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Engage:Hispanics

Coke Opens Happiness Via Educational Promotion

Joe Kutchera, Nov 25, 2009 09:35 AM

This fall, Coca-Cola launched an educational marketing initiative with the goal of helping Hispanics fulfill their dream of learning English. This is an important customer base as Hispanics represent one-quarter of Coke's domestic U.S. sales. To launch the program, Coke partnered with Lexicon Marketing, the developer and marketer of Inglés sin Barreras (English without Borders), the video-based English learning program in the U.S.

Reinaldo Padua, assistant vice president of Hispanic marketing at Coca-Cola North America, recently explained the two elements of the in-store and mobile promotion:

- 1) Consumers receive a premium when they buy Coke in one of the 11,000 convenience and grocery stores located in Hispanic areas across the country, a bilingual English-Spanish mini-dictionary and a DVD of the beginning lesson from the Inglés sin Barreras collection.
- 2) Consumers can then register to accumulate points via their cell phone by texting in My Coke Rewards product codes. Upon collecting 700 points, consumers will have the opportunity to redeem their points for one of the 12 volumes in the Inglés sin Barreras DVD collection.

Following are a few excerpts from my recent conversation with Reinaldo:

Q: Why did Coke decide to do this education-oriented marketing campaign with Inglés Sin Barreras?

A: As you know, our new global campaign is "open happiness." When we asked Hispanic consumers about what that meant to them, they said that happiness meant being able to pursue their dreams. In Latin America, in Hispanics' countries of origin, consumers there may not have access to those opportunities in education.

So, when we talk about that dream, in most cases they talk about advancement of family and the next generation and a lot of that advancement is about education and access to opportunities. We wanted to communicate a very inspiring message of "untap your dreams" or "destapa tus sueños" so that Hispanic consumers could visualize themselves in a better place in the future. This promotion provides a tangible tool for being able to attain that dream. One of the most popular products in the market for learning English among Hispanic consumers is Inglés sin Barreras. We are excited that Coke can offer access to that material with our partner.

Q: What are the goals of this program?

A: We measure the success of this program in how it builds loyalty for the brand. How is it driving sales volume in stores and activation of the promotion? We ask this question for all of our promotional and advertising programs.

Q: How do the initial results look since launching the campaign?

A: The initial results look very encouraging. The feedback we have gotten from consumers has been very positive. The feedback from our employees, our most important stakeholders, has also been positive. They love it and understand the value that it provides to the community. Customers also love the idea that we are helping the community in a tangible way.

Q: How do you evaluate doing a promotion like this one in comparison to, let's say, Coke's support of the World Cup?

A: At the end of the day, both of these promotions build upon the same brand promise of uncapping your dreams. In the case of the World Cup, it captures the excitement of your team going to the event, targeting younger, Hispanic males. The Inglés Sin Barreras promotion, on the other hand, focuses on the entire family and captures longer-term dreams around educational opportunities.

Q: How long has Coke been marketing to Hispanics?

A: For 75 years, since we opened in Latin America. What we do in Latin America directly affects what we do in the U.S. You see the effects of globalization from having offices around the world.