

# FOUR

## Latina Leading Voices

THE NEARLY 22 MILLION “voices” of Latinas in the U.S. represent a vibrant, dynamic, and *essential* audience of thriving consumers, budding, and successful entrepreneurs, and talented employees for corporations across America. There is no better time than *now* to take a critical look at the business model you’ve relied on for growth in the general market and determine what, if any, value it still holds for you in reaching this multi-billion dollar segment. Even if you have a business plan in place to reach Latinas, you may not want to get too comfortable with it, because the market is moving at warp speed and a “change mindset” is essential for success. Strategies that were effective in reaching the Hispanic market of the past have little relevance to the Latina of today. Latinas of all geographic origins are changing the way companies must do business to remain competitive.

The population of Latinas is large and *complex*. The U.S. Census Bureau accelerated the date by which the minority markets will become the *majority* markets in the U.S.—from 2050 to 2042. This is due in large part to the exponential growth of the Hispanic population, which will *triple* in size to 133 million within just four decades. The Latina segment of this population includes foreign born, U.S. born, acculturated, retro-acculturated, un-acculturated, Spanish dominant, English dominant, bi-lingual, Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Central Americans, Latin Americans and those from Spain. And, they are racially mixed, with Caucasian, Indian, and African blood (and in some Caribbean islands Asians are a factor), so there is no one “physical look” to represent the broad spectrum of Latinas (and Latinos) globally and in the United States.

Attitudinally, Latinas are determined, very committed to the long-term, and extremely dedicated to doing all they can for the benefit of their families and communities—even at the expense of their personal comfort and needs. They are the *madrinas*—the godmothers and caretakers of those in need and the selfless and tireless givers of love, support, and encouragement. This support and love can come in the form of an open home and place to stay if one is without residence. It can come in the form of a delicious meal of *arroz, habichuelas, pollo guisado, y tostones*—even if there is very little food in the home. “*Siempre hay comida para la familia,*” my parents would say to unexpected guests at dinnertime. “*Si uno come, todos comen*” . . . if one eats, we all eat. It’s amazing to me how my mother was able to stretch her dollars to make enough food to feed an army if necessary! And, of course, it was always deliciously prepared, “*con mucho amor y cariño.*” **This** is the soul of the Latina woman.

*La mujer* Latina’s boundless commitment to family is matched by her determination to succeed and her relentless pursuit of survival. “*Hay que adelantar la raza*” . . . or, “one must advance the race/group,” is a constant motivation urging Latinas onward. Educational attainment, as we will see in this chapter, is on the rise, as are solid entrepreneurial gains for Latina majority owned businesses. So as a business leader you will want to *remain vigilant* and *stay on your toes* as you give serious thought to the strategic changes in your plans that are required to get your fair share of this highly attractive consumer market.

### ***¡Pero, Quién Es La Mujer Latina?***

Who is this woman? What are some of the important demographic, economic, and cultural nuances of women of Hispanic ancestry? Read on to learn more.

### **Latina “Leading Voices” niche snapshot**

There is no question that Latina women are the dominant female ethnic group in this country. There are 22 million females of Hispanic ancestry living in the U.S., a number that has grown by 28.2 percent since

2000. This is four times faster than the growth of women overall, who increased 6.7 percent during this same time period.

► **Figure 4.1 Population growth among women**

U.S. females	2007	2000	% Growth
<b>Latina</b>	<b>21,980,731</b>	<b>17,144,023</b>	<b>28.2%</b>
Black	21,286,017	19,461,176	9.4
Asian American	8,291,405	6,623,231	25.2
<i>Asian</i>	7,784,432	6,172,636	26.1
<i>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</i>	506,973	450,595	12.5
American Indian/Native Alaskan	2,292,162	2,136,916	7.3
Total women of color <i>(Includes all females of color in the U.S.)</i>	53,850,315	45,365,346	18.7
Total U.S. females	152,962,259	143,368,343	6.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Spanish remains language preference

Approximately 75 to 80 percent of U.S. Hispanic adults speak Spanish at home, of which one-third treat English as their second language. Thirty-five percent of U.S. born Hispanics speak English well; only 4 percent of foreign-born Hispanics speak English well. Spanish clearly remains the dominant language of choice and the first language taught by parents. Ninety-four percent of U.S. born Hispanics learn to speak Spanish before they learn English and that language is most often taught by the mother. In addition to the role of the Latina mother in reinforcing the language's use at home, Spanish remains the U.S. Hispanic market's language of choice for several other reasons, including the geographic clustering of the market, which makes it easier to interact without having to speak English, continued immigration as a source of Hispanic population growth, the proliferation of Spanish-language media, and the importance of the language as a way to self-identify with the Hispanic culture. As proof of this last point, 90 percent of Latinas rate language as the one aspect of the culture that must be maintained among their children. Figure 4.2 shows the English-speaking ability of Hispanic *women*.

