



**Sounding Off: Tony D' Andrea "7 Latino Micro Trends 2010-2015"**

Sep 30, 2011



Why not *macro* trends one may ask. Because these refer to large yet widely publicized demographic trends: 51 million U.S. Hispanics with \$1.3 trillion in purchasing power, indexing higher in the consumption of a variety of product categories, and responsible for most of the U.S. population growth in a decade. In contrast, there are molecular phenomena that emerge at a local or subcultural level. Not so easily identifiable, they often remain under the radar until it is too late. Some fizzle out while still at an embryonic stage, whereas others do go mainstream.

For marketers, "micro trends may anticipate large scale consumption patterns of tomorrow. To investigate these possibilities is not merely fun or cool, but provides powerful resources for strategic and tactical advantage", notes Jim Legg, EVP of Leadership and Innovation at The San Jose Group, multicultural marketing agency. Several micro trends arising from the diasporic world of U.S. Hispanics are summarized below. They provide food for thought on what will be happening among Latinos and society at large; interesting possibilities to be creatively explored - and even expanded - by marketers.



**Women Entrepreneurial Boom:** According to U.S. Census Bureau, 788,000 Hispanic women currently run their own business, a growth of 46% in five years (against a 20% national average). Latinas are thus one of the fastest growing business groups in America. Among reasons for becoming entrepreneurs, they want to explore professional and economic opportunities often

denied to women (of all ethnicities) in structured corporate environments. Their growth antecedes wider changes in Latino consumer behavior and lifestyle aspiration. Along with more demand for products and services that deliver convenience, time-saving and resourcefulness, brands that recognize the new Latina values of assertiveness and independence will be at an advantage.

**Bloqueras:** While market studies have shown Hispanics as highly engaged in social media, there is a growing number of professional blogs run by educated Hispanic women. *Mama Latina Tips*, *Latina on a Mission*, *Modern Mami*, and *Spanglish Baby* discuss current issues through a bicultural angle: lifestyle, children, fashion, career, and modern life, in English or Spanglish. Each of these blogs hosts about 20,000 visitors per month. If brands want to take part in this conversation, they must actively participate in the Latino blogosphere by means of interactive promotions, partnerships and sponsorship.

**Mixed Martial Arts:** Fox Sports and UFC have recently announced the broadcasting of mixed martial art (MMA) fights across 18 Latin American countries. Its growing popularity among Latinos should not be seen as a surprise, after all. AT&T tapped into this relationship in 2008, hiring Lopez family Olympic Tae-Kwon-Do champions to appear in TV commercials. Further back, MMA actually is a 1960s Brazilian invention, as the world-renown Gracie family promoted "anything goes" bear-hand contests to prove the superiority of Jiu-Jitsu, now an almost mandatory specialty among octagon gladiators. Leveraging MMA fighters to endorse products is one obvious way to promote brands, driving consumption directly among Hispanic males, or more widely positioning a brand along aggression, power and skillfulness attributes, as valued by a younger generation of modern Latinos across the Americas.



#### **Dance Music Renaissance:**

Evolving in ebbs and flows over the years, electronic dance music is enjoying a mid renaissance, largely driven by the Latino youth in the U.S. and abroad. Top international publication *DJ*

*Mag* is launching its Latin American magazine this year, celebrated with a VIP party at Buenos Aires' *Crobar* last month. *NPR's* weekly nationwide radio music show *Alt.Latino* showcases new artistic experiments, such as hip-hop samba from Brazil, electro Tango from Argentina, heavy-metal merenge from Mexico, etc. And erupting into the mainstream, DJ Kaskadee's popularity is being fueled by Latino-centric Miami and LA club scenes, which are catapulting him across global DJ rankings: top 200 in 2008, #51 in 2009, #35 in 2010, and potentially higher up in coming polls. As a stereotype buster, the fact that Kaskadee is non-Hispanic attests to the largely cosmopolitan nature of many Latino clubbers. In this context, brands seeking coolness and popularity can try to connect with influential subcultures at a grassroots level. In the media space, there are numerous opportunities for ultra-modern movie soundtracks, as well as for TV commercials playing Techno music (beyond traditional spots featuring Japanese cars). Other branding possibilities are considered next.

**Music on the Go:** If you want to understand new forms of mobile behavior in the general market, then Hispanics is a group to watch. They listen, download and transfer music on, to, and from mobile phones at levels high above the national average (160-plus index points, according to ComScore 2011 reports). Likewise, checking entertainment for making purchase decisions on the go is spearheaded by Hispanics - the most wireless ethnic group in America, according to government's CDC. As mobile culture creates havoc in people's (re)scheduling agendas updated according to last-minute texts on the go, shopping patterns likewise become disrupted, based on spontaneous, improvised and on-the-spot decisions. Brands capitalizing on the immediate power of digital technologies can enjoy an advantage in the marketplace. In such ephemeral environments, music can provide a lasting way to connect with people.

**Gothic in the Mainstream:** Have you noticed more horror movies lately? It is probably related to Latinos as a heavy segment of movie goers: 28% of all frequent goers (for all movie genres) in the U.S., according to Nielsen. In the wake of gothic subcultures among Hispanics, they enjoy horror movies, as indicated by Latinos comprising 42% of the opening audience for "The Unborn" nationwide, and 54% for "The Last Exorcism" in the LA market. In Chicago, horror movie TV host Svengooli has strengthened his position thanks to the Hispanic audience. Sociologically, horror movies play on anxieties of the population. In the case of Latinos, departing from a Catholic background is often met with fears of separation (and even deportation), cinematically represented as horrible dismemberment and religious hysteria. With U.S. Census reports confirming the continuous growth of the Latino population, Hollywood investors will be tempted to release more scary movies in years to come. In addition to conventional ways of positioning brands across entertainment and art, a more subtle approach involves a deeper psychoanalysis of collective moods, by which brands can proactively explore the emotional undertones of a period, thus building a strong connection with consumers.



#### **Multicultural Super-**

**Heroes:** According to a Marvel top executive, Obama's election was pivotal in the release of multiethnic Spider-Man. Though half-Black, half-Latino Miles Morales

currently is a small-scale alternative to mainstream Peter Parker, there has been some speculation whether a minority actor should be cast as Spider Man in future movies. As metropolitan America becomes more and more multiethnic according to the U.S. Census Bureau, it does make sense that *Matrix's* Morpheus and the rebels from Zion are mostly Black and Latino. Overall, as comics often reflect larger social realities, the new U.S. demographics will be matched by a roster of multi-ethnic super-heroes. Wouldn't Green Lantern's recent popularity come from his half-Mexican, half-Irish background? Brands that can anticipate a conversation of virtue and empowerment with the metropolitan youth will have much to gain in appreciation and admiration, and in recognition of this great nation's melting pot in action.

*Tony D'Andrea, PhD, Director of Planning and Research at The San Jose Group.*