

Get real

Be not deceived—or deceiving. Customers know self-serving PR messages.
Page 7

Weave it in

P&G exec spearheads initiative that makes multiculti marketing part of company culture.
Page 13



Association News

Winter Educators' Conference awards and JIM articles highlighted.
Page 30

Marketing News

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YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

Experts offer best practices in multicultural marketing

By DEBORAH L. VENCE
Staff Writer

As more companies set aside money for multicultural marketing campaigns, they also are in search of the best marketing vehicles with which to target these budding, diverse markets.

Considering the intense scrutiny by top management executives and the need to adjust to a changing economy, marketers are bending over backward to prove that the overall return on investment is appealing.

"It's important for (companies today) to know their brand and (be able to) communicate it to the marketplace," says Jennifer

Woods, executive vice president of San Jose Group, a consortium of marketing communications companies based in Chicago. "In many cases, it's not always necessary to reinvent the wheel, but to make just a slight strategic shift (in the mainstream message)

See MULTICULTI / Page 9

ROMI and EVENT MARKETING

Integrate sales and media processes to implement ROMI initiative ...

Avoid the six pitfalls of internal branding.

Special Sections begin on pages 20 and 24.

Get involved, convey relevant message

in order to be culturally relevant."

In the wake of the Census 2000 results, companies have placed a great deal of emphasis on the Hispanic marketplace. But companies are expected to focus more of their efforts on Asian-American and African-American consumers as well. Experts say marketers can do a few things to make their promotions more effective in the multicultural marketplace, no matter how divergent their efforts are. Regardless of the market being targeted, marketers need to stay educated about the consumer they are pursuing; convey a message that is relevant to each particular market; use the Internet as a vehicle to educate ethnic markets about brands and products; and use integrated marketing techniques to reinforce the message in various ways.

Stay educated

Keeping a finger on the pulse of ethnic communities is one of the most challenging, and important, tasks of a multicultural marketer today. Within fast-growing multicultural communities, consumers and their preferences are becoming more fragmented. Meanwhile, more data is readily available to marketers, but subject to misinterpretation and misuse. The answer, marketers say, is to become as involved in the community as possible, at as many levels as possible.

For the last 10 years or so, for example, telecommunications giant AT&T Corp., based in Bedminster, N.J., has stayed abreast of the African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic communities through its involvement with national organizations, including the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), a private, nonprofit Hispanic organization based in Washington; Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), also in Washington; Chicago-based Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, a multiracial, multi-issue, international membership organization founded by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), based in Baltimore; and Chicago-based U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute. AT&T's involvement with such national and political groups is an extension of its longstanding grassroots efforts within ethnic communities.

"What we're doing is providing (financial) support to (these organizations) ... showing them our commitment to diversity," says Roberto Cruz, media relations director for AT&T. "(But) it's not just about giving money. (It's about having) a firm commitment to this type of work ... of engaging (ourselves) in the communities to learn about what their real needs are, and be able to respectfully respond to proper messaging."

AT&T remains in contact with the organizations' leaders through various meetings, conferences and shows that the company and the groups both attend, and via e-mail.

"It makes really good business sense and shows good commitment to the community. They can share with you the various nuances of the marketplace," Cruz says.

"The messages they give to us are to ensure that we are targeting their (markets) with respect and sensitivity—to use minorities in our ads, for instance, but at the same time, also use minority ad agencies," such as Kang & Lee and Bravo Group, two agencies that AT&T works with, Cruz says. "(They say), 'If you want us to buy from you, then you should reciprocate and buy from minority suppliers.'"

A relevant message

"Like anything else, being an effective marketer is about the right message with the right audience," Woods says.

Using the Hispanic market as an example,

San Jose Group in 1998 and 1999 put together a direct mail campaign for the consumer services division of telecommunications giant Ameritech (before it was acquired by San Antonio-based SBC Communications Inc.). The direct mail package—designed to advertise Ameritech's Caller ID technology—included a bilingual brochure, outer envelope and cover letter, sent to Hispanic households in the Chicago metropolitan area. What San Jose Group already knew was that Hispanics, whose culture places a high premium on personal relationships, tend to view Caller ID technology and its prescreening capabilities as impolite. San Jose Group's marketing team, then, dubbed the Caller ID box "The Smiling Device," for the smiles it prompts when someone can see that a family member or friend is calling.

As a result of that campaign, 750 calls came in to Ameritech's Bilingual Call Center inquir-

ing about the Caller ID product, and 374 Caller ID units were sold within just three weeks of the start of the campaign, Woods says. (No other Caller ID campaigns aimed at the Hispanic market were running at the time, she notes.)