► **Figure 4.2** English-speaking ability of adult Hispanic women, by nativity, 2006

	English only	English very well	English less than very well
Hispanic	19%	37%	45%
U.S. born	35	51	14
Foreign born	4	23	73

*Note: Data based on survey response. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.*

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2006 American Community Survey

### Latina youthfulness of age and implications

Hispanic women are much younger than their general market counterparts as evidenced in the age cohort analysis of women of color and women overall (Figure 4.3) The data from the U.S. Census shows that Latinas are the youngest of all women of color, with a median age of 27.8 years. They are an average of 3.4 years younger than other women of color and 14.3 years younger than non-Hispanic white females in this country. Hispanic women born in the U.S., who represent 48 percent of all U.S. Latinas, tend to be younger than their foreign-born counterparts by an average of three years. This makes them attractive for youth-oriented products (technology, music, beauty, fashion, digital communication).

Companies whose target market is comprised primarily of women aged 18 to 44 will want to pay particular attention to Latinas because they dominate this age cohort. A full 42 percent of all Hispanic women are aged 18 to 44 compared with 34 percent of non-Hispanic White women. We know from experience that people in this age group are most responsive to brand messages and are primary purchasers across many categories.

At the other extreme of the age spectrum, there are fewer Latinas approaching retirement age than any other multicultural segment. Only 6.5 percent of Latinas are aged 65 and over, compared with 17.4 percent of non-Hispanic White women. Retirement planning, elder care, age-related pharmaceutical products, and life insurance services are important opportunity segments for the Hispanic market. In general, Latinas tend to be more focused on the immediate, short term, versus having

a long-term perspective. Although the demographics indicate there are fewer Latinas in the older population groups experiencing the need for these services, nonetheless, companies would be wise to plan now for the future realities as Latinas age.

### LATINA LEADING VOICES INTERVIEW

#### ***On the “Voice” of the Latina Woman—Needs, Aspirations, and Values***

From my perspective, the voice of the Latina woman is a person who is empowered both in work and at home but for whom family is a priority, and so she builds her world around that. From my perspective, I chose not to have a job that would relocate me; I chose to stay in one place and perhaps that affected certain career moves through the years but it was the choice that I made for the sake of my family. And I think that a lot of Latina women share that perspective.

As a Latina and member of the powerful **85% Niche**, I represent a strong buying power and a strong influence. I buy for my family; I don't necessarily buy clothing for myself but my children get new wardrobes every year. I want companies to know that I have a lot of spending power and it's not just in “fluff.” I buy real estate, I buy land, and I make investments. I also buy vehicles, but I do those with other people in mind. I'll get in the back seat and make sure that it's comfortable, roomy and safe—as safe as the front seats are because that's where my children sit. I also will be looking at things that are needed for the community and the work that I do there. I may be on the board of directors and I may also be on the little league. So, I have a lot of needs that need to be met and I need those to be met efficiently and with the minimum amount of time and, no haggle. I know what I want and I want to be met half way with those needs.

Such planning will require a re-education among Latinas of the need to take care of themselves *first*—a concept understood and increasingly embraced by non-Hispanic White women. Because women outlive men by an average of seven years and due to cultural values that place an emphasis on “others” versus the “self,” many older Latina widows rely

on other family members to care for them as they age. This has a tremendous impact on the need for a sound financial strategy. As Latinas earn on average 52 cents for every dollar that non-Hispanic White men earn, their wealth and financial resources have to work harder and longer than men's do. In addition, because the Latino household is largely a patriarchal society, although Latina women still *influence* the majority of all purchase decisions, women are often unprepared for the financial challenges presented by the more-than-likely loss of a spouse.

Further, there is a cultural stigma associated with mainstream American elder care choices. Except in extreme cases, the idea of putting one's parent into a nursing home is almost unheard of in the Latino community. It is less about the quality of the services offered in the nursing home than it is about the broader generalization that no environment can match the love and care one receives from *familia*. Therefore, successfully positioning your product or service against the future generation of older Latinas will require a re-education of self-value and worth to *today's* Latinas, as well as an evaluation of how your products can be more closely aligned with the cultural values of the Latino community.

### **Age and workforce opportunities**

The group aged 18-to-44 also represents significant value as prospective employees and emerging talent. As noted in an earlier chapter, 33 percent of all new persons added to the workforce between 2000 and 2010 will be Latino. They will close the talent gap that will be created by the mass exit of baby boomers beginning to retire over the next 20 years. Companies can leverage this change in workforce structure to their benefit by proactively identifying, hiring, and training diverse candidates as members of their independent sales forces, wholesale teams, and employee management groups. Consumers are more willing to buy from individuals who speak their language, understand their culture, and look like them. Therefore, integrated business plans—including marketing, sales, and talent-recruiting plans—should be adjusted accordingly to invite Latinas to experience both the brand *and* the company's career opportunities.

