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hispanic retail branding



UNO

DESIGN BEGINS

=====UNO co-founder Luis Fitch has a message for those in the design community: HIT THE PAVEMENT.=====

IN THE STREETS

THE SITUATION

Many designers never get out in “the street” where consumers live, shop, and work to gain insight into who “the consumer” really is.

THE TECHNIQUE

UNO uses a market-segmentation system called “Filtros™” to segment consumers on factors like architecture, art, food, heroes, language, music, and religion.

THE BOTTOM LINE

In order to design for your clients, you have to know who they are and become a part of their lives – understand how they think, what they like, and why they do the things they do.

By Anthony Mazzotti

He wiped the sweat from his brow and continued securing the roof shingles in place. It was early in the morning, and he and the men he was working with had already put in four hours as the community below them began their commutes into the city. In another hour he would be permitted to play his music from the small radio that sat next to his toolbox. He considered it for a moment and then decided it wouldn't hurt to turn it on if he kept the volume low.

After adjusting the station, he reached for an energy drink and let the liquid do its work. He closed his eyes and concentrated on the light, cool breeze. A man with a notepad yelled up to him from the street below and interrupted his short break. The man asked him something about his drink. Why did he buy that brand? Why not coffee? Could he speak with him for a few minutes? “Yeah,” the man on the roof said. “I’ll give you a few minutes.”

THE man with the notepad was Luis Fitch. And it was just another day at the “office” for the UNO co-founder.

“Branding and design do not happen in a vacuum, and they don’t start with advanced software tools and the latest computers,” Fitch said. “It all starts in the street” – the street where consumers live, shop, and work; where the products hit the shelves; and where the target markets respond – or not.

“You’ve got brand managers for these mega-corporations and agencies who bring in focus groups, and consultants, and designers – and not one of them has gone out into the street, to the stores in the actual communities and browsed the shelves,” Fitch said. “Not one of them has taken the time to talk with the consumers, the shoppers, on their turf, and actually tried to gain insight into who the real consumer is.”

BECOME PART OF THE COMMUNITY

AND therein lies UNO’s secret to landing the accounts of some of the largest brand names in America. Fitch doesn’t just help his clients market to the community, he becomes part of it. He gains insights and understanding into the target market that aren’t normally revealed by standard campaign methods.

When designing a package meant for the Hispanic community for a large client, Fitch went out into the streets and handed cameras out to moms, asking them to take pictures of their kitchens. “I had hundreds of photographs on my walls, and patterns started to emerge. This is not the kind of information you get in a focus group,” Fitch said.

You may know who your customers are, but do you KNOW your customers?

The major brands are listening: Frito Lay, Quaker, Gamesa, Kimberly-Clark, Target Stores, Mervyn's Stores, MTV Latino and Josten's are just some of the major brands that have engaged UNO's services. And his methods have garnered national recognition, as Fitch was named one of *Graphic Design USA* magazine's "People To Watch" in 2006.

Although UNO markets itself as "branding for the new majority," UNO is transcending Hispanic markets as well. Target Stores engaged UNO to assist them in bringing wine-in-a-box to market. UNO worked with a top wine consultant, and with the understanding of Target's consumers, developed a wheel that illustrated which wines would go best with common items, such as peanuts and pizza. (see fig.1) "We were able to get major brands to help pay for the production of the wheel as it promoted their products as well," Fitch said. "It was a big hit."

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

MELISSA entered the Cub Foods store near her home, her two kids in tow. The youngest girl, Sammy, was still decked-out in the black and gold soccer uniform that has come to define her mother's Tuesday afternoons. A glance at the time displayed on her phone reminded Melissa that Tom would be home shortly, and she still had to help get Sammy's homework done, drop Cathy off to watch the neighbor's kids, and make dinner before six tonight. Well, she considered, she wouldn't actually make dinner.

She found her way to the frozen food section of a nearby supermarket and saw a new brand of tamales on the shelf. She and Tom had recently returned from a vacation in Mexico to trace their family tree, and the tamale package reminded

her of the little shop at the corner near their hotel. She picked it up and observed that the writing was entirely in English. Still, everything about the packaging promised authentic Mexican tamales. The packages of tamales on the shelf below were written in Spanish and English, but the neon colors reminded her more of ice cream than tamales. No thanks, she thought. She put the package that reminded her of the little shop in Mexico in her cart. As she began to move toward the checkout, she took a step back and grabbed one more, for next Tuesday – just in case.

Six months earlier, a family approached Fitch with a dilemma. They had just emigrated from Mexico, couldn't find work, and had only the sales of their tamales to make ends meet.

