

Advertising to Hispanics: What the Ads Say

A content analysis of portrayals, communication devices and execution

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our curiosity about the growth and sophistication of the Hispanic marketing industry led us to investigate how agencies are constructing their messages in advertising. We collected 369 TV commercials available in the web pages of AHAA member Hispanic advertising agencies and analyzed them critically by means of a content analysis. This report summarizes our main findings about what agencies are doing in terms of portrayals, persuasion strategies and execution.

The “portrayals” section contains analyses of the characters present in the advertisements, their gender, age, race, social roles, dress, and their relationship with the product or service (spokesperson). The findings show that most of the characters in commercials are people, aged 20 to 29. There were equal numbers of male and female characters, who were also found to be mostly “brown” and “white” in race, with undefined social roles, and dressed with weekend casual clothing. Also, we found that characters generally don’t act as a spokesperson for the product because in the majority of the commercials a narrator (voice over) serves as a spokesperson. In terms of portrayals, we suggest that agencies consider increasing their use of more non-human characters, match their characters’ races more accurately to the current makeup of US Hispanics, increase variety of identifiable professions both in male and female characters, and vary the types of dress to represent many different lifestyles.

We also looked at the persuasion strategies, analyzing the use of product benefits and attributes, communication devices and the values portrayed in the advertisements. We found that more than half of the commercials advertised the functional benefit of the product. Also, almost 60% of the commercials used visual and oral explanations to tell consumers about the product. More than half of the commercials used humor. Only 27% of the commercials used metaphors as a communication device. When we looked at the values portrayed in the advertisements, we found that the more prevalent values were *enjoy life*, *collectivism* and *wisdom/education*. Values that were expected to appear with a greater frequency include *respect for elderly*, *masculinity* and *femininity*. We propose that advertisers take advantage of the power of metaphors and other less concrete form of communication, particularly when the target market is already familiar with the product or services advertised. Also, there are a variety of values known to be important in Hispanic culture that advertisers could exploit more.

Finally, we analyzed various aspects of the execution of these commercials. We found few stereotypes perpetrated in the advertisements and their soundtracks. . Approximately 40% of the commercials had instrumental, non-regional rhythms as

music. Stereotypes traditionally related to Hispanic media such as the *Latin lover* or *harlot* were not present. In terms of settings, almost half of the commercials used a room in the house as the setting. Marketers should be aware of the danger of wearing out the notion of family and home in Hispanic advertising.

INTRODUCTION

The Hispanic advertising industry has positioned itself as the expert in advertising and account and media planning for the Hispanic market. This industry has evolved over the last decades, so that they may now boast increased effectiveness and higher production value in their advertising. More importantly, messaging has become more insightful, more sensitive to the needs of different consumer segments and more representative of US Hispanics.

This report consists of an examination of general ad characteristics in Hispanic television. First, we describe how Hispanics are portrayed in TV commercials. We then provide an overview of the persuasion strategies and communication devices used in the advertising messages, and conclude with a description of the cultural values present in the commercials. We also provide a description of features related to the execution of the TV commercials such as the music, setting and stereotypes. This study aims to present a picture of how Hispanic advertising agencies communicate with Hispanic consumers. This study provides insights and guidance to practitioners of advertising and marketing, and should also assist in the education of students of communication and marketing.

METHODOLOGY (Content analysis)

We collected all the commercials available in the web pages of agency members of the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA) between the 1st of April and the 1st of June of 2005. Thirty nine (39) of the 73 agencies had TV commercials uploaded and active in their web pages. Various computer software programs were used to download and capture the spots. Commercials not advertising U.S. products were excluded from the analysis. The final universe was of 369 spots.

We coded each television commercial individually with the help of a codebook with definitions for all the categories. The codebook was created after many sessions of discussion and practice. Intercoder reliability was 80%. All categories were defined as manifested in visuals, audio messages and captions.

The commercials analyzed for the present study make up the universe of ads available on the websites of ad agencies members of AHAA, thus statistical analysis was not relevant.

PORTRAYALS

Characters

We first looked at what kinds of characters were present in the television commercials. Nearly all (95%) of the commercials contained people, which is to be expected. A relatively small percentage of the commercials contained objects, animals, plants, or animated characters. The full table can be seen below.