► **Figure 4.3 Latinas and women of color by age segment, 2007**

	Hispanic	Women of color	Non-Hisp. White
Females	21,980,731	53,850,315	101,346,238
<b>Under 18 years</b>	<b>34.3%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>
Under 5 years	10.9	9.1	5.4
5 to 13 years	16.5	14.6	9.9
14 to 17 years	6.9	6.7	4.9
<b>18 to 64 years</b>	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>61.4%</b>	<b>62.4%</b>
18 to 24 years	10.9	10.7	8.7
25 to 44 years	31.3	30.4	25.4
45 to 64 years	17.0	20.3	28.3
<b>65 years and over</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>
Median age (years)	27.8	31.2	42.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# 85% THINK ABOUT IT

**U.S. Hispanic Women are the largest ethnic women’s group in this country. How does this affect your decisions about:**

**Your Mainstream Women’s Marketing Plan**

What enhancements to your current women’s marketing strategy are essential to ensure you are connecting with the 22 million Latinas in this country? What assumptions are you making about women that do not include the voices and needs of these 22 million potential customers?

**Your Communication Message**

Do you incorporate Spanish-language content and culturally relevant platforms to reach Latina women? Do you understand how to reach the bi-lingual Hispanic market within your mainstream communication strategy?

**Your Sales Expectations**

Do you have a specific sales target in mind when focusing on Latina customers? Do you have the internal infrastructure and database models to retrieve gender and ethnicity sales? If so, how well are you performing to expectation? What changes are needed to stay ahead of the growth curve of the Latina market?

*continues . . .*

**Your Workforce**

Are you working to create a workforce that mirrors the Latina customer market? What plans do you have in place to recruit more Latinas into your workforce?

**Increasingly well educated**

Latinas are making steady gains in closing the learning gap and enjoying the access provided by higher education. U.S.-born Latinas are leading the way. Specifically, second and third generation Latinas are nearly twice as likely as those foreign-born to have some college education. A full 47 percent of native-born Latinas have some years of higher education compared with 24 percent of those who are immigrants. Fifty-eight percent of non-Hispanic women have comparable college completion levels. Latinas from South America and the Caribbean have the highest rates of college participation at 82 percent and 71 percent, respectively. And, 60 percent of all post-graduate Latino students are women.

► **Figure 4.4 Educational attainment of women, 2007**

	Less than high school	High school grad	Some college	College grad
Non-Hispanic	10%	32%	30%	28%
Hispanic	36	29	22	12
U.S.-born Hispanic	22	31	32	15
Foreign-born Hispanic	49	28	14	10

*Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding*

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2007 Current Population Survey

**Economic picture: money and affluence****Money**

Buying power among Hispanics continues to climb to record numbers, and Latinas are making sure they get their fair share of the growing pie. In 2000, Hispanics accounted for \$550 billion in buying power; by 2005 that number swelled to \$735.6 billion, and by 2010 the buying



power of Latinos will rise to \$1.1 trillion. This makes the U.S. Hispanic market the largest Latin American economy in the world, an economy that is available and accessible, right here in our own backyard.

Latinas are making powerful strides in generating income and creating wealth among all Hispanics. Due in part to successes in educational achievement, growth in professional ranks, entrepreneurship, and immigration of wealthy Latin American families emigrating to the U.S. from Venezuela and Columbia, the financial impact Latinas have in the market place is steadily growing. In 2007, based on Hispanic buying power of \$860 billion, Latina women generated approximately one-third, or \$284 billion. Latina women will have an estimated \$330 billion in buying power by 2010. Cubans and Central/South Americans command the highest median household income as shown below.

► **Figure 4.5** Hispanic median household income by country of origin

	Median household income
All U.S. Hispanics	\$33,100
Mexico	\$32,000
Central/South America	\$39,000
Puerto Rico	\$30,300
Cuba	\$40,760
U.S. median, all households	\$42,409

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### ***Affluence***

There are certain geographic markets where upscale Latino families—those earning \$200,000 plus—are more likely to live. These markets are Los Angeles, New York, Miami, San Francisco, Houston, Chicago, Dallas, Riverside/San Bernardino, San Jose, and Washington, D.C. Together, these ten metro markets account for 49 percent of all Latino households with a woman present and whose income is in excess of \$200,000 per year. The combined total annual gross income of these markets is well over 10 billion dollars. If your products are upscale in nature or if you

seek to drive brand consideration among an influential segment of Latinas, these are the geographic strongholds where you will want to concentrate resources and planning efforts.

► **Figure 4.6 Metro areas where most affluent Hispanics are found**

*number of Hispanic households with incomes above \$200,000*

Los Angeles	12,588
New York	10,752
Miami	9,685
San Francisco	3,366
Houston	3,339
Chicago	3,288
Dallas	2,203
Riverside/San Bernardino	2,197
San Jose	2,056
Washington, D.C.	2,048
Total	51,524

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004

## What we buy

In aggregate, the spending power of Latinas is spread across several categories. Latinas influence the purchase decision of many products at least at the level of women in general, and in some cases higher. In the automotive industry, women's new vehicle registrations represent 45 percent of all new vehicle registrations. This is comparable to new vehicle purchases among Hispanic women. However, in the beauty products industry, Latinas over index versus the general market across all segments (eye makeup, blush, lipstick, nail care, skin care, fragrance, shampoo, conditioner). They shop more often, and according to a study by *People en Español*, 50 percent of Latinas agree that they like to use brands that demonstrate they have "made it" in America. Brands are a sign of affirmation and validation of success. It's no surprise that according to *Advertising Age*, marketers spent an estimated \$5 billion in 2005 to create strong brand impressions in reaching the Hispanic market.