"What my clients had was authentic Mexican recipes" Fitch said. "What they lacked was an understanding of how to increase their market share beyond the Latino community. And that's where we came in. We developed a plan to target the fully acculturated, third-generation Hispanic market and designed the packaging for that particular market." (see fig.2)

"We started in one Cub Foods store and sold out. Then we went into a second store and sold out. Then a third, and sold out. Now they're in all 65 Cub Foods store in Minnesota, and my clients can barely keep up with demand," Fitch said. "With shelf space at such a premium, major brands wish for that type of success. And that success came primarily through the use of Filtros™, which helped us in our marketing to the acculturated market."

USING FILTROS™ TO UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMER

"FILTROS™" was developed by UNO as part of their philosophy that one must truly understand the customer – in this case, the Hispanic customer. Similar to Claritas' Prizm and ESRI's Acorn segmentation systems, Filtros™ helps identify the habits of acculturated, partially acculturated, and non-acculturated Hispanics in America. (see fig.3)

"The level of acculturation is a critical factor when segmenting the Hispanic market," Fitch said. "We look at how far our client's particular audience has come on the path toward integrating American values, habits, language patterns, and



fig.1 Andrea Immer Wine Wheel for Target



fig.2 La Loma Tamales packaging

behaviors. This will have a dramatic impact on how we market to that segment.”

He explained further: “Non-aculturated Hispanics, for instance, prefer Spanish for all forms of communication and prefer traditional Latino brands and foods. Partially acculturated Hispanics use English for some modes of communication, and although they prefer traditional Latino brands, they’ve begun to recognize and incorporate American brands. Fully acculturated Hispanics have the highest levels of income, prefer English, and are very familiar with American brands and foods. Each of these groups has to be approached differently.

“No true Mexican is going to go to the frozen food section of a grocery store to look for tamales. But the third-generation Hispanic soccer mom from Edina will,” Fitch said. “And with major retailers having locations in Hispanic communities, partial Hispanic communities, and non-Hispanic communities, they really have to cover all the bases. That’s where Filtros™ really shines. We look at everything, from architecture, art, and food, to heroes, language, music, and religion. The whole picture.

“At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter what market you are targeting if you don’t understand that market. Brand managers, marketers and designers have to understand that,” Fitch

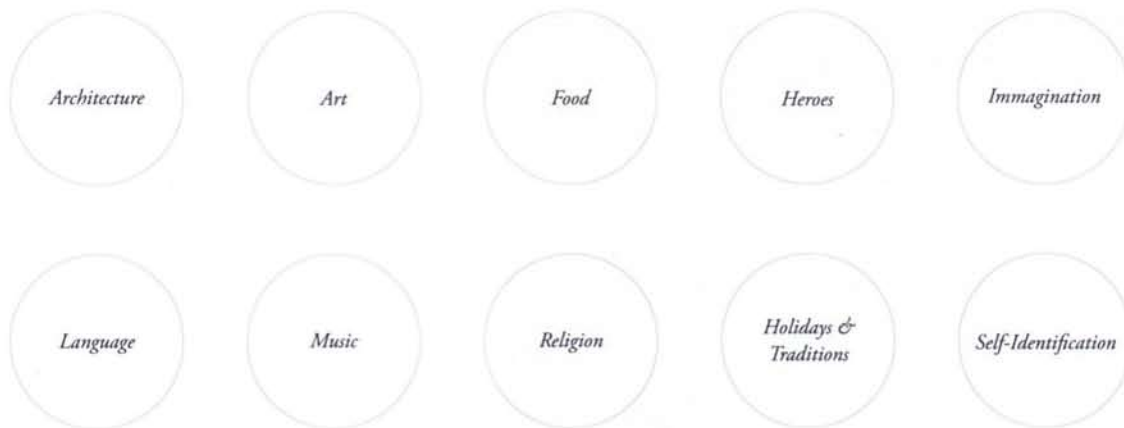


fig.3 UNO Filtros™ main categories

said. “If you’re marketing a chocolate cookie for kids, then taste the chocolate. Get the reaction to the cookies from the kids on the street. Watch them open up the package. And then go back and design,” Luis stated. “My guess is that the majority of designers don’t do that. Sure, they create trendy and beautiful work with great design and typography, but are they identifying and solving problems?”

A few minutes turned into 20 for the man on the roof. Luis had learned that the energy drink’s packaging wasn’t a factor in this man’s purchasing decision. To his interviewee, they all looked the same. It wasn’t the price either, or the name, or the celebrity who could be seen drinking the energy concoction on posters and television. It was simply...the flavor. The group of men that gathered around him all agreed they wanted more flavors. Luis made a notation in his file and thanked the men for their time. Another day at the office, indeed.

Anthony Mazzotti is the principal of Page One Communications, a copywriting service in the Twin Cities with clients throughout the United States. Anthony writes copy for brochures, websites, ads, press releases, newsletters, ghost letters, and helps companies write and develop business plans. He has lived and worked in more than 40 countries and has a diverse background in management, sales, marketing, and information services. Anthony is the author of a novel and screenplay and has been a national public speaker for Vistage, an organization of more than 10,000 CEOs and presidents. He can be reached at 612. 325 2271.