

# The Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication

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## Speaker Interview: Mark Lopez



- Google's U.S. Head of Hispanic Audience
- Center for Hispanic Marketing Communications Advisory Board Member

Mark Lopez earned his Bachelor's degree at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and his Master's degree in Business Administration from MIT Sloan School of Management. In 2000, he helped launch Terra Network's new portal as the Chief Strategy Officer for four years. After his contributions to Terra Networks, he took a position for AOL Latino as a publisher, and then later returned to Terra as Chief Operations Officer. After three years, he was offered an opportunity to work for Google. Mr. Lopez is currently the Head of U.S. Hispanic Audience at Google. Recently, he worked with comScore, an American Internet analytics company, to create the Hispanic Focus category.

Interview by Savannah Shaffer

### **SS: How have your education and experiences shaped your career and served you at Terra, AOL, and Google?**

ML: I studied Science in undergrad, so I did not have a traditional background coming into media. My parents wanted me to be an engineer, but I didn't, so I attended a school that focused on engineering and ended up studying mathematics. They allowed me to minor in Management and from there I did a little bit of consulting.

After I received my MBA, I did more consulting and management. This was in the late nineties, around the time the Internet was coming of age, and I started my first consumer Internet company. When Terra came to be, I was looking at that segment of consumers and I saw a lot of potential. At the time, there was a digital divide; Hispanics were not online. Mostly everything was dial-up or AOL and Hispanics had Internet penetration rates of maybe 40%. Over the past fifteen years, we see the consumer getting online and mobile [Internet use] taking over.

### **Given your nontraditional start, what interested you in media? What was your first exposure?**

I think the Internet was kind of that change and the fact that people could get information from anywhere. I remember when I was in school; I didn't have a cell phone. We didn't have computers; we had mainframes. It was a totally different world. So

when I got access to the Internet, it clicked that this is going to change the world. That was kind of my entry point.

### **What during this time provided you with insight to Hispanic segment of the market?**

We got into digital at a time where there was a lot of Hispanic marketing being done, but marketers weren't paying a lot of attention to the Internet as a marketing platform. So when I first started looking at the Hispanic market, I saw a lot of growth, which was my first requirement when getting into a field. It was very important that the field that was growing and stable. So that was kind of like, 'Look, it's growing. It's something that I feel, because I'm from Spain with a Mexican mother, I feel kind of attached to and related to,' and I wanted to learn a lot more about as a field. What is the audience doing? What are they going to do in the future? Why aren't they online?

I remember the ads were really clunky in early 2000, and I thought, 'What could we do to make this better?' At the beginning, everything was clunky; it wasn't a great experience, and not everyone was online, but you had to have the vision to see where the market was going. If I had to advise in any way, I would say to think three plays ahead. Don't think about where the market is today, but think about the next thing it's going to involve. Like big data; that's a big trend. If you're more qualitative and you like the multicultural and cultural

relevancy that's around marketing, that's a huge market right now. It's more art than science. So really pick a field that you have a lot of affinity for, and that's going to grow and allow you to learn.

### **Can you tell me more about your experiences working for Terra and launching the portal? How did developing technology and emergence out of the Internet as a viable advertising source impact your work?**

When I first came into the company, I was in LA and we were trying to start a relationship between Silicone Valley and Spain. Terra was basically put together by Telefónica Group, Spanish telephone company. Telefónica was looking at Latin America, and didn't really have the U.S. in their sights. Then, when they consulted an agency they were working with, they said, "You have to look at the Hispanic market. You have a lot of assets and a lot of content that is in Spanish and you're very strong in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. Why are you not looking at the Hispanic market?" They were right. There are 40 million people in the Hispanic market, so it is a good market for us.