The following chart demonstrates where Hispanic households spend their income on a median basis. It is based on the Selig Center *Economic Report* and extrapolated to U.S. Census population and household figures.

► **Figure 4.7** Aggregate median spending of Hispanic households by category, 2005 and 2010 projected

Category	2005 (in millions)	2010 projected (in millions)
Food at home	\$50,700	\$59,300
Food away from home	\$29,700	\$34,800
Alcoholic beverages	\$4,400	\$5,100
Housing	\$173,500	\$203,100
Apparel & services	\$24,900	\$29,100
Transportation	\$95,600	\$111,800
Health care	\$20,500	\$24,000
Entertainment	\$17,600	\$20,500
Personal care	\$6,800	\$8,000
Reading	\$500	\$600
Education	\$6,800	\$8,000
Tobacco products	\$2,400	\$2,900
Cash contribution	\$8,300	\$9,700
Personal insurance	\$40,000	\$46,800
Miscellaneous	\$5,900	\$6,800
All combined	\$487,600	\$570,500

Source: Based on Selig Center Median HH Expenditures and U.S. Census HH Projections

### Geography—top ten markets

Geographically, the Latina population is concentrated in the top ten markets of: Los Angeles (18 percent total U.S.), New York (10 percent), Miami (4 percent), Chicago (4 percent), Houston (4 percent), Dallas (3 percent), San Francisco (3 percent), San Antonio (3 percent), Phoenix (3 percent), and Rio Grande (2 percent). Combined, these markets account for 54 percent of the entire U.S. Latina market. The majority of those in these markets are foreign-born with a preference for Spanish

language. If you are doing business in any of these markets, you have a huge opportunity to grow sales by focusing on Hispanics in several ways: as customers of your products, as independent distributors, as suppliers for your business, and as employees of your company. Using a bilingual and Spanish language communication strategy, concentrating budgets in these top Latina markets, and using a local market approach will generate incremental sales in a measurable and targeted way.

► **Figure 4.8** Top ten markets for Latinas

	% of total U.S. Hispanic population	Latina population in 000s	% U.S. born	% Foreign born
Los Angeles	18%	3,956	28%	72%
New York	10	2,198	24	76
Miami	4	879	13	87
Chicago	4	879	23	77
Houston	4	879	30	70
Dallas	3	659	30	70
San Antonio	3	659	28	72
San Francisco	3	659	67	33
Phoenix	3	659	37	63
Rio Grande Valley	2	439	44	56
Total	54%	11,866	29%	71%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Country of origin and cultural heritage

Understanding culture and its importance to Latinas is key in establishing connectivity with the market. Although Hispanic women share a great deal in common irrespective of country of origin, there are differences that marketers need to take into consideration as tactical plans are being shaped. These differences are noted in the music, foods, major holidays, and certain words in the Spanish language.

To begin, 77 percent of Hispanics now living in the U.S. come from another country. Their origins, however, cannot be neatly pigeonholed. They come from 22 different countries, with the dominant ones being Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and countries in Central/South America. Mexico remains the primary country of origin for Latinas in this country as it does for Latinos, overall. The percentages vary only slightly, with more Latinas reporting ancestry from Central and

South America than Hispanics overall. Specifically, 60 percent of Latinas report Mexican ancestry compared with 64 percent of Hispanics overall. Twenty-six percent of Latinas report Central and South American ancestry compared with 20 percent of Hispanics overall. The largest growth over the last decade has occurred among Central and South Americans, who have grown in population size by 97 percent.

► **Figure 4.9** Hispanic country of origin

	Hispanics overall	Latinas	+/- Points
Mexico	64 %	60%	-4
Central America	11	14	+3
South America	9	12	+3
Caribbean	15	13	-2
Other	1	1	—
Total	100	100	—

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, PEW Hispanic Center

Geographically there are specific Hispanic groups that dominate, as shown in Figure 4.10. For example, Mexicans represent the largest Hispanic segment within Los Angeles at 64 percent. However, Caribbean Latinos from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba are the dominant group in New York with over 50 percent. Again, this is an opportunity for businesses to think globally, but act “locally” before embarking on tactical plans that will resonate with Latinas. It’s an opportunity to authenticate the brand experience by weaving relevant Latina traditions and customs into marketing and promotional programs.

