

Driving Relevance

The Vidal Partnership

At The Vidal Partnership (TVP), we believe any brand can be successfully woven into the fabric of the consumer's Hispanic life. Even a premium priced beer from Holland in a green bottle, with a name that doesn't end in a vowel.

Despite having no U.S. Hispanic marketing investment in the early '90's, Heineken enjoyed a default leadership status among imported beers in the east coast Hispanic marketplace. Primarily of Caribbean origin Hispanic consumers on the east coast knew Heineken as a premium beer in their respective countries of origin. Then total beer category sales struggled late in the decade and beer marketers looked to the burgeoning U.S. Hispanic consumer for growth. Heineken came under attack by other premium beers from places like Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Corona and Presidente were alive in the Hispanic world just because of their origins and identities. Heineken had taken its default Hispanic brand equity for granted and now was not ready to fend off the attacks. Quantitative tracking confirmed that the brand had ended up with no perceived superiority over imports or domestics and an unclear identity in the marketplace. In the back half of the '90's Heineken's default leadership with east coast Hispanics had disappeared.

If all this wasn't enough, Heineken's sales force and its distributors lost faith and began focusing their energy and resources on other brands. The only way to stimulate their motivation was to prove that Heineken could come alive and be woven into the fabric of the consumer's Hispanic world.

Heineken USA hired TVP in January of '98. In the next decade Hispanic contribution to Heineken volume grew to almost a full third of total U.S. volume. It regained leadership share in its traditional, core, Caribbean, east coast markets and the premium priced, beer from Holland in a green bottle, with a name that doesn't end in a vowel, has grown dramatically in the predominantly Mexican centers as well. Heineken's distributor network was electrified and the ANA twice recognized Heineken as the Hispanic Marketer of the Year. Along the way Heineken picked up several "Best of Show" and gold Ad Age's Hispanic Creative Awards and Radio Mercury Awards.

Over the years Heineken consistently addressed discerning, male, Hispanic beer consumers in their relevant media environments with unexpected advertising that leveraged music, language, casting and uniquely relevant context. Heineken's advertising leveraged deep consumer insight all wrapped up in the same executional elements as Heineken's general advertising. "Dance Partner" is just one of many examples. In this spot the context is a Hispanic wedding reception, the classic latin music makes everyone want to dance and a clever young Hispanic Heineken loyalist knows just how to use Heineken's premiumness and the relationship between a beautiful young lady and her aunt to rise above others. Since the advertising relied on unique behavioral relevance and not just language, it lent itself to execution in English and was rotated into Heineken's general media schedules wherever there was programming with high Hispanic audience composition. It didn't matter whether the consumer watched the football game on FOX or the futbol match on Univision, the consumer always saw Heineken brand advertising that felt like one brand. On some level of consciousness the advertising whether in Spanish or English convinced consumers that Heineken really knew them and their world.

Heineken's success took more than just hiring TVP. Great work that connects brands and Hispanic consumers is never the work of just the Agency and it never happens by accident. Successful Hispanic marketers bring to their Hispanic marketing the same standards they apply in their general efforts. They are clients that roll up their sleeves, and foster integration of themselves, their entire organization and both their general and Hispanic Agencies every step of the way.

Heineken USA and TVP proved that even a premium priced beer from Holland in a green bottle, with a name that doesn't end in a vowel, could be so very well woven into the fabric of the Hispanic consumer's life.