Telefónica looked to acquire a company and there wasn't anything available to acquire, so they decided to build it from scratch and put a team together. I was lucky enough to be a part of it and basically build the portal and product from scratch, and also build the brand in the U.S., as Terra was a European brand. In Latin

America, they knew it more because it was an Internet service provider, but we didn't have that in the States. We didn't provide Internet service that went through AOL or some other platform with those dial-up clunky services. It was just a website. Building the brand up was a great experience. We were knocking on doors; I was doing more of the product function for the site and convincing partners and advertisers that the Internet was going to be a viable place to advertise. When we were starting out, nobody was consuming content on the Internet and Hispanics weren't online because they couldn't afford it. But we stuck with it. I was there for a full five years, through 2005, and the business was solidified at that time. Once the Internet came of age and you had broadband connections, it became a real business. It was a great experience to see the business from a concept to the final stages.

**With the Internet's widespread increase in popularity and overall use during the 2000s, what valuable information or experiences did you derive from your time with AOL Latino?**

That opportunity was really interesting because at Terra we were a pure portal using the Spanish language. AOL had the opportunity to take a lot of assets, and, at the time, it was a large company with a lot of assets. They took a lot of platforms and rebuilt the Hispanic component to AOL Latino. It was very interesting. That brought me more to the commercial side of things, whereas before I was on the product and development side. It was a new functional area for me within the same industry and it allowed me to look at what advertisers are really looking for when you're doing campaigns. That was really my first step into the marketer-advertiser relationship. I learned a ton those three years there, which allowed me to come back to Terra able to really manage the overall business with a bigger scope.

**With your current position at Google, as the U.S. Head of Hispanic Audience, is it closer to the commercial or product side of the market? What are your responsibilities?**

It is more commercial. When you look at Google, we don't develop content, whereas at AOL, we used to develop content. We did concerts and we had actual teams that published content. At Google, it is just platforms, so we have platforms for others to post content on, like YouTube, and then we have the business side, which is what I work on. How do we monetize, how do we bring revenue from all those platforms? It's a lot cleaner, but it's definitely the business side of things. I do advertising and sales for what we call our large client segment, which is made up of mainly top Fortune 100 companies in the U.S. My job is to educate them and help them unlock the U.S. Hispanic opportunity and reach the Hispanic community across

***“I would say to think three plays ahead. Don't think about where the market is today, but think about the next thing it's going to involve.”***

all of our platforms: search, YouTube opportunities with videos, and also our Google display network.

**Within these top Fortune 100 companies, which ones are most likely to generate Hispanic appeal? What companies are the most interested in targeting the Hispanic audience?**

I think that, for a lot of them at the senior management level, Hispanic marketing is on their radar. There are some companies that have it as a topic on the agenda, and a lot of them, their focus is to do marketing to the audience through traditional media, standard radio, television, print, but they also want to learn what the consumers want digitally, so they're looking for partners like us to kind of help them develop and hone their abilities internally to go after Hispanics digitally.

**What companies are most concerned about attracting and engaging the Hispanic market?**

We work with all the major brands, across categories. We have about seven or eight categories that are our focus, like automotive, food/beverage, financing & insurance, a lot of health care. On the automotive side, we work with Ford, GM, Chrysler, Nissan, and Toyota. We look at corporate America across the categories and consumer product space. So while we work with a lot of those companies, our challenge is to not only work with them, but also to embed what they do and help them get better at it. As a “seller,” you don't want to just sell stuff; you want to help their business get better, so we can grow with them. Google cannot grow at twenty percent every year and Google's customers only draw at five percent. That's not sustainable. So that's the challenge; for us to work with them, but also help them get better at digital and get better as a company with more dynamic marketing, and to evolve what they do, which is a big challenge for a lot of these companies.

The perfect consumer today looks at a lot more healthy options in terms of food drink than twenty years ago. It creates a huge issue for companies like Coke because a lot of their volume is on sodas versus getting what they need to provide more healthy options. Those pivot points create a lot of opportunities to learn and to learn a lot from challenges. You have to pivot and continue to grow.

**How do you alter your approach when targeting a Hispanic market rather than a general one?**

Think about Hispanic communications. It is a very powerful segmentation mechanism, to go after the portion of your consumer that is going to grow the most in the next five to ten years. What you need to change is your messaging and what product attributes within your offer appeal to consumers versus a general market offer. So, the thing about Hispanics is

that it is a very powerful segmentation like Millennials or moms, but with the ability to segment your message based on cultural relevance and even based on language, you can build a Spanish language campaign around the consumer.

