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What's My Language?



Eight O'Clock Coffee recently embarked on what it calls its first Hispanic advertising initiative. It selected a Latina spokesperson, and placed advertising on a New York radio station listened to by Hispanic women that fit into the core target demographic of shoppers as determined by the brand and its agency of record.

But the Latina spokesperson is Evette Ríos, known for her appearances on culinary denizen Rachael Ray's syndicated talk show. The radio station selected to reach Latinas is WKTU-FM, an English-language pop music station.

Is this a Hispanic marketing initiative? Katherine O'Hara, co-founder of New Jersey-based agency "S3," says yes. It's her belief that one need not speak in Spanish to speak to Hispanics – especially in the case of Eight O'Clock Coffee, as second- and third-generation Hispanics were the focus of its effort.

George San José, COO of Chicago-based San José Group, thinks differently. San José believes a campaign targeting Hispanics needs to include Spanish-language messages.

San José outlined three tiers of Latino consumers, which he says have existed for many years:

1. **The Monolingual** – Hispanics who speak English all of the time but are connected to their culture by celebrating Hispanic-themed holidays and participating in Latino events.
2. **New Arrivals** – Hispanics who speaks Spanish all of the time and are still learning how to involve themselves in U.S. culture.
3. **The Middle Tier** – Hispanics that live in two worlds and can speak English or Spanish when they chooses to. But these are more likely to use Spanish-language media.

"When using English-language media to reach Hispanics, you could be reaching a third to as little as 15 percent of the population in some markets," San José says.

But he also points out that the number of Latinos in each of the three tiers continues to grow, while the percentage of Hispanics within each tier has remained the same. In other words, there are more English-preferred, Spanish-preferred and cross-cultural Hispanics than ever, with little demographic shifts being seen nationally.

Therefore, San José likens a campaign targeting a segment of Latinos that primarily consume English-language media as like living in a fish bowl. "There is a whole ocean out there," he says. "The opinions of those in other Hispanic segments would be a bit more valuable to me."

• *What's your take on marketing to Hispanics in English? Send **CMO Essentials** your thoughts, and we'll consider them for publication. Next up: An executive at a major Southern California Hispanic advertising agency weighs in on the subject.*

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