



The Ethnic Market

Hispanic

Hispanics are "coming of age" in America much like the black population did after the civil rights struggles of the '60's. A host of public and private studies have signaled the arrival of the Hispanic consumers, 15 million strong. This new interest has been sparked by the tremendous growth in the Hispanic population (65% in the last decade), the doubling of Hispanic income in the last ten years, and the above average size and youthfulness of the family. While some advertisers and marketers are racing to direct their campaigns and products toward this growing segment, others are more cautious in their approach.

How does this affect the professional salon market? Many of these 15 million Hispanics go to Hispanic-owned salons for professional grooming services. These salons, like any others, need the services of the professional salon distributor. In heavily Hispanic areas the Hispanic-owned salon is already a prime customer for area distributors. Edmundo Romero of Armstrong & McCall in El Paso says "75 to 80% of the salons we call on are Hispanic-owned. You won't find much difference in our area in the way we service the Anglo or the Hispanic salon. The products that they sell at retail and use in the salons are very similar to those Anglo salons use."

Bill Matusoff of Princess Beauty Supply in San Antonio concurs: "In this part of the country salons that cater exclusively to Anglos don't exist—it's all mixed. We're 60% Spanish and 40% Anglo. We really don't see much difference between the two. In the Southwest there's a huge American/Mexican market that exists."

George San Jose and Jesse Wilson, Hispanic marketing consultants in Chicago at San Jose & Associates say the Hispanic salon is serviced in slightly different ways in Chicago and New York. Since the Hispanic population concentration is greater, the Hispanic salons tend to be very separate and differ-



ent from their Anglo salon counterparts. In the New England area there are usually several "contact men" in major cities who know the location of Hispanic salons deep in the neighborhoods. These men buy in bulk and sell to these salons.

In New York, the Hispanic salon owners usually come to the Hispanic wholesaler and purchase from him directly. Also, lots of Spanish businessmen work out of their homes, purchasing bulk lots of limited products and selling them cheaper than anyone else. San Jose says "Hispanic wholesalers generally never go to the salon—there's just not time or money in it for the type of operation they run."

Needs of Hispanic Salons

Romero in El Paso says, "We're finding out that the Hispanic salon market here wants to get more involved in the management side of salon ownership: the retail concept, accounting and education. We hold seminars whenever we can to bring Hispanic salon owners this information. We bring in people who are knowledgeable in the field and constantly try to give training and information."

"The Hispanic salon owner needs to be treated just like any other good businessman," according to Jesse Wilson. "Brand is important, but price consideration is never ignored. If he can get a deal on a particular product, he'll be pushing that product this month."

Product Usage

There is straight hair and there is curly hair in the Hispanic market, just as in any other. But Hispanic hair differs from Anglo hair in almost always being dark and coarse. Does Hispanic hair require different products? The responses are mixed. Romero says, "The perming and coloring products we sell cater to the Hispanics' special needs: perm solutions for resistant hair and hair color in dark shades close to Hispanic natural colors. As for cosmetics, I think there's sufficient selection for Hispanics with the colors that are currently offered; there's not much demand for different ones."

"There's no difference whatsoever in product preference," according to Matusoff. "Mexican hair is just like any other hair even though it's predominantly

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