**How important is the digital component with traditional advertising within the Hispanic community? Are we looking at more and more Hispanic digital users and not seeing a digital divide?**

There really is not a digital divide. Our research on mobile adoption over the last couple of years shows a leapfrog effect on Hispanics using mobile phones as a primary access to the Internet. From that standpoint, it is very important for people in this market to think of mobile first. So there's not really a digital gap. What there is, is a gap in the capabilities of marketers to understand this audience and have a plan to reach them on mobile. It is important to consider the smaller screen, the location of the user, and the time of day to make their messaging a lot more relevant.

**With changes in perception and needs of the community like demands for healthy options, what sort of changes are you seeing in advertising methods? So many online advertisements, like those on YouTube, need to grab the viewer's attention within five seconds. How do you combat the challenges of information overload and user disinterest?**

We use TrueBlue, which shows you the first five seconds of an ad and, if you don't like it, you can skip it. So, if I'm a marketer, my challenge is how do you grab the attention of the consumer in those five seconds while being authentic? And I think authenticity is playing a large role. Consumers don't like getting lied to, and companies don't want to lie. In the past few years, the marketing has been more standardized. Companies push more of the great things of their

product and showing the authenticity of a product.

I think there's a shift now to be authentic and to say, at times, 'We're going to be great and give you a great product and this is where we're going with our brands, but were not there yet,' and that's fine. But we want to keep talking to you and to have a dialogue. You're lucky if you share your message in a positive way with twenty people, because you can also share your message in a negative way. It's really important for you to be authentic and to have a sustainable position on your brand that is true to yourself and your brand. Because consumers are much more informed with a cell phone that can basically search for anything, the background of your company and how the products are made, you want to be part of that conversation. The conversation will give you feedback about your product and how to better it.

***“You're lucky if you share your message in a positive way with twenty people, because you can also share your message in a negative way.”***

**What influenced your work with comScore and how did it change the new Hispanic Focus category?**

There was a time in the industry where there was a lot of focus on the audience measurement; not only doing a campaign online but how many consumers you are actually reaching. In television, the Nielson ratings tells you who you're reaching from an audience standpoint, so comScore wanted to figure out where the Hispanic audience belonged with each of the media players the market. We did a lot of work with them to come up with a standardized view, which has evolved to what we now call Audience Guarantees. Right now, we have a product that when we go out to the market and do a campaign for Coke or Ford, the Nielson can guarantee the same delivery to the audience on any television, and that's

critical because it makes online digital easier for agencies to buy.

**The Hispanic Focus is aggregated by composition rather than reach. How does this change your strategy or does it affect your previous methods at all?**

The challenge that comScore had was their panel. They didn't have enough of a Hispanic sample to actually go out and say you have X amount of viewers per month. So, we worked a lot on the methodology to really have a composition there that not only told you the amount of Hispanics, but how many of them were Spanish-preferred, bilingual, or English-preferred, and kind of start getting companies into who really had the audience in the market. There had to be a third party to say, look this is who has the audience, and we got it right. That matures the market; it makes marketers more comfortable because they know you have a vehicle that allows them to measure how much audience each of the players has.

**With the current direction of the market and your experience, what do you think the future for Hispanic marketing is with the population size continually growing?**

I think it's going to be a critical component. Not only just in Hispanic, but this cultural affinity is going to be a critical skill. I think a few years from now you're going to see companies look for a particular skill set around what your target consumer is like from an identity standpoint and cultural standpoint. Hispanic is again a very powerful segment because there is a set of traits that make the segment common and, like you said, it's growing.

With any market in the U.S., you want to appeal to the heart of the consumer, which centers on relationships, how you grew up, and the values that you have. For the Hispanic consumer, there is a set of unique traits that, if your brand appeals to, will allow you to attract

those consumers. I think that's going to be a huge part and it's not going to be a separate practice, but core to Marketing 101. I think that's what the trend is and it won't dilute the skillset, it will just make it more valuable.