While people are the most natural characters for advertisements both in general market television commercials and the universe of Hispanic television commercials analyzed in this study, advertisers should not overlook the possibility of less common types of characters such as animals and animations. Some of the most popular and effective advertising campaigns' leading characters are a gecko (GEICO), a duck (AFLAC), and frogs (Budweiser).

Though these types of characters may not be appropriate for every product category, advertisers should consider whether their product could be positioned and differentiated from the competition through the use of a non-traditional character. Animals and animated characters may help to make a very serious product, like insurance, seem less drab and confusing. These characters might also add humor and lightheartedness to an otherwise common product. Furthermore, Hispanics are known to have a very strong connection with nature, and often feel connected to the plants, animals and natural forces found in the world. Thus, these natural images might also be used as metaphorical representations of human consumers.

One example of a successful match of product and a classic animation character in a Hispanic advertising campaign is the use of the cartoon icon Speedy Gonzalez by VW to promote the GTI Mk V. Speedy Gonzalez not only is the epitome of speed and energy, but he is also a character that was part of the childhood of every Latino. Moreover, he “communicates positive values like altruism, resourcefulness, intelligence and confidence”, according to the words of Priscilla Cortizas, founding partner and creative director of C.O.D.¹ Also, the potential of cartoon characters to create deep connections with Hispanic consumers was recently discussed in the 21st Annual AHAA conference, where talented cartoon artists explained their creative process in developing comic characters inspired by U.S Latino lifestyles and cultural values². It would be interesting to see if, as a consequence of this discussion, the use of animated characters in Hispanic advertising increases.

¹ <http://www.hispanicmpr.com/2006/03/21/vw-teams-up-with-speedy-gonzales-to-reach-hispanics/>

² Hector Cantu and Carlos Castellanos, co-authors of Baldo. 21st Annual AHAA conference, Miami, 2006.

Table 1 - Type of Character³

Type of character	Percentage of commercials with
people	95%
objects	2%
animals	4%
plants	0%
animation	8%

Ages

We then tried to estimate the ages of the principal character(s) in each television commercial. In order to estimate as accurately as possible, we put each main character into one of six age ranges: 0-5 years old, 6-9 years old, 10-19 years old, 20-39 years old, 40-59 years old and 60+ years old. As seen in the table below, the majority of commercials contained characters in the 20-39 age range. Fifty four percent (54%) of the television commercials analyzed in this study contained at least one female from this age range. Even more males in this age range (67%) were depicted in the commercials. It is also interesting to note that both female and male children and teenagers were frequently depicted (25% female; 28% male).

These portrayals are a reflection of the age groups where marketers considered the highest levels of consumption to be. At this point, we must ask ourselves, are Hispanic advertising agencies doing an accurate job of representing the US Hispanic population?

Hispanic advertising agencies must stay aware of the constantly shifting demographics of US Hispanics and take advantage of the range of characters of different ages, even if they aren't the specific target market. Marketers might consider experimenting with the different emotions and values that certain age groups convey. For example, babies might be used in advertising campaigns for the emotions they inspire, though the target audience of the advertisement may be of any age. Elderly people can be used for their wisdom and experience, and even preteens might be used to target parents or younger children who see preteens as their role models.

Table 2 - Ages

Age	females	males
0-5	4%	5%
6-9	12%	15%
10-19	9%	8%
20-39	54%	67%
40-59	14%	23%
60 +	10%	10%

³ Because categories were not mutually exclusive, the percentages do not add up to 100%. This applies to all tables in the study.

Race

The next characteristic which the study examined was race/skin color. Because Hispanics can be of any race, we felt it was important to see if a wide range of races/skin colors was present in the television commercials.

White characters were defined as Caucasians, Europeans with blond, brunette or black hair but with light fair skins, like Cristina Saralegui. Black characters were defined as dark-brown skin, with usually dark and thick hair, dark eyes and thick lips, like Sami Sosa. Brown characters had light dark skin color, usually with dark eyes and hair. They were “mixed,” comparable to Mestizo (White and Indigenous), Mulato (White and Black), and Zambo (black and indigenous). An example of someone defined as brown is Oscar de la Hoya. Finally, a portrayal of a Japanese tourist in one of the commercials was used as a reference to code Asian characters.

