

Sharing The Knowledge

Hispanic Market Weekly

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As advertiser attention to the U.S. Hispanic market intensifies, communications consulting firm Newlink America has launched a video blog series focused on issues and trends in the Latino market.

"Newlink Conversations: Dialogue, Debate and Discovery" exposes the most relevant, and sometimes contentious, topics related to the U.S. Hispanic consumer that are being discussed in board rooms, C-suites, agencies and classrooms, explains Jorge Ortega, managing partner of Newlink America.

The series debuted March 1 with the participation of Charles García, co-founder of management consulting firm GarcíaTrujillo, discussing the results of a survey on Latinos' emotional connection with companies and brands, and with Cesar Melgoza, CEO of Geoscape, speaking on why Fortune 500 companies are slow to invest in the U.S. Hispanic market.

As marketers look at the Latino marketplace, size the opportunities and try to develop business strategies, there are a lot of interesting conversations and experts that can contribute their knowledge and insights, Ortega points out.

"There isn't just one expert in this field," insists Ortega. "Newlink Conversations will serve as a business vehicle to communicate with those who are 'not quite there' about targeting the U.S. Hispanic market."

Estimates indicate that the U.S. Hispanic advertising market is currently worth roughly \$5 billion across television, radio, print and online. The online segment represents four percent of that total. It's a market, experts insist, that advertisers can no longer ignore.

Upcoming topics to be featured include 2010 Census results and the impact on marketers and consumers, as well as recent studies conducted on the Hispanic market. The video blog can be viewed at www.youtube.com/newlinkamerica.

Today, Mark López, head of U.S. Hispanic audience at Google, takes center stage at Newlink Conversations. In an interview conducted by Ortega and Hispanic Market Weekly editor Cynthia Corzo, he discusses Latinos' online behaviors, trends and their response to advertiser messages delivered online. López currently leads Google's team of Hispanic specialists focused efforts for search, video, mobile and display.

"Not only are Latinos online, many are on broadband and that opens opportunities to look at video as a social platform for Latinos," says López. "Latinos tend to react more to video, post comments more, and they over-index on sharing video content." In the seven-minute video blog, López also discusses how digital media needs to take a more prevalent role in advertisers' Hispanic-focused media mix and offered insights on how marketers can tap into social networks for a continued dialogue with "connected" Latinos.

"The industry as a whole has the challenge of shifting from a divisional planning model more focused on mediums like television to a more holistic approach to planning that would put digital at the forefront of the strategic discussion," insists López.

Once that is done, he adds, the advertisers would have a broader understanding of Latino consumers and can build up the necessary expertise to remain ahead of competitors. López points out that some of the brands that have found success in digital-focused efforts targeting U.S. Hispanics are General Mills, Kraft, Procter & Gamble, and Estee Lauder.

Over the course of the next few months, Newlink Conversations will chat with Dr. Felipe Korzenny, director of the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University; Raul Cisneros chief of media relations at the U.S. Census Bureau; Nicolás Ibarquén, publisher of Poder Magazine; and Dr. Eduardo Gamarra from Newlink Research.

"You can't ignore the reality of digital, social, mobile and online media," says Ortega. "Clients have to address their objectives within the reality of how people are producing their own content."

Launched in late 2010, Newlink America zeroes in on strategy as the driver of advertisers' communications with Hispanic consumers.

The Miami-based shop offers clients marketing and communications solutions that incorporate technology to conduct research, engage consumers online, motivate employees and influence stakeholders, while creating conversations that connect clients with their audiences.

"Today, the consumer is in control – connected to the media of their choice, savvy about technology," says Ortega. "Marketers need to be equally focused - addressing targeted consumers nationally and locally while at the same time leveraging a social networked marketplace."