► **Figure 4.10** Latina country of origin by top markets

	Los Angeles	New York	Miami	San Francisco
Mexico	64%	9%	2%	45%
Central America	14	5	17	21
South America	2	11	6	5
Puerto Rico	1	37	4	3
Cuba	1	2	52	1
Dominican Republic	0	18	3	0
All others	18	18	16	25
Total	4,956,000	2,198,000	879,000	659,000

*Note the significant differences in country of origin between the East and West coasts.*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Customs and traditions

*Family, socializing with friends, happiness, and festive events* are important cornerstones in the Hispanic culture and the family, as a group, is a high priority. As we will examine in greater detail in chapter seven, “Mothers of Color,” Latina women are disproportionately represented among the population of mothers in this country. More specifically, while 55 percent of all U.S. females aged 15 to 44 are mothers, *73 percent of Hispanic women, 15 to 44, are mothers*. Stated differently, Latinas aged 15 to 44 are 32 percent more likely than women in the same age group to be mothers. Moreover, 45 percent of Hispanics consider their family as the primary source of their satisfaction versus 21 percent of the mainstream consumer market. As a result, the Hispanic household includes more children and extended family members compared with the general market. While the Census shows at least 3.6 persons per household among Latinas (compared with 2.6 for the mainstream market), the number is much higher if you consider grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who often live with the nuclear family.

Latinas are also very *religious* and approximately 75 percent of the Mexican-American population, the largest of all Latino populations, is of the Catholic faith. In the southwestern United States over two-thirds of the Catholics are Mexican or Mexican American. The Roman Catholic Church is also strong among other Hispanic groups, including Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central Americans.

One important pastime in Hispanic families, in addition to community and social events, is watching *sports*. In the top ten markets alone, 89 percent of the Hispanic population watches sports on television. Although viewership leans heavily toward the men in the family, Latina women will be involved as well. Professional boxing is favored, garnering 68 percent viewership. Major League Baseball with a 57.8 percent viewership and Major League Soccer follows closely with 53.7 percent viewership. Obviously, given these high penetration rates, tying into sports—either as a promotional sponsor or from a media integration perspective—is a particularly effective strategy for companies to consider in reaching Hispanic families.

## LATINA LEADING VOICES INTERVIEW

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### ***On the Importance of Family***

As a Latina, I never imagined not having children because family is such an important part of our lives. Home is the center of the family so it's very important to me. I'll spend money in making (my home) beautiful and comfortable and I tend to spend money on things that foster togetherness; so, recreational vehicles, a boat, a camper, a great entertainment system with a great slew of family movies; anything that fosters that togetherness. I actually purchased a television set for each of my kid's rooms; I didn't see them for a year, so I got rid of them. And we restricted use of video games for the same reason. So, I try to make sure that what we do, we can do as a family.

Speaking on behalf of Latina women, we are very active with our families. It's not just me going with my husband to buy the house; it's bringing the family. It's not just me going to a dealership to buy a car; it's bringing the family. Unless somebody understands how we operate as a family unit, you will never really understand our potential. It's kind of funny 'cause the van opens up and the "abuelos" and "abuelas" (grandfathers and grandmothers) come out too when you're looking at a house. So, as a Latina what companies need to understand is that family is integral to everything. When we go to purchase a house, we bring the family because it's a group purchase. When we purchase a vehicle, we bring the family, for the same reasons. Everything we do is for the good for the family unit and so retailers need to understand that and meet us with those needs—whether it be larger areas for the family to look at something or just some understanding when we all get out of the car that this is the way that we're going to purchase.

### **Country of origin specific snapshots**

For a more detailed description of the culture and background of the Latino population, you may visit [www.everyculture.com](http://www.everyculture.com) a website with

in-depth data and historical references for the U.S. Hispanic market by country of origin, including other ethnic populations.

## Marriage and family

Marriage and family life are at the crux of the Latino culture, community, and socialization, and roughly half of all Hispanic women are married (51 percent compared with 52 percent of all women). More foreign-born Latinas are married (63 percent) versus U.S. born Latinas at 44 percent. As such, many traditional and primarily foreign-born Latinas are raised with the expectation that they must devote a great amount of time to nurturing the family and to creating a warm, supportive home life. Somehow they manage to squeeze in time to work full time, cook and clean, take care of their men, visit and stay in touch with family outside the U.S., and more.

### ► Figure 4.11 Latina marital status

*Fifty-six percent of all U.S.-born Latinas are single; 37 percent of foreign-born Latinas are single.*

Marital Status	Latina	U.S.-born Latinas	Foreign-born Latinas	Women of color	Women 15+
Married	50.9%	44%	63%	44.2%	52.2%
Divorced	8.8	15	13	10.1	10.8
Widowed	5.6	6	6	7.8	10.5
Separated	4.6	***	***	4.6	2.5
Never Married	30.1	34	18	33.5	24.0
Total Single	49.1	56	37	55.8	47.8