While Asian and Black characters were only present in 2% and 5% of the commercials, respectively, white and brown characters were represented in similar percentages. Nearly one half (45%) of the commercials analyzed contained “brown” females and 34% contained white females. Similarly, over half (52%) of commercials contained white males and almost half (49%) contained white males.

It is difficult to know what the actual racial composition of Hispanics in the United States is. However, knowing that the majority of Hispanics comes from Mexican, mestizo populations, we can estimate that most Hispanics in the United States would fall under our definition of “brown.” Also, the fact that many commercials portrayed “brown” or “mixed” characters is somehow in alignment with the way in which Hispanics identify themselves racially. In the 2000 Census, 43% of Hispanics checked “some other race” for a lack of a better category.

Because of these Hispanics, combined with the Caribbean, and Central and South American immigrants of similar racial backgrounds, we can conclude that if marketers want to have a representation which resonates more with Hispanic consumers, they should consider increasing their portrayals of brown and black characters.

This is important for many reasons. Consumers feel validated when they see characters like themselves in advertising. It helps to convey the message that they are wanted as consumers. Thus, advertisers have an important and unique opportunity to contribute to the collective self-esteem of Hispanic consumers by portraying them in their various and true colors. Marketers here have the chance to overcome the bias so often present in Latin American advertisements, which is to give preference to white, blonde, Anglo-centric characters.

Marketers can also portray Hispanics in a more multicultural social environment. The everyday reality of many Hispanics, particularly of those living in bigger cities, includes regular interaction with members of other racial and ethnic groups. The recently released study **The Multicultural Marketing Equation** (Korzenny, Korzenny, McGavock & Inglessis, 2006), has in fact shown that Hispanics have a more heterogeneous interpersonal network than non-Hispanic Whites, African American and Asians (p. 22).

Table 3 - Race/skin color

<i>Race/skin color</i>	<i>females</i>	<i>males</i>
White	34%	49%
Black	5%	5%
Asian	2%	2%
Brown	45%	52%

Social roles

The table below shows the social roles that we quantified. It is interesting to see that males and females are equally represented in roles such as grandparent, employer, student, lover/spouse, and announcer. On the other hand, more males than females were represented as employees, professionals, and children (sons). Only in the advisor category were females more represented than males. The relatively high presence of grandparents in these commercials seems to be an accurate representation of the importance of grandparents in Hispanic families. However the danger is that the popularity of this character could wear out and become a stereotype. A continuous renewal of their representation might prevent *abuelitos*, for example, from becoming a stereotype. It is also interesting to note that a high percentage of male and female characters (45% and 31%, respectively) were undefined in terms of social roles. Marketers might want to play around with a variety of characters and professions that might evoke cultural imagery and archetypes.

In our analysis of the types of professions and occupations portrayed, we were able to distinguish certain patterns. In general, more male than female characters were portrayed as doctors, instructors, professional actors, musicians, professional sports players, entrepreneurs, and technicians. On the other hand, more female than male characters were portrayed as models, dancers, celebrities, and waitresses or bartenders. Clerks or costumer service agents were equally males and females.

Males were generally portrayed in a larger variety of identifiable professions/occupations. Furthermore, the types of professions used to portray them typically require a higher level of expertise and education. Although this may be an accurate representation of the current state of Hispanic males and females in the workplace, in certain cases marketers can actually improve the perception and self-esteem of Hispanics in the United States by showing them in more professional roles. For example, more and more Hispanic women are starting their own businesses or entering careers every year, and advertising can play an important part in affirming and supporting their role as working women.

Table 4 - Social Role

<i>Role</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>
Grandparent	16%	17%
Employer	1%	1%
Employee	6%	1%
Student	2%	3%
Professional	16%	12%
Announcer	2%	1%
House-spouse	1%	1%
Lover/spouse	16%	16%
Advisor	0%	1%
Undefined	45%	31%
Child	18%	13%

Dress

Do Hispanics identify themselves with a materialistic display of success? Hispanics might not respond in a positive way to depictions of affluent lifestyles or white-collar executives. However, academic research has also shown that Hispanics tend to consume products that highlight and maintain the symbols of their limited economic success (Wallendorf and Nelson, 1986; Alaniz and Gilly, 1986). It is necessary to understand who the relevant reference group for the segment is in order to know if commercials should use aspirational reference groups or not (Korzenny & Korzenny, 2005).