**Do you recommend doing anything to stay current with one's understanding of digital technology?**

I think conferences are great and as students you can participate in a lot of conferences for free or discounted rates. It's great to map the field out and see what the key conferences are and which you could attend to not only learn about the content, but to network with the industry. Not necessarily for a job, but to get to build your network early and expose yourself to people within the industry. I think that will give you a huge advantage.

**In addition to this skillset and the ability to predict a few steps ahead, what other valuable advice do you have for students interested in marketing?**

I think for you guys, the best advice is to keep it simple, but at the same time have the flexibility to be in a role where you can continue learning. In my mind, we are in the first inning of this cultural and technical revolution. An iPhone 6 couldn't be thought of five years ago and now it's right here. Like these watches that connect or the next phase of Google Glass. How will this impact marketing? How will it impact the consumer attention? What is going to be the etiquette around the use of this technology? All of that we have to go through together. Students also have the patience and the flexibility to plan as the market twists and turns.



## Crowdfunding: What's That?

A fascinating new financial concept involving incentivized donations from a potential audience, crowdfunding was brought to the table at this year's Hispanic/Latino Media and Marketing International Conference while discussing innovative funding strategies for radio. Although the two guest speakers, Juan Ignacio Gallego of La Universidad Carlos III and Manuel Fernandez-Sande of La Universidad Complutense, were thousands of miles away in Madrid, they were able to give an insightful presentation about crowdfunding via Skype! The power of technology is something to take into consideration since we're talking about marketing and media.

The concept of crowdfunding was brought up to encourage diversity and cultural participation between producers and their audiences, which is a crucial for success. They elaborated on the emergence of social media and how the power of technology has affected radio compared to its popularity in the past. Internet radio, which is currently flourishing amongst young adults in Spain, was brought up as a great example of what crowdfunding can accomplish. Radio Ambulante, a popular Internet radio channel mentioned, is definitely something worth checking out!

Jenice Bastidas  
Public Relations Junior  
Florida State University

## Speaker Interview: Mariela Ure



- *Wells Fargo's Senior Vice President and Hispanic Segment Strategy Lead for Enterprise*
- *Center for Hispanic Marketing Communications Advisory Board Member*

*Mariela Ure completed her Bachelor's of Science degree in Business Management from Southeastern University in Florida. After working at Disney for ten years, she took a position at a Hispanic marketing agency, which led her to work for Bank of America's Enterprise Marketing Group. Mariela took her current position of Senior Vice President and Hispanic Segment Strategy Lead for Enterprise at Wells Fargo after a decade with Bank of America. Her recent projects include Wells Fargo's sponsorship of the Mexican National Team and Major League Soccer and Wells Fargo's partnership with Telemundo for the "Conversemos de tus Finanzas", a financial literacy campaign focused on providing helpful, accurate financial assistance to Hispanic individuals and small business owners.*

*Interview by Savannah Shaffer*

**SS: Tell us about your educational background and what experiences you had early on that got you interested in your current career?**

MU: In my case, it was a very good combination of work experience plus education. I didn't attend an Ivy League school, but I did receive a Bachelor's degree in Business Management. I was working for Disney while going to college, so when I was getting ready to graduate, an internship in marketing led to a great job in marketing there. Because I worked for Disney for ten years, I was recruited by a Hispanic marketing agency, and later on went to work for Bank of America, followed by Wells Fargo. So, that's why I say it was sort of a perfect combination of education and work experience with very good companies.

**In regards to your experience with Disney, did you seek out a marketing position they were offering or did your interest in marketing begin with that initial internship?**

I started part-time to help pay for college. But in that process, I met a lot of people who worked in marketing. I was fascinated by the work they did and so willing to do anything, so one of them gave me the chance to be an assistant, which was sort of an internship job. After I finished the program, I said I have to get a job somehow and I'll do anything they ask me to do. It took a while though. It

wasn't immediate or easy, because I was competing with people who were already graduated. The competition was hard, but I think that people got to know me over time, and I just developed such a great relationship with them they were willing to give me the chance.