\*\*\*Included in Divorced statistic

Source: PEW Hispanic Center

## Marriage and workforce dynamics

Navigating marriage and a career can be difficult for some Latinas. Latino men—particularly older, traditional men—can be difficult, especially those who are trapped into believing the archaic view of women



as subservient and that males should rule the home with an iron fist. Unfortunately, these men can present a real problem to Latinas who want to advance and make a life for themselves and for their children. There is a balance that these women who are successful in being assertive in the workplace must find in catering to the *machismo* personalities of traditional Latino men, yet at the same time asserting themselves when their needs are compromised. One Latina executive I interviewed said: “I think that has always been a struggle (work life). When I am at work, I am very American and at home I am very Latina . . . there is a shifting that takes place. You are nurturing, you are there for your family, but at work you need to (be assertive). We have to do it 200 percent. For a Latina woman, our culture is more ingrained . . . we have to do it all and take care and handle family.” During another interview, a Latina who married a “gringo” shared this humorous comment: “My mother didn’t approve of my extensive work-related travel. *‘Tienes suerte que te casaste con un Americano porque un Latino no te hubiera dejado . . .’*” [Translation: You are lucky that you married an American man because a Latino would not have let you . . . (travel, etc.)]

Whether compromising by working harder and smarter, or finding a mate who is accepting of the cultural “pulls” on Latina women, more and more of us are finding solutions to blending traditions with present day realities. Latinas are successful in moving forward, as evidenced by the increases of those attending college, the growth of Latinas in the workplace, and the number of new Latina entrepreneurs. The younger generation of Latino couples are finding it easier to have powerful careers and to share responsibilities at home. One younger Latina thought leader shared this comment on living in two worlds: “While family is most important, sometimes you rely on your spouse to handle the children and other things . . . it’s a juggle, a concerted effort to prioritize, and respect and support for each other. My husband and I have a 50/50 relationship, in that both of us can perform and are responsible for all aspects of our family lives. We do everything like a partnership. If I can cook, and do for the kids, he can, too.”

**LATINA LEADING VOICES INTERVIEW*****On Challenges in the Workplace***

As a Latina, it's time for our power—our buying power—to be recognized. My viewpoint is that if you don't reckon with us and understand us, make an effort to reach us on our terms, then you risk losing us. We have tremendous buying power and it would be something that would affect your bottom line eventually. This occurs not only at a retail level but at an employment level, as well. If you don't meet our needs both at the retail level and at the employer level then we'll find a way to do it on our own and we won't need you at some point. So, my message to corporations would be: pay attention.

***“When I am at work, I am very American and at home I am very Latina . . .”***

Sixty-two percent of Latinas who are married and have children under age 18 are in the workforce, which is lower than rates for other female groups. More specifically, 71 percent of married non-Hispanic White mothers with children under age 18 are in the workforce, 82 percent of married Black mothers are in the workforce, and 66 percent of married Asian mothers also work. It *appears* on the surface that married Hispanic mothers have the lowest labor force participation of all ethnic women. I would argue that Hispanic women are not stay-at-home mothers in the traditional mainstream American sense. Instead, these Latinas, who are very industrious, and very motivated to provide the best care for their families, and who may need additional income for household living, education, and other financial goals, often complement traditional work with a second income stream. This second income stream is often found in direct selling.

The direct-selling industry that sells to consumers through independent distributors, party plans, and through network marketing, provides an effective means of generating income while balancing the needs of home and other responsibilities. Many Latinas have discovered the ben-

efits of direct selling and many direct sellers have discovered that Latina women as excellent prospects, as well. Companies such as Avon Products, Inc., JAFRA Cosmetics, Tupperware, Princess House, and others have been successful in growing sales by recruiting and selling to Latinas.

Latinas, especially those foreign-born who may come to this country at an older age and lack the educational credentials of their U.S.-born Latina sisters, are looking for ways to create income to *supplement* their full time jobs or income to represent their *primary* means of livelihood. They, along with U.S.-born Latinas, appreciate direct selling for the greater control that it offers in work-life balance. While many corporations are making significant advancements in providing flexible work arrangements for their employees, corporations in the direct-selling industry have long recognized the value they offer independent distributors in giving them control over their work schedules.

This unique characteristic of direct selling is paying off for them with the ethnic markets, and with Latinas in particular. Today, according to the Direct Selling Association (DSA) over 15 percent of their company members' distributors are Hispanic and this number continues to grow.

### **LATINA LEADING VOICES INTERVIEW**

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#### ***On Mentoring Other Women***

When I mentor younger women, I work to help them understand to be self empowered, take initiative, be smart about what you're doing, ask questions but only after you've really tried to answer them on your own. And be creative; don't let boundaries stop you; never let someone else tell you what your potential is or your capability. You know that in your heart and reach for the stars every time. And so for other women, Latina like myself, it's imperative for them to understand this as well.

For those Latinas who opt to achieve success and accomplishment in the corporate sector, there are other challenges that often characterize their journey. Josy Laza Gallagher, Senior Consultant at FutureWork Institute and First Vice President of Madrinas, an organization of Latina

executives dedicated to the advancement of other Latinas in corporations comments: “Latinas have the unique challenge of language, culture, assimilation, family work/life balance, and extended family to contend with. Yet, we are essential to the foundation and growth of the corporate workplace. Success depends on a mutual exchange between corporations and Latinas to win.”