Hispanics, far from being a monolithic, Spanish-language consumer bloc, define themselves differently in part through language preference: English-dominant, Spanish-dominant or bilingual. And so AOL Interactive Marketing, a division of Dulles, Va.-based America Online Inc., uses a three-pronged approach to providing content to U.S. Hispanics through its AOL Latino



unit. Because the version of its site aimed at the Hispanic market can be easily switched from Spanish to English and back again, in whole or in part, it appeals equally to Spanish-dominant, English-dominant and bilingual consumers.

"It's critical that you ... hit different decision-makers in the Hispanic community in their preferential language," notes Peter Blacker, vice president of U.S. Hispanic and International for AOL Interactive Marketing. AOL works with clients to determine whether their target market is Spanish-preferred, English-preferred or bilingual. Once

See MULTICULTI / Page 10

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MULTICULTI / From page 1

Use Net to zero in on target audience

language preference is determined, AOL Latino creates a marketing campaign in that language. At that point, AOL Latino works with its account services team to monitor results and tweak the language preference, among other elements, based on performance.

For a client such as the U.S. Army, AOL Latino is running banner ads in Spanish because they have a better click-through rate, even though recruits have to speak English to actually join the Army.

Meanwhile, New York-based Kang & Lee Advertising Inc. knows that it's equally important to have a marketing message that is linguistically relevant to Asian-American consumers.

"We create advertising that speaks directly to (Asian-American) lifestyles. More importantly, there are many groups (from that segment) that prefer to see (advertising) in their native language," says Saul Gitlin, executive vice president of strategic marketing services and new business for Kang & Lee.

The customization goes beyond language: "We customize each (promotion) by using group-specific backgrounds, props, designs, colors, imagery (among other elements). On occasion, we may use more generic-looking Asian talent across creative executions targeting multiple groups. But just as often, we use talent that is specific to the group we are targeting," Gitlin explains.

As an example of a pan-Asian ad, Kang &

Lee created a TV ad campaign for a client (which Gitlin declined to identify) in which a vignette of Asians was depicted in the background preparing food, an activity central to the Asian family life, regardless of country of origin. In an ad campaign for another client, Kang & Lee had depicted two Asians competing against each other in a table tennis tournament, which happens to be one of the most popular sports in Asia. The language differed depending on the target group.

Web sites galore

Yet another valuable channel companies should use to target the multicultural market is the Internet, experts say.

A recent report by Reston, Va.-based Score Media Metrix titled, "Reach U.S. Hispanics through online marketing," revealed that Hispanics view 15% more Web pages and spend 9% more time online than the U.S. general market. Meanwhile, a December 2003 report from Nielsen/NetRatings Inc., based in Milpitas, Calif., showed that one-third of the members of each of the three major ethnic groups—Hispanic, African-American and Asian—living in the United States go online now regularly.

"Targeting the U.S. Hispanic market to increase market share is an area in which companies have a huge amount of potential. It's the fastest-growing group in the U.S.," says Mary Zerafa, director of New Media for La



Opinion Digital, an online publication of www.laopinion.com, a news and information Spanish-language Web site based in Los Angeles.

For example, La Opinión in early 2002 launched an integrated marketing campaign for Beech-Nut, a baby food manufacturer based in Canajoharie, N.Y. As part of the online component, La Opinión created a Spanish-language Web site, www.laopinion.com/bebes, which included a baby-of-the-month contest. The objective for Beech-Nut was to generate awareness among U.S. Hispanic families, and develop a family-oriented promotional campaign that was fun and educational and would engage the consumer.

The baby-of-the-month promotion, which ran from September 2001 to the following May, asked consumers to submit photos of their babies. Laopinion.com users filled out a Web entry form and uploaded their pictures for display on the site. On the voting site, all visitors to La Opinión's Web site voted for their favorite baby. Linked to that page was an "e-mail-to-a-friend" feature that encouraged parents to send e-mails to family and friends to vote for their baby.

More than 20 people sent in photos each month, and baby winners received six months of baby food and the famous Beech-Nut Teddy Bear.

Similarly, Terra Lycos Inc., a global Internet firm with international headquarters in Barcelona, Spain, helped Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble Co. design a separate Spanish-language Web site as a way to help gain a larger Hispanic following for its Cover Girl product line. Terra launched the Spanish-language Cover Girl mini site last Dec. 28, which is nearly identical to the English version of the site.

Nearly—but not exactly. "Products, tools and tips won't change from culture to culture," and that information is in Spanish, explains Craig Stanford, sales manager for the western division of Terra Lycos. "But the way that the users view the brand will change from culture to culture."

And so Terra's site features more Hispanic

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models than non-Hispanic models. Terra also created four specific promotions that are culturally relevant for Cover Girl. One example is the "Quinceañera" promotion. "Quinceañera" or "Sweet 15 Birthday" is a Hispanic tradition, a "coming of age" birthday when Hispanic girls can start dating, wearing make-up and going out with friends without a chaperone.