**How did you transition from Disney to banks? What got you interested in working in a different market?**

When I was at Disney for my 10th anniversary, it was a great job with great training for me, but I was very ambitious and knew that if I wanted my career to grow, I had to leave. I started looking for marketing jobs and a start-up marketing agency in Charlotte recruited me to run their account working with Bank of America, their biggest client. So they hired me, and while I was at that marketing agency, my client at Bank of America recruited me. They really needed someone in-house who knew marketing well but also knew the Hispanic population and could marry those two. After that year at the agency, I went to work for Bank of America. I was there for ten years, and while working at Bank of America, I really didn't look for [my current] job. It was an executive firm that was looking to fill the position for Wells Fargo.

**What sort of experience did Disney give you specifically with**

**Hispanic marketing that you felt could translate to a different market? What factors are present in all markets when considering a Hispanic audience?**

You know, my most valuable learning experience at Disney wasn't with the Hispanic population, but around the fundamentals of marketing, and the processes of that. You can never skip an important step in the process leading to outstanding marketing work for any audience. That was very valuable; I still use it in my job even to this day. It's a very rigorous process from strategy development to marketing work. In that process, the emphasis and the focus to get to those very deep insights, and passing that onto communications and creative work, learning that skill, its valuable marketing to any audience. That's really what I took from there. The Hispanic angle really came out of a personal passion because as I learned the marketing fundamentals, I was started to learn how companies were interested in enriching the population. I know this population and I think I can learn more and marry those two to become a valuable asset to companies.

**What can you tell us about the Telemundo campaign and any other recent projects or campaigns you've worked on for Wells Fargo?**

Yes, that was one of my favorite campaigns! I have done a lot of

traditional advertising campaigns in my career. You can imagine, big companies, there's always serious advertising, but with Telemundo what happened was that I was looking at the brand metrics and I was starting to see that, even though our results were strong, there were some areas around the perceptions of trust in Hispanic community and we could do something to improve that. I mean doing something different than the traditional 30 second spot, which we will always do and we know those play an important role in the marketing mix, but I wanted something that engaged differently and provided something of value. I shared exactly this conversation with the people at Telemundo, and they said we could come up with something, which was using their talent and insights about the company.

One of the key insights used was this idea that the Hispanic population tends to rely a lot on friends and family to get advice on just about anything. And that's great, but on very important matters in life, like financial matters, it really is in the best interest of everyone to ask a professional. And using that insight and the assets at Telemundo, we merged them and came up with this partnership that included three minutes of using their talents to talk about the importance of consulting with professional to get guidance on how to manage your money better, how to save, how to credit better, and then of course with other extensions online. It was just terrific.

**What kind of social media was integrated within the campaign?**

Telemundo has its own Twitter and Facebook. So there were a couple of things: the talent talking about the topics with their fans, posting the content that was on TV, and then people as they interacted with them, they were directed to go to a financial guidance page online that gave them more detailed information.

**How do you measure people's interaction with the campaign? Is there a way to measure the return on investment?**

There are a couple of things we look at. They call it campaign based measurements and then the more macro level, brand measurements. At a campaign level we look at pre- and post- results. So basically we look at before the campaign goes out, how aware of the brand are viewers, how likely are they to consider the brand, and then we look at the results after the campaign, to see what differences we see. Then at a macro level for the brand, we look at a very long rich set of attributes that we want our brand to be known for in various communities. So for Wells Fargo, it is very important for us that our community believes that we are a trusted financial advisor so we test and we look at what are you looking for from a financial institution that provides valuable guidance, so we look at metrics like that.

***“Develop a willingness to do the things that are needed when you're working versus what you believe is the perfect thing you want to do for the rest of your life.”***

**How do you involve PR and marketing agencies in Wells Fargo's efforts?**

In the past three years at Wells Fargo, we have begun to implement a very rigorous integrated marketing process. It brings people from various marketing disciplines together to develop the right tactics within those channels, but all of them work to deliver a message that is connected with the community. A good example is this campaign we were just talking about, Telemundo. I wanted to integrate all their channels and the PR agency participated in the process. They did a couple of interesting things. They did a joint press release with Telemundo and Wells Fargo. I did a lot of interviews with the media about the program in partnering with Telemundo at the same time. Also,

we did some Google chats during the program and we talked about the content on the show.

