

Hispanic Agencies Surge With Chicago Market

By Emmett Curme

CHICAGO—The Chicago Hispanic market is expected to continue its spectacular growth for the next decade—great news for the four Chicago Hispanic agencies that handle most of the key accounts.

According to the latest figures, the Chicago Hispanic market—which includes Northwest Indiana and Milwaukee—numbers 750,000 to 800,000, not including illegal aliens.

Thus, Chicago ranks about fourth in the country—along with San Antonio—behind Los Angeles, 3,400,000; New York, 2,500,000; and Miami, 900,000.

Chicago is the only major Hispanic market with a distribution by nationality that mirrors the total U.S. Hispanic population—60 percent Mexican, 27 percent Puerto Rican, 3 percent Cuban and 10 percent others.

The four largest Hispanic agencies headquartered here are Asencio & Associates, Jorge Caballero & Associates, OMAR, Inc. and San Jose & Associates. Each offers a full range of services including creative, media buying, marketing and research.

OMAR, the oldest, was founded in 1969 by Marcelino Miyares, also owner and founder of Chicago's WBBS-TV, which specializes in Spanish-language programming.

OMAR is run by Luis M. Salces, executive vp, who joined the agency in 1971. Salces said OMAR had total capitalized billings of \$1.6 million in 1984.

OMAR's blue-chip clients include Illinois

Bell, Jewel Food Stores, Peoples Gas, Jays Foods and WBBS-TV.

Salces stressed that quality is vital in the production of Spanish-language TV commercials. "Don't produce Spanish-language TV spots that you aren't proud of," he said. "If it's not as good as the English-language versions, don't run it." Salces added that the quality of Spanish-language television commercials have been improving.

The OMAR executive listed TV and radio as the most effective media in reaching the Chicago Hispanic market. About 75 percent of Hispanics are exposed to TV and radio at least once a week, watching an average of 2.3 hours of TV daily.



San Jose

Although San Jose & Associates is only four years old, it may rank as the largest Hispanic agency. George L. San Jose, founder and president, said the agency had total capitalized billings in 1984 of \$3.1 million, an impressive gain over 1983 billings of \$2.25 million. He forecasted that billings this year will climb to \$3.7 million.

"We shoot for national accounts," San Jose said. Among the larger clients are Anheuser-Busch, for which the agency handles advertising in this market for Budweiser, Michelob and Busch brands. It also has Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Chicago.

Community involvement programs are very important to the San Jose agency, and George San Jose estimated that the agency is involved in more than 200 promotions yearly for the various festivals, parades, banquets and other events in the Hispanic community. "We are able to reach the general mass of Hispanics through these community functions," San Jose said. "It is very important to advertisers to be represented at these events."

Jorge Caballero, owner and president of Jorge Caballero & Associates, charged that creativity is missing from much Hispanic advertising.

"The power is in the hands of the account people," he said. "The creative people are not given freedom to create and creativity is suffering. The advertisers seem to want us to follow the English version of their ads," Caballero said.

The Caballero agency, which was started in 1977, billed an estimated \$1 million last year, up from \$800,000 in 1983. Its largest clients are Commonwealth Edison Co., WNSN-TV and Group W Cable TV.

John J. Asencio, owner and president of Asencio & Associates, predicted that Chicago Hispanic agencies will continue to grow and will be competing successfully in the fu-



Caballero spoons ads for Hispanic market.

ture with larger Hispanic agencies from New York and Los Angeles.

"Chicago has been slow in developing as an agency town for Hispanic marketers," Asencio said. "New York has been way ahead but the last two years, some major gains have been made here. It would be very convenient for Midwest advertisers to have strong Hispanic agencies based in Chicago. We hope to change a lack of confidence that some companies have in our local agencies," Asencio said.

Following nine years at OMAR, Asencio

"New York has been way ahead but the last two years, some major gains have been made [in Chicago]."

opened his own agency in 1979. Although he declined to talk about billings, he claimed that his agency was either the largest or second largest in town.

Among Asencio's bigger clients are Walgreen Co.; Sears, Roebuck & Co.'s Chicago Group, which includes northwest Indiana, Milwaukee and Chicago; Florsheim Shoe Co.; Dominick's Finer Foods, and Walgreen's WAGS restaurant division. The Asencio shop is "very heavy on creative" according to its owner.

Asencio's work for Chicago's Sears.