

MediaPost's

Engage:Hispanics

By John Burn Marante Monday, Aug. 18, 2014

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [RSS](#) [REPLY TO EDITOR](#) [HOME](#)

What Navarro Pharmacy Can Teach CVS

With an eye on strengthening CVS's position in the Hispanic marketplace, the company recently announced plans to acquire Navarro Discount Pharmacies, the largest Hispanic-owned drugstore chain in the U.S. With over 50 years of experience serving the Hispanic community in South Florida, there's a lot a successful local chain can teach the national giant on marketing to Latinos. This recollection of my first visit to a Navarro drugstore explains much of their success.

I was on a mission. Not the typical kind for a drugstore visit, I was out to purchase a stove-top espresso coffee maker. Yes, strange as it sounds, my Cuban/Puerto Rican heritage calls for having an espresso coffee every morning, and I knew Navarro's was sure to carry it. Once in the store, I asked an employee to point me in the right direction and suddenly I was engaged in a friendly conversation about three different sizes, manufacturers and benefits of each machine. After making a selection, I passed a friendly pharmacist explaining how to use a medication in a "family-like" tone to a customer. I then made my way to the checkout where I was greeted with a smile, and made eye contact with the cashier.

It's a simple story, but the lessons and insights for successfully marketing to Hispanics are plain and simple to see and can be grouped into three groups: Mix de Productos (Relevant Merchandise), Marketing a la Comunidad (Caring for the Community) and Service like a Familia (Customer Service). Some additional thoughts on each below.

1. Mix de Productos (Relevant Merchandise) - Navarro's offers products not typically found in drug stores. Religious items (candles), Fabuloso multi-purpose cleaner or my preferred ground espresso coffee brand La Llave are all staples. From wireless to ethnic products, Navarro is that bodega one-stop-shop neighborhood store we (the Hispanic community) knew growing up, but with the added benefits of a drugstore.

Navarro seems to have cracked the code in tailoring their product mix to different Hispanic nationality groups based on store location. In Doral, for instance, the store caters to the Venezuelan community (yes they sell "areperas"), in Coral Gables they offer products desirable to Cuban and Central American Hispanics and in South Homestead, they accommodate the Mexican culture. Navarro's selects their merchandise to fit the needs and traditions of the nationalities within each store's individual communities.

2. Marketing to La Comunidad (Caring for the Community) - Navarro's doesn't just sell products, it takes care of the community. Whether by developing a local club for patients with diabetes called 'Mommy and Me' or setting up information centers to educate consumers about the new health care reforms and their customers' individual options, Navarro lives up to their higher purpose. It's true that "no other pharmacy in Miami te cuida mejor" (cares for you better) if you are Hispanic. Other pharmacies may take care of you through clinical advice and medications, but Navarro takes care of you better.

3. Service Like a Family - For Hispanics, a successful shopping experience requires "calor humano," which essentially

means human warmth/touch. It's about having a connection, and having the store employees go beyond what is expected. Latinos are social shoppers. We don't tend to shop alone and expect an engaging experience, whether it's a conversation with staff or other shoppers. This community feeling is what drives loyalty and brings community members back to the store "where they know me."

As CVS tries to incorporate Navarro's success in other Hispanic communities across America, the big question is: can "calor humano" (human warmth) be trained and institutionalized into a corporate HR book training manual or is it something that has to start at the DNA of the corporate culture under a new definition of the value of "caring"? Assuming the human warmth can be trained, will CVS be able to also recruit with enough ethnic diversity (Asian, African American, Hispanics, etc.) at senior manager levels to really understand first cultural cues?

Whatever the results, I admire CVS's aggressive move to not only strengthen their position in the fast-growing Hispanic market through an acquisition, but also their desire to gain insights on how CVS can play a key role in every community in which they do business.

[Post your response to the public Engage:Hispanics blog.](#)

[See what others are saying on the Engage:Hispanics blog.](#)

[John Burn Marante](#) is on the shopper marketing leadership team within Geometry Global, part of the WPP Group.



You are receiving this newsletter at catalina@wowfactorusa.com as part of your free membership with MediaPost. If this issue was forwarded to you and you would like to begin receiving a copy of your own, please visit our site - www.mediapost.com - and click on [subscribe] in the e-newsletter box.

For advertising opportunities see our online [media kit](#).

If you'd rather not receive this newsletter in the future [click here](#).

We welcome and appreciate forwarding of our newsletters in their entirety or in part with proper attribution.



© 2014 MediaPost Communications, 15 East 32nd St., 7th floor, New York, NY 10016