

Navarro Succeeds in Being ‘All Things to All Hispanics’

MEDLEY, Fla. — When it comes to reaching Hispanics, Navarro Discount Pharmacy is “el rey.”

The king of chain drug merchandising to Latinos is “all things to all Hispanics,” Navarro vice president of marketing Cristy Leon-Rivero said this summer.

It helps that the vast majority of the chain’s employees are themselves Latino. Their ties to South Florida’s Hispanics are reinforced by bilingual circulars, such as the July issue that said, “Celebrando la independencia de su país” (Celebrating the independence of your country). Leon-Rivero explained that besides the birth of the United States, the month marks the founding of Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela.

Navarro has singular expertise in merchandising and marketing beauty products for Latinas. It is known for a fragrance department “second to none,” said Leon-Rivero. The fragrance counter has a far greater assortment than those of department stores, with prices discounted up to 70%, and without the inconvenience of a big box, she pointed out.

The chain promotes the department with a guarantee to match any competitor’s price. “There have been very few cases where we’ve had to do that,” Leon-Rivero noted. The appeal of fragrance counters is heightened by the specialists who staff them and frequent product demonstrations, she added.

Another strength of the chain is tailoring its mix to different ethnic groups within the Spanish-speaking population. While other retailers may see the region’s Hispanics as homogeneous, Navarro’s marketers and merchandisers are aware that, for example, the chain’s Doral store serves a disproportionate number of Venezuelans and Colombians. Circulars advertise the Bene Casa arepera (arepa maker) for South Americans who want to make one of their favorite food items, while the store in Homestead carries Nescafé coffee, the preferred brand of the area’s many Mexican agricultural workers.

When it comes to health care, the July circular said on the front page, “Our pharmacists represent all Hispanic cultures.” It had photos of pharmacists Marta Selgado of Honduras, Carla Wertman of the United States, Patricia Marquez of Colombia, Gerardo Torres of Puerto Rico, Bertha Rueda of Peru and Mirielys Almenares of Cuba.

Given all the nationalities served by Navarro, the chain is highly receptive to stocking favorite products from people’s homelands, said Leon-Rivero. A lot of people want to use, and eat, the products and the food they grew up with, she said. “We want to help our customers maintain their traditions.” Also, the retailer is rolling out the Vida Mia (My Life) private label line with bilingual packaging.