**With the Telemundo campaign, we talked a lot about financial literacy. What all does that entail? What information do individuals and small business owners of the Hispanic community need? What are the ultimate goals for achieving financial literacy?**

With financial literacy, it is important to make that distinction you just made, which is the financial guidance that consumers need as individuals versus small businesses, because they're different. With small businesses, one of the things we know is that a lot of the failures have to do with the lack of business plan. The guidance we provide to small businesses begins with the importance of having a business plan and the resources that are available to do it because you don't have to have a business degree to develop a business plan. There are a lot of companies today online and offline that do that.

With consumers, we have done a lot of research to understand that within the Hispanic community, specifically, what is the guidance needed. And there are two overwhelmingly important needs: day-to-day money management and credit management. Families feel very overwhelmed about the day-to-day management of money. They know very well that they have to work and they have to bring in income to pay what they have to pay. What's hard is how to do that on a day-to-day basis in a way that maximizes their income and that takes care of their needs in the short and longer term. Second, credit management. Understanding first that once you have credit, how do you maintain it? And if something happens and you have to fix it, how do you go about fixing credit? So that's also a critical component of our financial literacy program with consumers.



**Considering how the U.S. Hispanic segment has grown, how do you think that creating a positive perception of Wells Fargo as a financial advisor is going to benefit Wells Fargo as a company in the future?**

What we're hoping to happen, and it already has happened because we bank a lot of Hispanics in the U.S., but in the future, we hope that by providing this information that we know is valuable to them from research and we know is good, they will over time see us as a valuable partner. Wells Fargo is there to be an important player in helping them achieve their financial goals in life, whatever those may be.

**Can you tell me a little more about Wells Fargo's sponsorship of the Mexican National Team? What is Wells Fargo hoping to accomplish with the sponsorship?**

That is also a very exciting partnership we did a few years ago and it came out of first our business objectives, which were to continue building our brand perception within the community and the way to do that is do more than simply sell financial services. We have to be part of a community, engaging with things that matter to them. And what better way to do that than at time when you're celebrating, when you're rooting for your team, where you know sports in general, but soccer specifically in the Hispanic community, We thought it was a terrific opportunity for us to partner with the National Mexican Team and have the opportunity to engage with the community while the games were taking place.

That was one of the examples I shared yesterday when I spoke to the students, where the sponsorship was great, but I think that the way we showed up in the market when the games were taking place and having a lot of brand activities on site was the success. I actually went to one in Chicago, and we had this whole set up where you could play different games, take pictures with the soccer players from the team. So that was a really fun way to engage with the community, but at the same time, keeping our brand objectives at the forefront.

**Similarly, do you see a return on investment with this sponsorship? Can you measure how many people have been exposed to Wells Fargo's message?**

We do. In fact, one of the really important metrics during those events, when we aggregated them around the country, was the interactions. For example, one of the new features that we are launching are the Spanish language mobile capabilities. So during this event, we will have tutorials and showing how people can use those. So every person went through those, and we measure that, and we aggregate all of those people together and its pretty significant.

**Is there any other advice you have for students?**

Develop a willingness to do the things that are needed when you're working versus what you believe is the perfect thing you want to do for the rest of your life. That job will come over time if you do a good job, but if at the very beginning you have the willingness to learn and do things that don't perhaps seems to be as glamorous, it will pay off in the end.

