

Engage:Hispanics

Enter: The Nueva Latina

by Jim Legg, Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:10 PM

When analyzing the Hispanic population in the U.S., we've noticed firsthand the transformations taking place within the segment throughout the years. One that is undoubtedly worth highlighting is the emergence of a new cultural identity -- the Nueva Latina. This new segment represents the largest (26%) and fastest-growing Hispanic woman sub-segment of the entire U.S. Hispanic women population with a marketing size of four million.

A few key areas to focus on when examining this new sub-segment are the ways in which the Nueva Latinas profile differentiates from the traditional and/or unacculturated Hispanic woman.

"Marianismo"

In many instances, when describing the role of the Hispanic woman, we have used the term "marianismo" as a defining characteristic. It is the tendency for a woman/wife to embody characteristics such as emotional, kind, instinctive, whimsical, docile, compliant, vulnerable and unassertive. These qualities tend to perfectly fit and provide balance within a machismo society where women are expected to raise their children, be spiritually pure and submissive to the demands of men.

For the most part, we continue to see the unacculturated, traditional Hispanic woman conform to marianismo. However, the farther we move along the acculturation spectrum, and closer towards the Nueva Latina, the less we notice marianismo.

Evolution of the Nueva Latina

As the Nueva Latina embraces some of the American cultural values such as being more self-reliant, assertive, impervious and driven, she continues to maintain some characteristics of the Latina culture, such as being emotional, instinctive and family oriented. She is proud to embrace the duality of her American and Hispanic culture and does not define herself as from one place or another, but rather from a blended place that is her own.

The Nueva Latina is best described as a second-generation Hispanic (or has lived half of her life or more in the U.S.), college educated and a career woman. She is open to change and feels she has control of her destiny. In addition, she firmly believes in developing relationships where both males and females are mutually vested in contributing financially, emotionally, and sharing household responsibilities.

Language Preference Media Consumption

A greater number of Nueva Latinas prefer to communicate in Spanish (45%) over English (31%). Although we notice this trend in her language of preference, her media consumption skews towards English. Sixty percent of Nueva Latinas prefer either general market programming, such as "American Idol" or "Dancing with the Stars," or English-language content that is culturally relevant to her lifestyle, such as "Ugly Betty." This dichotomy could be attributed to the lack of media channels

in Spanish, particularly television channels, that provides relevant content that reflects her new reality and lifestyle.

The Challenge

Hispanic marketers are not only challenged with selecting the appropriate media channels that will best reach the Nueva Latina, but also with creating relevant content in her language of preference. To be effective in reaching her, it is essential that we have a deep understanding of her needs, desires, and inspirations to allow us to connect her and our brands at the core. Perhaps by simply understanding that she views her success through her own personal achievements, marketers will have better insights into how to communicate with this new and unique sub-segment of the Hispanic woman.

0 comments on "Enter: The Nueva Latina".

Ken Muench from Draftfcb commented on: July 22, 2010 at 3:07 p.m.

Good stuff Jim. It is indeed an important, powerful and growing segment that should rather quickly become the most critical group to win with.

I'm a little curious though, about Marianismo. You talk about the acculturation process changing that and skewing women towards "American Values" like self reliance as they become more acculturated..

But if you look at women in Mexico, you'll find a very similar thing going on: women are becoming powerful, independent, aggressive, etc...to the point where now Mexican Men are a little lost. The whole Machismo thing isn't flying like it used to.

So it may not be an acculturation thing at all. Which would mean that even lower acculturation women are undergoing this change, which I believe is the case.

The takeaway, I guess, is that not only Acculturated women should be marketed to like self-reliant, independent etc, but increasingly the same goes for low acculturation. Saludos. And thanks for the piece!

Jim Legg from The San Jose Group commented on: July 22, 2010 at 6:22 p.m.

Ken,

Thanks for your comment. As we look at all the factors that influence acculturation, education plays a big role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of an individual. Furthermore, with higher education also comes a higher capacity to analyze and reflect one's role in society, which allows the Nueva Latina to reshape her role. Perhaps, you are right with these changes also occurring anywhere from Mexico down to Argentina; however, we must consider that these would be more pronounced in urban areas and among more educated social circles.

Jackie Bird from Redbean Society, LLC commented on: July 26, 2010 at 1:58 p.m.

So gentlemen, your point is? Acculturated or not, more or less, is not the factor that empowers Latinas, Mexicanas or women of the world to be more independent, assertive or decisive. Empowerment comes from knowledge, education, opportunity, community. And it just so happens that our women are getting a lot more of that today than in the past and in the U.S. than in their home countries. Let's get on with the real dialogue, which is less about demographics, language or acculturation and more about the emergence of new values in the U.S. that to a great extent are driven by cross cultural movements and Latino culture.

Esther Gutierrez from LaCosmopolatina commented on: July 26, 2010 at 4:11 p.m.

Interesting article. I do agree that there is a developing and quickly growing community of Latinas, both 1st and second generation, that are educated, career-driven, successful young women. These women are still very much connected and proud of their cultural roots and are very much aware of the influences their traditions, customs, and values handed down through their immigrant parents (or grandparents) have had on their upbringings. Likewise, these women also understand that living in America has allowed them to have incredible opportunities -- within the work force and within the education system that has led to an overall better form of life.

As a "Nueva Latina" myself, I am entirely aware of how both my Mexican roots, along with my American upbringing, have undoubtedly shaped who I am today. As a consumer, I am constantly aware and acknowledge when products/companies try to target this blend of cultures and values. It is a lot more appealing than only targeting the less acculturated Latina, or not appealing to the Latina-ness at all.

Jim, you are absolutely right when it comes to general marketing programming and what Nueva Latinas prefer to watch. I am guilty as charged when it comes to watching shows like American Idol and So You Think You Can Dance. On the contrary, my mother is off watching "novelas" on channels like Univision y Telemundo that I believe cater primarily to Latinas closer to the "Marianismo" extreme.

This group of Latinas are surely gaining a strong voice not only within the Latino community but throughout the general public, as well. I do think there is a need for marketing to continue to develop ways to target this audience because we are definitely growing, and fast.

Jackie, I am not sure if there are necessarily "new" values emerging in the US, but definitely more of a blend driven by these cross cultural movements. And I do believe this blend of values-- a blend that consists of sustaining and upholding values from our Latino roots, from our hard-working ethics to our perseverance and determination, with those of our American roots such as our competitive strive, is what has lead these "Nueva Latinas" to success and will continue to do so.

Ef Rodriguez from @pugofwar commented on: July 26, 2010 at 9:17 p.m.

The world could use a lot less of this machismo nonsense. Good article :-)

Ken Muench from Draftfcb commented on: July 27, 2010 at 10:14 a.m.

Jackie. The point is simple. The US Hispanic market is not monolithic, as you know. So understanding what group is undergoing which change is, some would argue, rather important if your marketing is at all nuanced. The interesting point of this discussion isn't simply "Latina women are becoming more assertive," but rather which specific groups are doing so, at what rates, and what's causing it.

"Demographics, language or acculturation," which you feel are not really the point--help us understand those nuances and address the right groups in the right way.

In this particular case, understanding that the change is also happening in Latin America, especially in Urban areas--as Jim points out, is rather significant. Especially if your target is a recent arrival and hasn't been influenced much yet by US culture.

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