At the same time, the Cover Girl en Español site can be found as a link directly from the "Teen and Women's Channels" within Terra Lycos' Web site, Stanford says. (For more on P&G's program for marketing to U.S. Hispanics, see our interview with Graciela Eleta, vice president-general manager for Procter & Gamble Co.'s multicultural development organization in North America, in Spotlight on page 13.)

Back in October 2001, Terra did the same for New York-based Pfizer Inc., maker of Viagra, at a time when the company was targeting only the mainstream market. Terra teamed up with Pfizer to create Viagra en Español, a site that is more than 60 pages deep with content translated directly from the Viagra English-language site. Terra created links within the Spanish site that drives traffic back to the Viagra English site, and Pfizer's overall Hispanic health site (www.sanalarana.com, which means, "the healthy frog," in Spanish) provides educational content regarding health topics and diseases for the Hispanic community.

Hispanic health site (www.sanalarana.com, which means, "the healthy frog," in Spanish) provides educational content regarding health topics and diseases for the Hispanic community.

"We've had good success working to build out a subset of (our clients') Web sites for the Spanish-language audience," Stanford adds.

For each of these campaigns, Stanford says the companies did not conduct any custom research to track online ad spending to offline product sales. In the case of Cover Girl, it's still too early to measure the campaign's success. However, Procter & Gamble's primary objective was branding for Cover Girl and driving Hispanic traffic to the mini-site, and "so far, so good," he says.

"For Viagra, Pfizer will not provide any data to us, but by all accounts they said they were pleased with the results of the program, which was geared to providing more in-depth product education to the Hispanic segment," Stanford notes.

More is better

For multiculti campaigns, as with those aimed at the general marketplace, integrated marketing techniques that reinforce the message is most effective.

"There still are advertisers that use only one marketing medium, but ... more companies (realize) they should have a more integrated mix. Direct mail by itself without the support of other things might be less personable," depending on the culture, Woods says.

To reach the African-American marketplace, for example, AT&T Corp. typically runs ads in such magazines as *Ebony*, *Black Enterprise* and *American Legacy*, in addition to TV and newspaper ads, Cruz says.

Meanwhile, San Jose Group in the late '90s helped Ameritech launch a Hispanic marketing campaign to advertise its Voicemail98 message retrieval service.

"Initially, the goal was to enhance (Ameritech's) direct mail-only strategy with proper messaging. That (strategy) had yielded a positive outcome in terms of incremental sales and response," Woods explains. "But once we established a benchmark of success, (Ameritech's) consumer products team came back to us and said, 'Now that we've done this, what else can we do to make this better?' So, we layered the direct mail campaign with direct response TV, print and radio ads. And with those (additions), we saw even greater lifts." ■

For more information on the companies mentioned in this story, go to:

- ◆ www.att.com (AT&T)
- ◆ www.laopinion.com (La Opinión)
- ◆ www.thesanjosegroup.com (San Jose Group)
- ◆ www.terralycos.com (Terra Lycos Inc.)

Letters to the editor

POINT TAKEN—AND MADE

Pick me off the floor! Did I just read a b-to-b marketing guy beating the drum for brand trust as the leading barometer for market success? Mr. Lamons, you have hit a home run with your recent article in *Marketing News*.

Having worked on the agency side and as a marketing consultant prior to moving to corporate marketing management, I have come to the same point of view as your well-stated article. You did a great job in making the point—especially with the Tango example.

Brand preference will drive the cash register nearly every time, but it seems big advertisers are slow to come to this conclusion. *The Fall of Advertising & The Rise of PR*, by Al & Laura Ries, does a superb job of detailing advertising's ineffectiveness to protect a brand that has lost the preference race. Two ad gorillas, Chevrolet and Budweiser, continue to spend like there's no tomorrow. And how have sales fared? Bud wins ad awards but sales are off—down

from 50 million barrels in 1990 to 35 million barrels in 2000. Chevy has out-advertised Ford for five years only to see Ford pick up another 5% market share.

I look forward to your next article.

Daniel Carazo

Marketing manager
Cooper Wiring Devices
Long Island City, N.Y.

PROPER FOCAL POINT

Just wanted to let you know I was impressed with Bob Lamons' article in the Jan. 15 *Marketing News* ("The brand battlefield resides in customers' minds," page 8). Marketers too frequently focus on a product's tangible features and benefits and ignore the buyer's other (and normally

unarticulated) needs and wants. Well done.

Sean M. Gallagher

President
Gallagher Management Inc.
Hingham, Mass.

INTENT REIGNS SUPREME

I enjoyed David Singleton's article, "Basics of good research involve understanding six simple rules" in your Nov. 24 issue (page 22). I agree with what he says, but not necessarily the way he says it. If there is a "king" in the research process, it is the objective, not the design. First things first.

Stephen J. Hellebusch

President
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