The informal look was the favorite mode of dress for characters in the commercials analyzed. This is in part explained by the fact that most characters were represented in undefined professions and in the home, as we will explain later in this report. Furthermore, the category “costume” appears frequently because here we included some professional attire and uniforms.

For marketers, this may be a chance to use more diverse looks and styles to portray Hispanics.

It is known that Hispanics, particularly Hispanic women, are very fashion conscious. They enjoy putting together outfits and taking care of their appearance even if it is just to go grocery shopping⁴. Perhaps the rationale behind using informal looks for the characters is to make them more approachable and similar to the reference group of the average Hispanic. However, we see an opportunity to draw from a wider variety of looks and styles that already exists among Hispanics, such as the hip-hop and reggaeton inspired “Hurban” style, and the “norteño” look. Marketers might also want to represent the “aspirational reference group” by using more business and formal dress if relevant.

Table 5 - Type of Dress

<i>Type of dress</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Business	11%	5%
Casual	20%	26%
Formal	1%	2%
Weekend	49%	32%
Costume	26%	13%

Spokesperson

Most television commercials have a spokesperson, or someone that actually takes the responsibility for explaining and promoting the product. The person or people can take many forms, such as a celebrity, company representative, common person, or a narrator, among others. This study found that more than half (55%) of commercials used a narrator as the spokesperson in television commercials. About one out of five (19%) used a common person, and the same percentage had no spokesperson at all. Very few commercials used a celebrity (4%), authority figure (2%), or company representative (2%). None of the commercials examined used a salesperson as a spokesperson.

Some of these findings were counterintuitive. We expected to see greater use of authority figures and celebrities. Hispanics tend to trust in power distances, assuming that authorities are authorities because they really know more than the general public. In addition, celebrity opinions are more widely respected and accepted in the Hispanic community than in mainstream advertising culture.

⁴ This and other cultural phenomena have been analyzed as manifested in US Hispanic and Latin American literature (McGavock, 2007, in press).

The findings in this section should be of particular interest to Hispanic advertising agencies. There is substantial room to increase the use of testimonials and common people as spokespeople. Hispanics generally have a positive attitude towards testimonials because they can identify better with people and settings that look more like their everyday lives, but also because they are less skeptical than Anglos (Korzenny, Korzenny, McGavock & Inglessis, 2006).

Table 6 - Spokesperson

<i>Spokesperson</i>	<i>%</i>
Celebrity	4%
Authority	2%
Salesperson	0%
Company repres	2%
Common people	19%
Narrator	55%
None	19%

Summary

Hispanics were portrayed using mostly brown and white characters and characters between the ages of 20-29. Hispanics were also shown in a number of different social roles and occupations. In this category, there is room for marketers to use roles and occupations as a motivational and inspirational force to encourage Hispanics and increase their self esteem. The same is true for the way dress is used.

Additionally, Hispanic advertising agencies can consider these recommendations:

- Explore the idea of non-human characters. Animated characters or metaphorical representations using objects or concepts found in nature may resonate with Hispanic consumers.
- Think about incorporating characters from various age groups into commercials. As we mentioned, babies, preteens, and elderly people can be important characters for the emotions they bring up and the values they represent.
- Use commercials as an avenue to increase Hispanic self-esteem through accurate portrayals of race. This means including more “brown” and “black” Hispanics in order to represent the current US Hispanic population as it likely exists. An accurate representation would break with traditional Latin American advertising techniques,

- which could show Hispanics that they are seen, respected, and wanted in the United States, both as consumers and citizens.
- Use the variety of professions and occupations that Hispanic males and females engage in in real life as well as the professions that are aspirational for them. This may open the doors for infinite story plots and more varied representations. Furthermore, this could also increase the motivation and self-esteem of Hispanics who see themselves reflected in commercials as they would like to be. Marketers should, however, analyze each case individually in order to determine if an aspirational approach is the right one.
 - Consider the use of testimonials and celebrities as persuasion strategies for Hispanic television commercials. Hispanics are known to rely on the advice of their reference group when making decisions, and generally respond positively to celebrity endorsement. This doesn't mean that any testimonial or celebrity endorsement will appeal to all Hispanics. Hispanics favor personal testimonies and celebrity endorsements because of the trust they place in these people to tell the truth. For this reason, marketers must be very careful to ensure that the endorsements and testimonials are truthful and don't mislead consumers, which could have long-lasting negative effects.

