

ARF DAVID OGILVY AWARDS 2020

Award Designation and Category:

Multicultural Marketing

Campaign Title:

"This Rice Unites"/"Este Arroz Ya Nos Unió" Mahatma Rice

Year the campaign took place: May 2019 – April 2020



Brand: Riviana Foods

Creative Agency: Lopez Negrete Communications

Media Company/Agency: Lopez Negrete Communications

Research Company: Quester Market Research

Additional Affiliated Companies: N/A

Summary of the marketing challenge, methodology, insight discovered, creative execution and business impact.

Despite being a leading brand, Mahatma Rice lacked excitement and had an aging consumer profile, necessitating a revitalization and reintroduction to younger Hispanics.

Lopez Negrete developed a strategy satisfying both opportunities by targeting Hispanic Millennial food explorers, helping them overcome two key barriers:

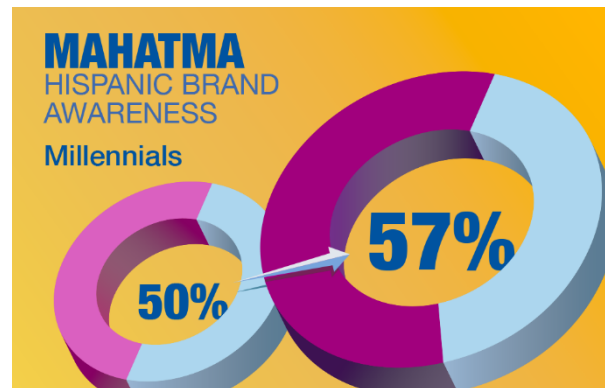
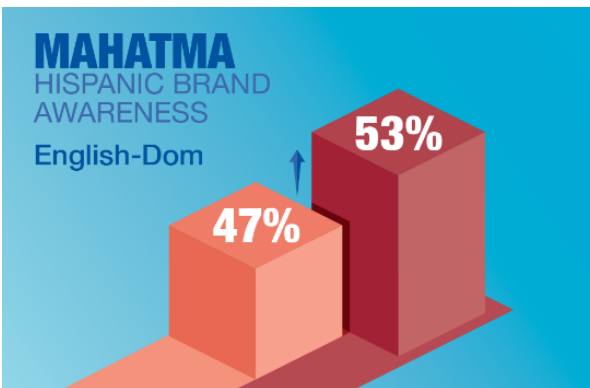
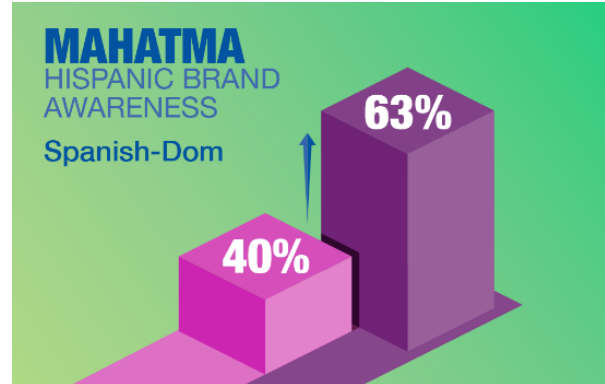
- Insecurity in cooking rice as successfully as their moms;
- Not seeing rice as an enabler for flavor and cultural explorations.

The key to this target was to bring ease and confidence to preparation, as well as excitement in culinary exploration.

To take Mahatma to a new generation, we created a 360-degree campaign, led by Hispanic but also targeting general market Millennials to build the brand among younger consumers. The campaign featured dynamic, modern graphics, contemporary musicalization, and used various digital formats. It was called "This Rice Unites."

The objective was to re-energize brand equity, increase awareness, consideration and purchase intent, especially among Millennials. The campaign increased awareness among Hispanics from 46% to 55%, with increases in Spanish-dominant (40% to 63%) and English-dominant Hispanics (47% to 53%). Among pivotal Millennial Hispanics, awareness increased from 50% to 57%. Mahatma Rice had the largest awareness increase in 2019 at a time when most rice brands lost awareness to private label.

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Consumer Insight

Hispanic Millennials needed help exploring the flavors they crave while gaining the confidence to cook as well as their parents.