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## *On the next page...*



## **Speaker Interview: Joe Kutchera**

*Joe Kutchera advises companies on how to best develop content marketing strategies for social media and digital platforms, with a special emphasis in Hispanic/Latin American markets. He is the author of two books including Latino Link: Building Brands Online with Hispanic Communities and Content and E-X-I-T-O: Su estrategia de marketing digital en 5 pasos. He has been featured on Advertising Age, BBC Mundo, CNN en español, CNNExpansion and Telemundo.*

*During his nine-year tenure at Time Warner, Joe built such web properties as Warner Bros. Online, ThisOldHouse.com, and CNNMoney, and CNNExpansion. During his last two years at the company, Joe started the digital ad sales team for Grupo Expansion in Mexico City (acquired by Time Inc. in 2005), launching the web sites for CNNExpansion, Quien, and Chilango. Subsequently, Joe served as the Director of Digital Marketing at Acento Advertising before consulting on his own.*

*Joe has a BA from Macalester College and an MBA from Fordham University. Joe has served as a board member for the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Mexico and as a member of the Hispanic Committee for the IAB in the U.S.t*

*Interview by Lana Steele*

**LS: What sparked your interest in Hispanic Marketing?**

JK: I answer that question in the dedication of my first book, *Latino Link*: "I'd like to dedicate this book to my parents who met in Spanish class, honeymooned in Mexico, and had me nine months later. I've loved learning Spanish ever since."

My wife, Lulu, is from Mexico. She was a food scientist at PepsiCo Mexico and now works at Sabra Dipping Company, you may know its hummus. She helps me with my Spanish and teaches me a lot about Mexican culture.

I find the evolving U.S. demographics, culture, and digital media landscape fascinating. We know that around 2030 or 2040 the minorities in the U.S. will become the majority. It will be interesting to see how businesses adapt.

**What inspired you to write the book *E-X-I-T-O*?**

My co-authors and I saw that marketing models like the 4 P's (Place, Price, Product, and Promotion) were outdated and we wanted to create a model for the 21st Century that reflected the need for innovation, content creation, and interaction with customers. On a practical level, I wanted to create a trademarked process that I could utilize with my consulting clients.

All successful strategies start with listening and understanding your audience, but not all marketing models include this essential step. This is the first step in our 5-part strategic process from our new book (in Spanish) - *E-X-I-T-O: Su estrategia de marketing digital en 5 pasos*.

The five steps include:

1. *Escuche a su audiencia* (Listen to your audience)
2. *EXperimente como usuario*, a través de "perfiles" (Put yourself in the shoes of the user and write your marketing plan using "personas")
3. *Integrate your communication channels*
4. *Transform your audience into a community*
5. *Optimize*

Download a sample chapter of the book [here](#).