PERSUASION DEVICES

Product benefit and communication device

Another research goal was to determine the primary product benefit illustrated in each advertisement. We coded each commercial as promoting either a functional, physical or emotional/psychological benefit⁵, or a combination of these. We found that over half (58%) of the commercials showed a functional benefit. Only 32% of products showed an emotional benefit, and even fewer (23%) illustrated a physical benefit. This might be related to the product categories. Future studies might want to explore this relationship.

Furthermore, we looked at the communication device used to communicate the product's message. We did not include dramatization, as it was assumed that most commercials

⁵ For this study, a functional benefit was defined as power or faculty of the product such as protection, change, convenience, productivity, or durability. A physical benefit referred to the derived advantages of the product/service in terms of satisfaction of the body needs or sensations. An emotional or psychological benefit referred to the benefits of the product/service in terms of satisfaction of emotional and psychological needs such as self-fulfillment, safety, freedom, love, esteem, community feeling, tradition, or relaxation.

make use of dramatization techniques. Among the other communication devices, we found that the most commonly used devices were: oral information (59%); visual demonstration (58%); humor (52%); and written information (32%). The full table can be seen below.

The fact that the commercials heavily emphasize the functional characteristics of the product (58% of the commercials), together with the fact that more than half of the commercials contained an informational approach (oral information, 59% visual demonstrations of the product/service, 58%, and written info, 32%) supports the assumption that less acculturated Hispanics use advertising to obtain information about products and services. This is important because this group of Hispanics may not be familiar with the range of brands in every category.

Still, there is an opportunity to increase the use of metaphors and more abstract communication, especially with Hispanic consumers that are already familiar with the product or category. Hispanics generally favor high context communication. This means that Hispanics tend to use a less verbally explicit communication because a lot of the information about the context is internalized.

We should also consider that Hispanics tend to have a holistic perception of the world. This opens possibilities for more emotional and sensorial communication, again, particularly when the product or service is already well known by the consumer. There is no doubt that Hispanics enjoy artistry and vivid imagery because it is engrained in their lives.

Table 7 - Product benefit

<i>Product benefit</i>	<i>%</i>
Functional	58%
Physical	23%
Emotional	32%

Table 8 - Communication Device

<i>Communication Device</i>	<i>%</i>
Humor	52%
Visual demonstration	58%
Oral info	59%
Written info	32%
Comparison	4%
Irony	1%
Magic/fantasy	11%
Drama	2%
Metaphor	27%
Multiscene	22%
Other media	11%

Product Attributes

We also analyzed the attributes used to position products and services. The most popular strategy was product formulation, found in 75% of the commercials. By product formulation we mean the description or detailed depiction of features of the product such as the ingredients, materials, shape, structure, design and so forth. Product formulation was followed by the representation of the service act (22%), and distribution (17%). This finding is in alignment with the need to offer more information about the product/service and where to find it. The use of name (including brands) is considerably low. Marketers may find it advantageous to expand their use of brand names for product positioning. This could lead to increases in awareness in those who are just getting familiar with the product and brand loyalty among those who already know it.

Table 9 - Product attributes

<i>Product attributes</i>	<i>%</i>
Formulation	75%
Packaging	3%
Name	3%
Pricing	14%
Distribution	17%
Service act	22%

Values⁶

The results related to the appearance of values in commercials analyzed are part of a completely separate study. Here, however, we report some of the most important findings. The table below shows how often the values appeared in commercials.

⁶ A value is defined as the positive quality that makes something desirable or valuable; something that one hopes to attain.

Table 10 - Values

<i>Values</i>	<i>Percentage of Commercials in which value appeared</i>
Enjoy life	53.8%
Collectivism	21.2%
Wisdom	20.2%
Sex appeal	15.7%
Goal achievement	13.8%
Choose lifestyle	12.8%
Health and Wellness	12.5%
Traditions, celebrations	11.9%
Hispanicness, Patriotism	9.0%
Nurturance	8.3%
Work	6.4%
Individualism	5.4%
Masculinity	5.4%
Femininity	4.5%
Modernity	4.5%
Popularity	4.2%
Beauty	3.2%
Luxury, Social Status	3.2%
Respect for Elderly	1.9%
Uniqueness	1.3%
Youth	1.3%

By far the most frequently appearing value was *Enjoy Life*, which appeared in over half of commercials (53.8%). As one of the most prevalent cultural dimensions used to characterize Hispanics, it is not surprising to see these results. This reflects a Hispanic reality which emphasizes living in the present. However, we should also note that a common theme of advertising is enjoyment. Therefore, these results may also indicate a general theme in advertising in which most advertisements show people having a good time and enjoying the advertised product.

