

Hispanic Market Overview.

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Washington, D.C. has changed. But, as you'll read in this 16th annual report, the need to target Hispanic consumers in the most efficient way possible has not. Here's how to "Hear their Song" – and not get drowned out by loud distractions.



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‘We’re Not Muted. We’re Mobilized.’

As INFUSION by Castells founder and leader **Liz Castells-Heard** shares, marketers aren't scared when it comes to reaching multicultural consumers. Agencies aren't quieting down either. "Culture doesn't pause for politics—or ROI," she says.

"We expect 2025 to be a strong year," Castells-Heard said as the second quarter of 2025 began. "No, we're not scared or silenced—we're recalibrating." For her shop, which counts Charter Communications' Spectrum among its largest clients and is unaffected by its total market creative and media shop changes, the bigger concern isn't political pushback. Rather, Castells-Heard comments, "It's the one-size-fits-all mentality some clients still cling to, which this does feed."

For Liz, multicultural agencies have never had the luxury of complacency. "We've always had to prove ROI—and fight harder to prove the business value of cultural relevance with data. This moment just reminds us to be more focused and louder .. if that's even possible for me," she says with a laugh, as Castells-Heard has long been known for her deep and highly audible speech.

INFUSION by Castells' clients also include McDonald's and Toyota. All understand that cultural marketing isn't a "nice-to-have" thing. Rather, they see it as a growth engine. Commenting on the political discourse sweeping our nation on a day when President Trump signaled a potential departure from the administration of SpaceX, X and Tesla head Elon Musk, Castells-Heard said, "The headlines may be loud, but no brand is willing to forfeit sales tied to multicultural audiences."



"Latinos now make up 43% of the U.S. population and consistently outperform on ROI," she continues. "In-language and in-culture efforts aren't optional—they're business necessities. The real risk isn't backlash—it's brand irrelevance. We're not in a bind. We're building the bridge."

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THE **CULTURAL AGENCY** BUILT FOR WHAT'S NEXT.
AI-ENHANCED CREATIVITY, AGILE AND SMART. ROI-POWERED IDEAS® PROVEN EFFECTS.
FUSING CULTURES, TRUTH AND HEART. MIXING SCIENCE, STRATEGY AND ART. BREAKING THE MOLD.
ALWAYS BOLD. WE DON'T QUIT UNTIL OUR CLIENTS REPEATEDLY WIN. NO BS, JUST RESULTS.



Asked if the end of DEI has neutered multicultural marketing, Castells-Heard replies, “DEI may shrink. Demand for relevance doesn’t. Growth strategies like multicultural still stand.”

She also believes that the “DEI is not marketing” clarion call was never a dismissal. Rather, she says, it was a clarification. “DEI (Internal) belongs in HR and corporate,” she explains. “Multicultural marketing (external) belongs in brand, media, and strategy. While some DEI departments have gone quiet, the need for cultural fluency hasn’t changed. If anything, it’s clearer now who really understood the difference—and who never did.”

For Castells-Heard, the numbers speak volumes:

- 90% of U.S. adults believe inclusive ads are necessary
- 65% still feel underrepresented in mainstream media
- 68% of non-Hispanic whites believe a multicultural majority enriches American culture, and multicultural opinions even influence their brand choices.

“Marketing to multicultural audiences isn’t ‘woke’—it’s smart business,” Liz declares. “There’s strong demand for both inclusive and uniquely multicultural messaging. And they have to be delivered with both authenticity and accountability.”

Thus, even with the death of DEI for some U.S. corporations, “You can’t freeze what’s fueling growth,” Castells-Heard says.

Welcome to the era of “Culturenomics.” She comments, “The backlash against DEI is largely political—rooted in fear of quotas and isolated controversies. But the Fortune 500 companies, the latest wave being tech, retail, and finance, are keeping their DEI. All the major players are still investing in cultural marketing. Why? Because it works.

“Political noise may temporarily pressure companies to abandon DEI programs, but culturally fluent marketing isn’t going away, especially with the consumer’s high expectations of personalization. Gen Y and Gen Z consumers demand to be seen. Personalization for Hispanics and multicultural consumers is rooted in their cultural lens and identity.”

Some brands that treated culture as a PR tool may pull back, Castells-Heard says. For those that pull out, “they will be back soon because they will see sales erode just like last decade with TMA (total market vanilla that reached no one effectively).”

Marketers with a long-game mindset are doubling down. “They know that Hispanic consumers, in particular, are essential to growth,” she says. For Castells-Heard, the U.S. is now in an era when culture drives sales and where deep cultural expertise is critical to creative, media, and messaging strategy. This allows brands to show up authentically in the lives of multicultural consumers—and drive their business, she says.

“Cultural agencies like ours fill that needed gap of cultural knowledge as a complement to and collaborating with larger general market agencies,” Castells-Heard shares. “That’s the smart play for clients, and all agencies should play nice in the sandbox for the shared client success.”

INFLUENCE THAT POWERS PROGRESS

Hispanic Market Overview shared with Liz that an early theme of this year’s report was “Persist.” Asked if this is a word that best describes the Hispanic community and the multicultural marketer today, Castells-Heard comments, “Persistence isn’t survival—it’s influence and powering progress. It’s not just a theme. It’s our reality. Latinos do persist. We always have. But now we’re not just adapting and we’re leading. Bi-culturalism is at an all-time high, and U.S. Latinos are shaping what’s mainstream. They’re driving population growth and redefining what American culture looks like. Brands that get that win. Brands that don’t fall behind.”

Clients are asking better questions, Castells-Heard says. To that, “we’re delivering bigger answers but always rooted in culture, driven by performance. Multicultural and Hispanic agencies always pushed forward. Now we’re doing it with broader sharper insights, clearer KPIs, and more control of our narrative. ‘Persist’ hits home.”

As the conversation neared its conclusion, Liz was asked if she started her agency in 2025 instead of perhaps 40 years ago, would she still do it? “The short answer is: Same purpose. New playbook,” she responds. “Absolutely. I left investment banking for this ... where I’d probably be long retired. I’ve never looked back. As a Stanford MBA and a Latina, I launched this agency to uniquely focus on creative driving results (which no one was doing back then), and secondly, to elevate multicultural market representation in advertising to empowered, multidimensional portrayals. Ads feed perception, and perception shapes reality.”

That’s why Liz considers INFUSION by Castells to be “a cultural agency.” She says, “We understand both general market and multicultural consumers and where they overlap, diverge, and connect. Today, with AI tools, we’re assuring ethnic bias and blind spots are balanced. We can scale cultural relevance in smarter ways than ever before. That’s the future and we’re ready for it. It’s not just a profession. It’s purpose. It’s legacy. This isn’t the end of multicultural marketing. It’s the cultural evolution—and we’re built for it.”