Among some there is a misconception that Latinas are willing to wait until they are past a certain age to excel or that they simply don't want to advance. One Latina executive interviewed for this book stated, “Sometimes, our firms fail to see our potential, or put us in a position but never come back to see if we are interested in doing something else or something more.” Another executive said that some Latinas hold themselves back from moving forward. “We are so grateful for the promotion that we don't even think to consider that there is further upward mobility.” She goes on to say that mentoring becomes difficult because there are few Latinas in senior level positions in the company. As such, some Latinas seek camaraderie and support from Black women in management. Some believe that a Black woman would share the same passions for progression and advancement as a Latina and have some successful solutions to share to help climb the corporate ladder.

Building trust among women of color in the workplace is exactly what Stephanie Counts and Dee Dixon, co-founders of The Women's Intercultural Exchange (WIE) believe is necessary for success in the workplace. “We saw a strong need to examine trust among women of color. Women of color were starting businesses at a faster rate than the rest of economy; they have one trillion dollars in buying power, but they are not sitting at the corporate table. We commissioned a study of women and found that women of color had a startling level of only 22 percent trust for Caucasian women.” The WIE is focused on creating partnerships in the community that build awareness and bridges of trust among Latina, Black, Asian, Native American, Caucasian and other diverse women's groups.

## 25% THINK ABOUT IT

**U.S. Hispanic Women will account for a significant portion of the new workforce talent pool. How does this affect your decisions about:**

### **Your Work Life Flexibility Programs**

Do you offer work life flexibility programs for your employees? What are the participation rates by women of color ethnic groups? Latina women?

### **Your Employee Affinity Groups**

How do you support employee affinity groups among women and diverse audiences? Is there a specific group or sub-group that addresses the needs of Latina women? How can you encourage more dialog on the issues of importance to Latina women in the workplace? Which companies should you benchmark progress against?

### **Recruiting & Rewarding**

Are you consciously working to increase penetration of Latina talent in your workforce, within independent distributor and wholesale groups, in your supplier base? Do you have the correct compensation and reward structure in place to motivate your team to achieve business targets among diverse consumers? Do you have market awareness and training tools available (through company intranet sites, downloadable diversity tool kits, local market action planning materials) for your teams?

## **Dismantling myths**

### **1. Latinas are not monolithic**

Not only are Hispanics different from the point of view of country of origin, but also they differ in levels of acculturation. Highly respected research firms, such as Synovate, have done a great deal of work on the subject of acculturation. Rather than attempting to summarize this wealth of information here, I would summarize by stating that there are

three distinct groups of Latinas that vary on degree of cultural adaptation, language preference, and education/affluence. It is important for companies to understand which segment has the greatest potential for its products and services.

**Acculturated Hispanic women** are primarily second and third generation Latinos, whose surnames are Spanish in origin. Their knowledge of Spanish may be limited, and their media preference is heavily weighted towards English-language content and programming. Approximately 55 percent of their media usage is in English (TV, radio, print). They tend to be younger, better educated, and more affluent than other groups. They represent a high degree of value to companies whose products or services are technological in nature and are higher priced.

**Partially acculturated Hispanic women** consume media in both English and Spanish, and are comfortable in each, spending approximately 40 percent of their time with English-language media. Importantly, both acculturated and partially acculturated Hispanics maintain strong Latino pride and retain elements of their heritage in the form of traditionally prepared foods, ethnic music, and conversational Spanish.

**Unacculturated Hispanic women** tend to be older and Spanish-language dominant. They are generally recent immigrants and include both older and younger women. The common unifier for unacculturated Hispanics is the lack of English-language proficiency and strong reliance on Spanish language as the basis of communication. Not surprisingly, more than 80 percent of their media is consumed in Spanish.

## ***2. Latinas are not all Caucasian***

Contrary to popular belief, Hispanics are not all Caucasian and fair skinned with straight hair. There are U.S. Latinos and Latinas who are light-skinned, brown-skinned, dark-skinned, have kinky, wavy, and straight hair, and both broad and narrow facial features. Similarly, there are Hispanics with blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair, Caucasian skin. There

is a world of Afro Latinos that lies *beyond the stereotypes* that are portrayed in the media and in advertising. And I, along with 11 million other U.S. Latinas, am in that mixed in-between world of African-descended Hispanics. This does not include an additional 10 to 11 million Latino men in the U.S. who claim mixed African ancestry.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 44.5 percent of all Hispanics indicated they were of “mixed” racial heritage, and an additional 2 percent claimed African ancestry. From a historical perspective, only 5 percent of the African slaves that were traded during the Middle passage were sent to the United States; 95 percent were sent to South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. The first slaves to arrive in the Western Hemisphere went to Hispaniola—today’s Dominican Republic—not Virginia. And, they arrived 100 years *earlier* than they did in the United States. So the impact and influence of African people, customs, music, and food is *infused* in Latino culture. Dr. Marta Vega, President and Founder of the Caribbean Cultural Center in New York has done extensive research on the African Diaspora experience. I encourage you to contact her organization ([www.cccadi.org](http://www.cccadi.org)) for more information. Also, [www.vidaafrolatina.com](http://www.vidaafrolatina.com) and [www.caoba.org](http://www.caoba.org) are two websites that provide lifestyle and product information for Afro Latinos—in both English and Spanish.