Perhaps more significant is the second-most represented value, *Collectivism*, which appeared in slightly more than one out of five (21.5%) commercials. Marketers seem to have recognized the importance of the family and reference groups when advertising to Hispanics. In contrast, only a small percentage (5.4%) of commercials showed *Individualism* as a cultural feature. This supports what research has shown about the collectivistic nature of Hispanics.

As Hispanics come to the United States and begin to acculturate, they place great importance on gaining knowledge and education. These are characteristics which they believe will help them and their children succeed in the United States. One out of five commercials (20.2%) contained the value *Knowledge and Education*. This category not only referred to formal knowledge and education, but also to the desire for learning in everyday life.

As shown in the table, numerous other values appeared, but much less frequently. Based on the existing research about Hispanic values, we would have expected some of these traits to occur more often in the commercials analyzed. For example, only 1.9% of commercials showed *Respect for Elderly*. *Respect for elderly* in our coding scheme referred to the positive representation of older people giving opinions and recommendations. The lack of this value doesn't mean that the elderly are negatively represented, but rather that they are represented in a neutral or passive way, as part of the background or family group. Keep in mind that 10% of the commercials showed characters 60 years old or older. In the Hispanic community, it is very common to seek out the elderly for advice in many matters, particularly in those related with family relations (Paz & Applewhite, 1988). Marketers could take advantage of this value orientation by using the wisdom of the elderly, a truly persuasive force, more often. However, they also need to consider that portrayals of authority and obedience could have a negative effect on younger generations who may have been born in the U.S. and who are in the process of acculturating.

Issues of femininity and masculinity are prevalent in traditional Hispanic values, as seen in the previously mentioned concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*. However, these traits were not found to be present in the Hispanic television commercials that we analyzed. This may indicate

reluctance on the part of marketers to reinforce what may be seen as outdated stereotypes. It may also represent a shift in these particular values among Hispanics.

Other findings related to values are discussed in the separate report mentioned before, including how these values are present in commercials divided by product category.

Summary

As we expected, the products tended to emphasize the functional benefits of the product through information-oriented communication devices. This serves to inform less acculturated Hispanics about the product and its uses. In addition, products were promoted for their formulation more so than for other attributes. Numerous values were also found to be present in the commercials.

Additionally, Hispanic advertising agencies can consider these recommendations:

- If the target audience is familiar with the product, explore more metaphorical, sensorial, less literal and explanatory messages. As Hispanics stay longer in the United States and learn about products and services, there will be more room to expand advertisements to connect with Hispanics on a more emotional level.
- Don't be shy to experiment with rich and surreal imagery. Hispanic literature, music, art, and popular celebrations are full of these images. Furthermore, images and sensations which remind Hispanics of their past, their countries or their cultures are likely to make an emotional connection with these consumers. It is important to note that these images do not need to be the stereotypical images associated with Hispanic culture, such as the mariachi or the sombrero. Infinite images of Hispanic culture exist. McGavock (2007) gives some ideas of how marketers can find strategies and representations in current US Hispanic and Latin American literature.
- Think about the values presented here and how they relate to the target audience. How can your team use these values to discover relevant insights and engage the creative team in order to create a culturally relevant advertisement which reaches consumers' hearts and minds?

EXECUTION

Music

The varied genres of music used in the commercials are evidence that Hispanic TV commercials have become less stereotypical. Initial industry efforts tended to use Mariachi or merengue music to over-emphasize that the commercial was indeed for a Hispanic audience. Nowadays, the tendency is to use less marked, less regional and less stereotypical themes. In that sense, Hispanic TV spots are becoming more neutral and similar to mainstream TV commercials. Generic instrumental music was observed in 41% of commercials. This indicates that advertisers are not relying as heavily on music as a distinguishing characteristic. Ironically, we have noticed that general market commercials are now using Latin rhythms and styles of music more often.

