to make better lives for themselves.” The paper also has a partnership with the *Wall Street Journal* which runs *WSJ En Español* through *Reflejos* in a bilingual format.

Distribution Challenges

Considering the aforementioned geographic split that places over half of the city’s Latinos in the suburbs, it is not surprising that distribution presents some challenges to publishers. MST’s Jerry Campagna asserts that the city-dwelling Latinos make for a much easier target: “Because Chicago is so densely populated and offers more of a pedestrian mobility environment, boxes are a cost effective and viable option for newspaper distribution. Home-delivery is also effective in Chicago because a publication can specifically target neighborhoods that have Latino residency in the 60%-80% range.”

By contrast, neither newsstand distribution nor home-delivery is as useful in suburban communities, where the population spends more time in their cars than walking around. Latinos are also living in more integrated communities where the resident density, even in larger suburban Latino communities may only reach 30%-50% of a neighborhood, making home-delivery less effective. “The result is a more expensive distribution model in order to reach suburban Latinos; one that relies more heavily on distribution within Latino businesses, churches and community centers. Event marketing is also much more critical in suburban markets as a method to promote a regional presence,” says Campagna. ■

ROOM FOR GROWTH?

Automotive, financial, and the armed services are reliable advertisers in the U.S. Hispanic media marketplace, and Chicago is no exception. But which categories are not as strong as they could be, and therefore offer the most opportunity for growth?

Alejandro Solorio, HOY: We believe our paper maintains a balanced mix of categories and we are always working to grow all of them with innovative ideas, products (Padres de Hoy) and advertising opportunities that go beyond the paper with promotional, electronic, mobile and grass roots elements. Consumer packaged goods and pharmaceutical products are two categories that are challenging but also represent growth opportunities for us.

Brian Baase, LA RAZA: Mergers and acquisitions have had a negative impact on some revenue categories, i.e. telecom and financial. Other categories have trended flat as speculation of a softening economy. Utilizing print in non-traditional ways, bundling on-line as part of a print campaign and introducing grassroots/event marketing when it makes good sense to clients are three ways in which underperforming categories can be bolstered.

Carlos Olea, Un Buen Doctor: The category that we feel can be very strong is the Beauty and Weight Loss & Fitness. There is a great demand for services and information about those topics. We are embracing it as we speak.

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