Marketing Challenge

Mahatma is the leader of the “long cook” segment, defined by large-cut rice versus instant rice options. For Hispanic shoppers, long grain rice is their staple, and for generations they’ve mastered cooking it to perfection. Fast-forward to the Hispanic Millennial and that principle is not applicable: they have the palate to know what well-made rice tastes like and grew up loving to eat rice, but they are intimidated to cook it. Although certain grains like quinoa have gained popularity, rice is part of their culture and has a special place in their hearts and on their tables. The challenge for Riviana and Lopez Negrete was to grow the Hispanic consumer base and consumption volume, while continuing to provide quality positioning against private labels of lower price, yield and flavor.

Lopez Negrete developed a communications strategy focused on a unique umbrella concept, satisfying both opportunities by targeting Hispanic Millennial food explorers, helping them overcome two key barriers:

1. Insecurity around how to cook rice as successfully as their moms;
2. Not seeing rice as an enabler for their enthusiastic flavor explorations.

The key to the hearts and minds of this new target was to bring a sense of ease and confidence to the preparation, as well as a sense of exciting exploration in cuisine. Since Hispanic Millennials are highly aware of food culture and flavors, the next layer was for the creative to incorporate exciting ingredients into the traditional rice, making it a central ingredient or component that brings cultures, contrasting flavors, and people together.

Market objectives were:

- Increase sales and penetration
- Establish leadership among younger Hispanic Millennials
- Connect with younger Hispanic Millennials, creating an emotional bond
- Cement the new brand positioning among Hispanic Millennials without alienating traditional Hispanic consumers

Campaign objectives were:

- Engage Hispanic Millennials with the category and brand by portraying simple and reassuring ways to cook rice
- Excite Hispanic Millennials by showing culturally relevant ingredients and dishes, making our rice brands their culinary “Sherpa”
- Promote cultural moments of delight by showcasing delicious dishes where rice is a main protagonist instead of a side dish, which in turn

would reflect in sales volume increase, and brand differentiation against private labels

- Develop an organic media reach with a mix of broadcast, digital, social and influencers, catering to the fragmented Hispanic Millennial media landscape

Methodology

A number of different resources were used to gain insight and understanding of Hispanic Millennials and their attitudes towards cooking and use and purchasing of food. Two foundational studies were: a total market consumer segmentation, supported by a Hispanic rice consumer deep dive.

Additionally, syndicated research using the Simmons National Hispanic Consumer Survey supplemented the studies. Finally, second-party research in the form of a Mintel Rice and Cereal Study complemented our other sources.

The total market consumer segmentation had the objective to develop, identify and understand the segments and determine which segments provide the best opportunities for each Riviana brand category, based on size, purchase frequency, etc. Additionally a qualitative layer was added to develop an understanding of who these consumers are and qualitatively profile each group to bring the segment to life. The hybrid qual/quant study was conducted online as a 35-minute survey with a sample size of 2400 respondents.

The Hispanic rice consumer segment analysis included a Hispanic read-out of segment findings and – importantly – included a deep dive into the qualitative statements and verbatims that added texture and provided the basis for the strategic development and the key consumer insight.

Strategy:

The campaign was based on a foundational notion: Mahatma is your “rice authority”:

- A trustworthy and dynamic culinary Sherpa;
- A brand with the perfect rice for every meal, right every time.

Mahatma is a stress-free rice, providing ease of preparation and consistently amazing results. Beyond reasons to believe, we added reasons to love, since the category involves food preparation. The main reason to love the brand is the fact that it is a “pride provider.” Pride in mastering cooking rice, in serving delicious dishes, in combining culturally relevant ingredients in unexpected ways and, finally, by providing moments of togetherness around a bountiful meal.

The combined result of all of the above landed us on the powerful strategic idea of “own your rice.”

The Hispanic Millennial presented unique demands that needed to be satisfied across the many creative executions:

- With a strong drive to explore food and life, they want to stand out and make it happen for their family;
- Deliver an experience that helps them stand out. They see culture and food as key ways to show their uniqueness;
- They are positive about being encouraged to try and learn new things; What they see on social media encourages trying out new things.

Creative Execution

Creative Execution:

LNC customized the deployment of the campaign to the Hispanic Millennial mindset through a media channel ecosystem and social media influencer program, both aiming to gain fast exposure, sizable impressions, and propelling trial through exploration of flavors.