As seen in the table below, the use of Latin rhythms ranging from tango to reggaeton was relatively infrequent. Nonetheless, Hispanic marketing practitioners still report that they frequently have to deal with clients that insist on using “Latin” music in commercials for their products, even if it is completely unjustified.⁷

Table 11 - Type of Music⁸

<i>Type of Music</i>	%
Salsa	3%
Tango	1%
Mariachi	2%
Other Latin	15%
Classical	2%
Electronic	6%
Rock	11%
Generic instrumental	41%
Rap	1%
sound off	6%
Other	4%
No music	9%

⁷ At the 21st Annual AHAA conference, Miami, 2006. Paco Olavarrieta, president and creative director of OLE, narrated his tribulations with a client that absolutely wanted a Brazilian tone for the commercial.

⁸ Please note here that the categories are mutually exclusive.

Setting

If we combine the settings of kitchen, bathroom, other room home and outdoors home, almost half of the commercials (47%) have the home as setting. This also relates to the fact that characters are depicted wearing informal, weekend dress, and are depicted in undefined professions. This is a reflection of an understanding in the industry of the importance of family among Hispanics. This analysis doesn't include an analysis by product category. Product category could be a variable which would explain the use of the home, for example, when advertising cleaning products or food. Even if the selection of home as the setting is explained by the product category, there is the danger of overusing the importance of home and family among Hispanics. When the consumer is already familiar with the product or category, more non-traditional settings could be used.

Table 12 - Setting

<i>Setting</i>	<i>%</i>
Kitchen	9%
Bathroom	3%
Other room home	24%
Studio	6%
Outdoors home	11%
Outdoor away	18%
Restaurant/bar	4%
Business	33%
School	4%
Outdoor urban	12%
Other/unclear	27%

Language

For many years, the principal reason for hiring a Hispanic advertising agency was simply because they knew how to create commercials in Spanish. It was also assumed in the past that the best and only way to reach Hispanic consumers was through the use of the Spanish language. Because of this, Hispanic advertising agencies still tend to promote themselves as Spanish language agencies. It is important to consider that the agencies that produced the commercials analyzed might have also produced commercials in English. However, the sample of their work that was available to the public when we collected the spots was mostly in Spanish. This may be because that is the clearest way to position themselves as Hispanic advertising agencies. The production of commercials in Spanish seems to be their main competitive advantage.

Our study found that over three quarters (76%) of the television commercials in the study contained only Spanish language. A small percentage (12%) was in English only, and about four percent contained both English and Spanish in some capacity. In addition, a small percentage (8%) contained no words at all.

This finding illustrates the great opportunities for creating bilingual advertising which reflects the increasingly bilingual Hispanic population. The percentage of bilingual or English dominant Hispanics is growing rapidly as Hispanic children go to US schools, learn English, become adults, and finally have children of their own who grow up hearing English from day one in the United States. This represents both an opportunity and a challenge to Hispanic advertising agencies. On one hand, there is now liberty to advertise in both Spanish and English. However, there is also the necessity to move beyond the Spanish language as a defining force of Hispanic advertising agencies. Not doing this means risking losing clients to general market agencies who claim that they can reach Hispanics in English. This idea has been recognized by the industry in recent Hispanic marketing literature (Korzenny and Korzenny, 2005), and also in the last semi-annual AHAA conference, during which a validation of the Latino identity beyond language was the topic of discussion. Hispanic advertising agencies also have the opportunity to educate marketers and potential clients by including examples of English or bilingual commercials in their portfolios. The use of case studies in the webpage might help visitors to understand why Hispanic advertising goes beyond the use of the Spanish language.

There is also the possibility to explore is the use of symbolic communication without linguistic elements. The power of symbols can sometimes make up for the lack of dialogue and captivate Spanish dominant and English dominant Hispanics at the same time, and perhaps even the general market.

Table 13 - Language

<i>Language</i>	<i>%</i>
English only	12%
Few words Spanish	1%
Equal English Spanish	2%
Few English	1%
Spanish only	76%
No words	8%

Stereotypes

We analyzed commercials predicting that some stereotypical representations would become apparent. We expected to find those stereotypes that have already been related to Hispanics in media such as the buffoon or the Latin lover. Also, other potential new stereotypes were included as they emerged in the first stages of the study such as the image of women as a decoration and men's affection for their cars. Finally other popular stereotypes related to Hispanics were included such as laziness, partying, superstition and the servant woman. We were positively surprised when the findings showed that none of the stereotypes was found in more than 10% of the commercials. The full table is shown below.

