

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS

As director of national multicultural and field marketing for the west at Dunkin' Brands, Xavier Turpin has instilled a cross-cultural mindset across the organization BY MICHAEL J. McDERMOTT

Over the past three decades, Xavier Turpin has been a sort of Johnny Appleseed of multicultural marketing, driving its adoption at several big brands, including Makita and Fiskars. Dunkin' Donuts began increasing its focus on opportunities in the Hispanic market about six years ago, under then-CMO John Costello, and it engaged Dávila Multicultural Insights (DMI), a leading boutique consulting firm, to help formulate a strategy. DMI developed a five-year plan addressing high-level issues, and it created Turpin's position to execute on the strategy.

How has Dunkin' Donuts' approach to multicultural marketing changed over the past five years?

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I was hired in 2012 to create a roadmap for the five-year plan on a more detailed level. I did not want a conventional multicultural marketing department vertical structure, as was common at many companies. My vision included most aspects of what is now commonly known as the total market approach, and I knew that in order for it to succeed, it would have to be possible to institutionalize its underlying concepts within the organization. I started by conducting many interviews with people at every

level of the organization, all the way up to the CMO. It was important to gauge their comfort level with adopting a new approach to doing marketing in a multicultural nation.

So what are the basic tenets underlying multicultural marketing at Dunkin' Donuts?

Our approach is built on three pillars: strategy and planning, budget co-management, and a Multicultural Knowledge Center. We work together with every marketing discipline within the organization — brand marketing, consumer engagement, media, advertising, promotions, digital, mobile, and social media. Culinary and innovation are also under the marketing umbrella at Dunkin' Donuts, so we work closely with them as well. It is also imperative that we work closely with other non-marketing disciplines like communications, operations, construction, and development. This kind of multidiscipline cooperation helps make sure multicultural marketing is embraced during every strategy and planning discussion from the outset.

How does that all play out in execution?

There is an overarching strategy for our entire marketing effort, and we work with the heads of each discipline to develop individual plans to meet specific marketing objectives, then each discipline is responsible for executing its plan through its own department. In the past, multicultural marketing functioned in a silo at most companies. The common organizational structure would include a director of

multicultural marketing with maybe three to five people developing and executing the strategy. The team would execute their own advertising, media buying, promotion, etc., but it was all in a silo because they were constrained by a limited budget and authorized activity set. At Dunkin' Donuts, we have developed a truly holistic approach that now drives marketing. In addition to the dedicated multicultural marketing team that focuses on strategy development, building the Multicultural Knowledge Center, and tracking our KPIs, we have more than 100 people across the marketing organization executing against our total market approach.

One hundred people? How is that possible?

Well, the key has been our success at creating an organizational infrastructure that integrates multicultural throughout all marketing processes. Multicultural is a business imperative here, and it's part of our corporate culture. Whenever any of those roughly 100 marketing people execute, they are executing against our total market approach. That means when our media director and his team buy media, they buy media for everything — TV, radio, digital, social media, *and* Spanish-language TV, radio, digital, etc. One of the biggest frustrations for multicultural marketing teams working in a silo is that they so often do not have a seat at the table when strategic decisions are being made. That's not the case with our approach. We are injecting multicultural at the outset of every new brief. And that doesn't just mean creative

briefs; we go all the way back to product briefs, way before we even get to the messaging briefs. We are putting multicultural into the ecosystem at ground zero, and for this to work, it really has to begin at the C-level. If you don't have that endorsement and vision, you're swimming against the tide.

But on a practical level, how can you stay on top of multicultural issues and activity across the entire marketing organization?

One of the other things we've done is identified, or hired, bilingual and bi-cultural individuals throughout the organization. Each marketing discipline now has somebody who is a de facto liaison for multicultural. It's not possible for our small team to attend every meeting to discuss multicultural marketing opportunities, but there are 100 advocates who are the "hand raisers" at the meetings we can't attend.

How does this approach affect the way you work with your outside agencies?

As you can imagine, we work with many different agencies — large, small, general market, boutique. They all follow the overarching strategy that drives our marketing effort internally, and they execute against that same strategy in culturally relevant ways. Collaboration is key to the success of our advertising efforts, but some degree of oversight is needed to keep things on track and moving efficiently. All agencies get briefed at the same time, and they may cross-pollinate with each other during the creative



Over the past five years, Xavier Turpin has driven the adoption of multicultural marketing at Dunkin' Donuts.

process, especially on issues related to cultural affinity. The bottom line is that we want to reach all the customer segments we're targeting, and doing that requires cultural insights and extending the message with culturally relevant and in-language creative where appropriate.

When all is said and done, why is multicultural marketing important to big brands, and what are the keys to making it work?

In a word, results. We are not doing this to be politically correct or just to be friendly to a particular segment. It's good business practice. We hit our five-year plan goals in just two-and-a-half years. We have Hispanic-designated stores outperforming the rest of the market by 20 percent or more in some cases. We're seeing the impact at the bottom line. As far as making it work goes, at Dunkin' Donuts, the two key factors have been teamwork and commitment from the organization at every level. ■