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The Multicultural Media Boom

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By Rachel Meranus

According to recently published census figures, approximately 40 percent of the population under 30 is classified as "non-white" and minority groups are expected to be the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population over the next 50 years. Just as companies have modified their product lines to meet the interests of different market segments, they're seeing the benefit of using multicultural marketing and PR tactics. Gina Amaro Rudan, director of multicultural and international markets for PR Newswire, offers her insights into how small businesses can leverage this opportunity.

Entrepreneur.com: Why should businesses consider multicultural marketing in their communications activities?

Rudan: Reaching different cultures living within the United States can have a tremendous impact on a company's bottom line. For small businesses that have limited time and money to devote to marketing and PR, the impact can be even more profound.

The combined buying power of the Hispanic, black, Asian and Native American communities is currently in excess of \$1.5 trillion. Hispanics, for example, understand the importance of supporting, partnering with and using small companies. The primary reason for this enthusiasm is that Hispanics in the United States are opening small businesses three times faster than the national average, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Also, the infrastructure of Hispanic communities was built by Hispanic small businesses and the commitment of entrepreneurs.

How influential are culturally focused media outlets?

Rudan: One word: extremely. The growth of culturally focused content and programming has exploded over the past 20 years. There is no greater proof of its influence than the \$3 billion price Viacom paid for BET in 2000.

On a more practical, day-to-day level, the power of culturally focused content is most evident in the Hispanic community. Overall, 2006 was an explosive year for Hispanic print, television, cable, radio and internet. In total, there are 385 weeklies and 37 daily newspapers targeted to Hispanic readers. And it's not just print. Univision, Telemundo (owned by NBC) and Azteca America, the three major Hispanic TV networks, account for more than 100 local stations and hundreds of cable affiliates through the United States. And, according to Arbitron, Spanish-language format radio holds 18.9 percent of all radio listeners aged 25 to 34.

What are some of the basic strategies, tools and techniques small businesses can employ to reach specific cultural groups?

Rudan: First, do your research. Know your audience, where they get their news and the reporters who write the news. Once you've done your research, it's time to get your name and business into the public eye. Introduce your organization to the local ethnic media. Initiate contact with the editors, reporters and writers, and tailor your press releases to multicultural media. It may also be a good idea to send the press releases in the language of their media.

Becoming a member of multicultural organizations is a great first step. For example, become a member of a local Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. You don't have to be Hispanic to be a member. This also goes for black Asian American markets, as well as other minority groups.

Has the same growth in online communications--news sites, blogs, social media--been seen in the multicultural space?

Rudan: Without question. Many companies have neglected black and Hispanic online consumers due to the belief that their rates of technology adoption lagged behind the general market. While that perception may have been accurate in the past, it isn't the case today. Cultural groups are now often ahead of the mainstream in their use of the internet.

In fact, among teens ages 12 to 17, English-speaking Hispanics show the highest rate of internet use of all ethnicities, and blacks are more likely than the general population to use a mobile device for internet access, to stream audio or video content online, and to use the internet for research.

Do specific business segments benefit more from engaging in culturally focused marketing and PR?

Rudan: All business segments have an opportunity with multicultural markets. But the categories that tend to do the best when engaging in multicultural marketing efforts are: food and beverage, automotive, apparel, personal care, entertainment, sports, telecommunications, health care, banking and finance, and insurance.

Rachel Meranus is Entrepreneur.com's "PR" columnist and vice president, public relations at [PR Newswire](#). Get more information about PR Newswire and public relations with their [PR Toolkit](#) for small businesses.

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