This fully in-culture and in-language, 360-degree creative campaign was designed around four key pillars:

- Introduce consumers to the brand and empower and encourage Hispanic Millennials to make their own “successful” rice dishes, so they can overcome the idea that cooking “good rice” is too complicated;
- Leverage the opportunity to lean into Hispanics’ desire for exploring cultural tastes and flavors across the spectrum of Latin cuisines;
- Provide excitement around product assortment because Hispanics love all things rice;
- Cater to Hispanic cultural interest by showcasing a variety of cultural dishes.

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The campaign was called “Este Arroz Ya Nos Unió” or “This Rice Unites,” and it encouraged the Hispanic Millennial to explore with confidence. The campaign showed contrasting elements and culturally relevant ingredients and final dishes brought together by the power of Mahatma Rice, making the brand the approachable rice authority – all in a super contemporary manner, breaking creative boundaries never tested in the rice category.

Media Execution:

The highly targeted, multi-touch media strategy was successful in raising awareness of the Mahatma brand among the hard-to-reach Hispanic Millennial target in both endemic channels (Spanish-language) and non-endemic (English-language). Combined, the TV, radio and digital efforts resulted in upwards of 66 million impressions made across seven key geographies.

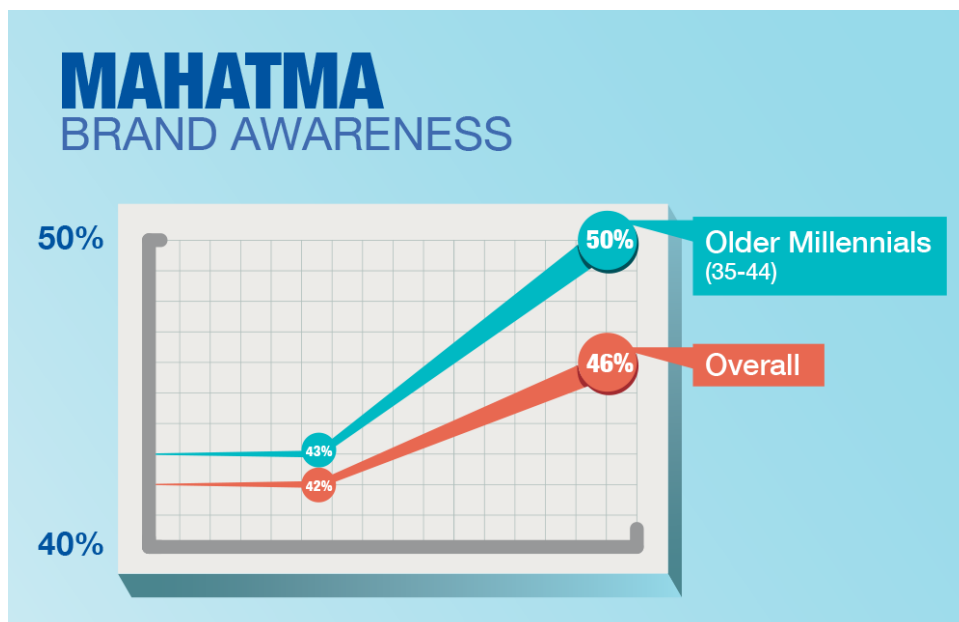
The TV and radio broadcast schedules went beyond the typical 30-second spot, with on-air branded integrations and vignettes that not only educated but connected with Riviana’s young Hispanic audience in a meaningful way, rooted in both language and culture.

High-impact digital banners, YouTube, streaming video, social and search tactics were deployed to fully surround Hispanic Millennials where they spend the most time: online. Additionally, a number of demographic, audience, behavioral, contextual and geo layers were implemented for effective and efficient targeting and retargeting of the audience.

Business Results/Lessons Learned

The key objective for the campaign was to turn around declining brand equity metrics and increase brand awareness, especially among Millennial consumers. The campaign ended up succeeding by increasing overall brand awareness among Hispanics from 46% to 55%, with increases in both Spanish-dominant Hispanics (40% to 63%) and English-dominant Hispanics (47% to 53%). Among the strategically important Hispanic Millennial segment, awareness increased from 50% to 57%. Finally, Mahatma brand awareness overall (not just Hispanic) increased from 42% to 46%, driven by a particularly large increase among older Millennials (age 35-44), from 43% to 50%. Mahatma Rice had the largest awareness increase in 2019 at a time when most rice brands (including market leader Uncle Ben) lost awareness to private label.

Additionally, optimization of the digital media accounted for 80,000 visits to the various Riviana Rice recipe pages, where users gleaned inspiration, learned even more about the brand's offerings, and interacted directly with the brand.



Contributors

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