From a marketing point of view, this audience of Afro Latinos has unique product needs and preferences that are more closely aligned with the African-American market (cosmetics, skin care, hair care, toiletries, shaving products, music, fashion), yet the culture and language is in tune with the Hispanic market. They are a segment that straddles more than one audience and cannot be pigeonholed into one group. Companies who are proactive and looking for untapped and under-served markets need look no further.

- Globally there are over 150 million male and female persons of Afro-Latino descent. Approximately 22 million live in the U.S.
- U.S. Afro Latinas will grow approximately 13 percent by 2010 to almost 12.7 million. For perspective, this is as large as the current Asian-American population.

- The economic buying power of U.S. Afro Latinas was estimated at \$160 billion in 2005.
- U.S. Afro Latinas will control an estimated \$215 billion in economic buying power by 2012—a 34 percent increase over 2005 levels.
- If U.S. Afro Latinas were a country, their economic buying power in 2012 would rank them #31 on the World Economic GDP Rank, ahead of countries like: Argentina (\$214 billion), Portugal (\$193 billion), and Venezuela (\$182 billion).

### LATINA LEADING VOICES INTERVIEW

#### *On Latina Stereotypes*

There's a stereotype of Latina women as great housekeepers, possibly that being their occupation; stay-at-home moms. That may be true for some but it's not true for all. These are intelligent, career-minded women; very entrepreneurial. They'll go out, open a business, be very diligent in pursuing a business and be very independent.

The amount of money that companies leave on the table because they do not understand Latinas is unimaginable because Latinas are aspirational; they have big dreams and they'll try very hard to attain those dreams. They've worked for so long in the home and with the family and placed so many things in priority that now they're looking at putting themselves on the path to achievement. And they're doing it; they're doing it in big numbers and they need to be reckoned with because they're an audience that comprises a large portion of your marketplace . . . So, I think that's the reality versus the stereotype America has of us Latina women.

### ***3. Latinas can be reached using English language and digital, non-traditional media.***

While Spanish-dominant Latinas are an important group to market and sell to, there is a growing acknowledgement among media and marketing companies of the English-dominant and bi-lingual Latina,



and the need to create targeted strategies and programs to reach her. According to the National Survey of Latinos, 25 percent of all Hispanics are English-dominant, 28 percent are bi-lingual, and 47 percent are Spanish-dominant. Therefore, marketers have the opportunity to reach Latinas in general market media using relevant advertising strategies and content that has cultural relevance. Lifestyle situations, talent, music, and themes that appeal to bi-lingual and English dominant Latinas will be most effective. The Internet offers great value in reaching Latinas, especially U.S.-born Latinas. Studies show that acculturation, language, and education play a role in Hispanic Internet use, with a higher degree of involvement among U.S. born Hispanics and lower involvement among Spanish-dominant Hispanics, although this segment is growing. According to a study released by Pew Hispanic Center:

- Seventy-eight percent of Latinos who are English-dominant and 76 percent of bilingual Latinos use the Internet, compared with 32 percent of Spanish-dominant Hispanic adults.
- Seventy-six percent of U.S.-born Latinos go online, compared with 43 percent of those born outside the U.S.
- Eighty-nine percent of Latinos who have a college degree, 70 percent of Latinos who completed high school, and 31 percent of Hispanic adults who did not complete high school go online.
- Mexicans, the largest national origin group in the U.S. Latino population, are among the least likely to go online: 52 percent of Latinos of Mexican descent use the Internet.
- One in four Hispanics has visited YouTube, which is comparable to the general markets. But among Latinas, according to Synovate Research, only 20 percent had visited the site, compared with 41 percent of Latino men.
- Some Latinos who do not use the Internet are connecting to the communications revolution via cell phone. Fully 59 percent of Latino adults have a cell phone and 49 percent of Latino cell phone users send and receive text messages on their phones.

## **Best practices in reaching Latinas**

Chapter nine provides a detailed action plan on how to access the growth potential of the women-of-color markets. Suffice to say that having top level CEO commitment and visible engagement to diversity remains the number one “best practice” in generating incremental market share among diverse consumers. This commitment must clearly come from the top, be reinforced in regular business planning and sales tracking meetings, and be validated through budgets, which are aligned with the diversity business case. Chapter nine will begin with this basic foundational tenet and provide more in-depth advice on how to deepen your relationship with the U.S. Latina market. Also, you will find checklists and reference tools in the Appendix of this book, which will be helpful as you craft an action plan to grow your business among this target.

We’ve covered a great deal in this chapter and armed you with vital information about the strength of the Hispanic women’s market as a true gold mine of opportunity for companies across many different industries. Let’s now turn our attention to the African American woman—a consumer audience that generates more economic buying power than Latina and Asian women combined!