Table 14 - Stereotypes

<i>Stereotypes</i>	%
Buffoon	9%
Latin lover	6%
Big family	6%
Macho	1%
Servant women	4%
Women as decoration	2%
Dancing	5%
Party	5%
Loudness	1%
Abuelita	5%
Abuelito	3%
Laziness	1%
Superstition	3%
Over the top woman	1%
Immigration	3%
Affection for car	3%
Soccer	5%
Manipulation/liar	5%
Bandit, harlot, Mariana, woman as social climber	0%

Groups

Because of much research which has reported that Hispanics are a collectivistic culture (Korzenny & Korzenny, 2005), we decided to examine the use and composition of groups of people or crowds in the television commercials. By far, the most common type of group was the "background" group (appearing in 42% of commercials). The background group refers to the presence of groups of people with an undefined relationship with the main characters of the commercials. For example, the presence of a group of people in a park where a father and his kid

are playing baseball was considered to be a background group. This is not surprising, and supports the collectivist dimension. It also supports the Hispanic's less rigid view of personal space. While the Anglo consumer seems to desire privacy and space, the Hispanic consumer may actually derive positive feelings from seeing a group in a television commercial.

Though the percentage of television commercials with a background group was rather large, we anticipated seeing these same large numbers in other types of group as well. For example, following the collectivistic theory, one could expect to see a large percentage of commercials with a "family and friends" group. Hispanics have traditionally been characterized as relying on interpersonal influence and reference groups for their decision making. Therefore, it would have made sense to see more groups of family and friends experiencing a product or situation together. This is a distinct opportunity for marketers to portray Hispanics in the actual conditions in which they make decisions.

It is important to note that group in commercials were mostly mixed in terms of gender and race.

Table 15 - Type of Group

<i>Type of group</i>	<i>% of commercials</i>
Children	4%
Adult	18%
Mixed age	12%
Background	42%
Family/friends	9%
Mixed gender	27%
Mixed race	19%

Summary

Music was found to be one executional area in which advertisers have overcome traditional stereotypes to include many different styles and sounds. In addition, we found that Hispanics stereotypes such as the mariachi or the over the top woman were rarely used in these commercials. Other executional considerations, however, seemed to be less reflective of the variety of Hispanic lifestyles which exists in the United States today.

One area which has much room for improvement is language. In order to reflect the current population of US Hispanics and the growing number of them who are becoming or who

are born English-dominant, Hispanic advertising agencies must adapt the advertising they create and present to incorporate both English and Spanish.

Additionally, Hispanic advertising agencies can consider these recommendations:

- Explore and study the huge Latin music repertoire, old and recent. This will help marketers find music that is relevant for the mood of the commercial and which still pleases the client who insists on having a Latin rhythm.
- Send your characters out of the house and into the world. Explore devices to show the product and the characters in less traditional settings, which might even make the commercial more memorable.
- Recognize the complexity of Hispanic consumers. What unites them is much more than a common language. Often times, making a cultural connection with consumers is even more important than the language factor. Remember that an ad is not Hispanic merely because it is in Spanish. In order to connect with consumers, marketers are moving beyond the language issue to consider the cultural factors which make Hispanics unique.
- Educate marketers and the general public about the importance of going beyond the Spanish language realm by posting some of your bilingual or English language work in your webpage portfolio.

CONCLUSION

This report should serve both as a pat on the back and a call to action for Hispanic advertising agencies. It seems that Hispanic advertising agencies are starting to go beyond stereotypes to represent and connect with Hispanics through meaningful and authentic communication.

Nonetheless, there are numerous areas for improvement and expansion on current practices in Hispanic advertising. Hispanics in the US are constantly changing and evolving, and so must the agencies and the advertising messages which aim to connect with them. There are multiple avenues through which advertisers can improve their communication with Hispanics, including spokesperson, character type, dress, language choice, and values. Marketers should also continue to explore relevant cultural insights which will allow them to make a unique connection with Hispanic consumers.

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