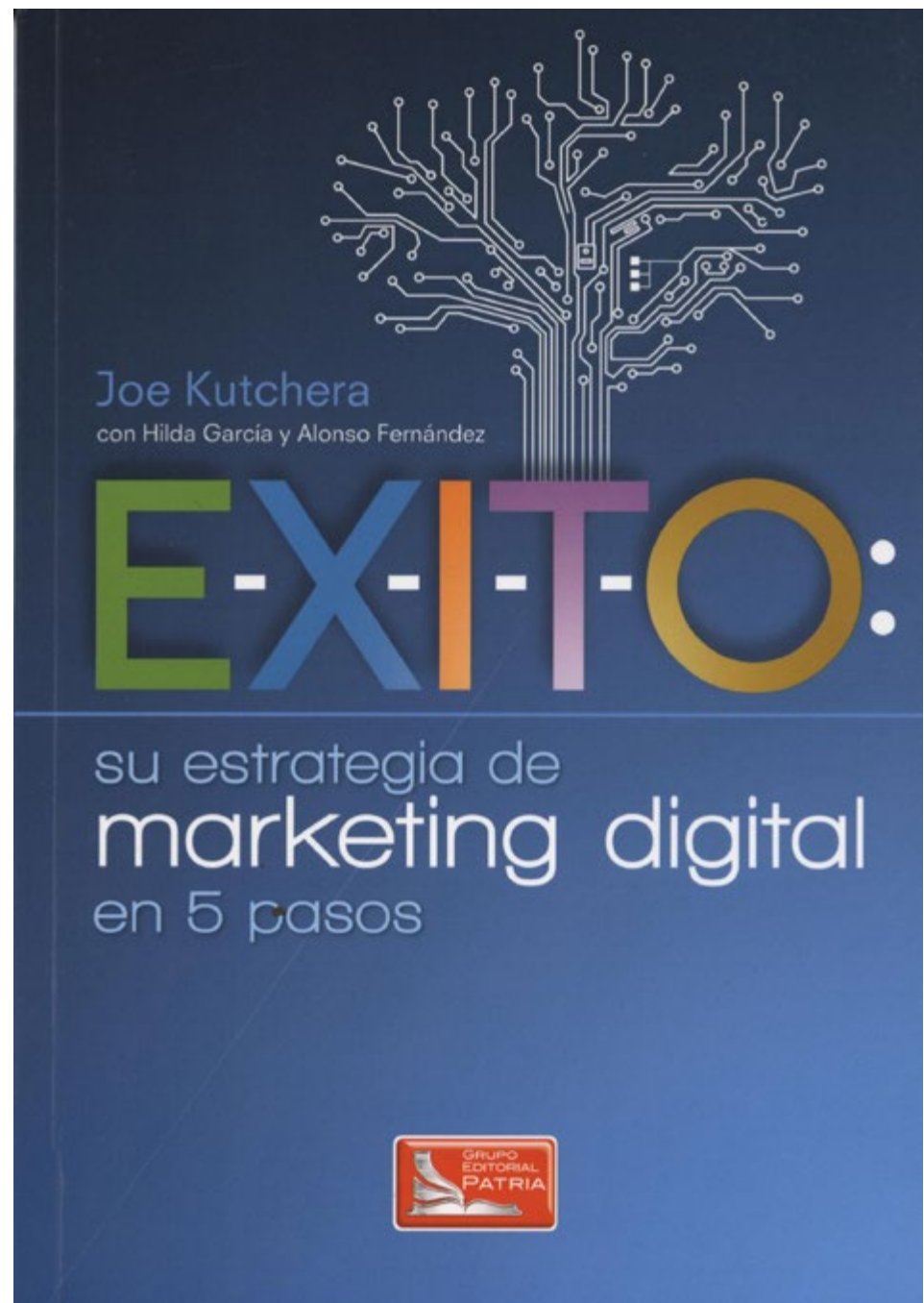
**You have been a guest speaker in Hispanic Marketing classes at FSU, what was your main message?**

Dr. Chapa invited Hilda Garcia and I to present our book *E-X-I-T-O* in her class. It was an honor. We encourage the students to:

- 1) Follow the E-X-I-T-O process
- 2) Listen! (We have 2 ears and one mouth for a reason.)
- 3) Keep learning
- 4) Stay open to change (optimize)

To students looking to get into the Hispanic Marketing field I would say set up informational interviews at companies and agencies you would

like to work at. Get to know people in the industry. Learn which companies are most committed to Hispanic marketing or whatever functional area you are interested in. Read trade magazines. Always keep learning about how the culture of the Hispanic market and the U.S. overall is changing as well as how new technology changes communications. Keep your LinkedIn profile up-to-date. Share news and insights that would interest your colleagues in Hispanic marketing.





## Alumni Spotlight: Joana Wong

Joana Wong was born and raised in Panama to a family of Chinese heritage that has lived in Central America for several generations. Because of her background—growing up in the Panama Canal Zone, attending a Panamanian School and being raised in a Chinese Family—she has always had a strong interest in culture. Through FSU's Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication, Joana had the opportunity to really understand culture's true power and to find a community of people who—like herself—also thought that understanding culture was cool. As an undergraduate student, for example, she would go to the Center just to hang out with the PhD students like Tony Reyes, and conversations would flow about research on how culture affects attitudes and behavior.

At FSU, Joana majored in Advertising and later went on to receive a Master's in Integrated Marketing Communication. While she was still an undergraduate, she became an integral part of the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication and remained involved until her graduation from the Master's program in 2013. At the Center, Joana served as the Promotions Coordinator and later as the Director of Promotions, where her duties included helping organize conference trips and advisory board meetings, promoting the Center to the local community and industry, and transferring the content management system of the website to the new platform. In addition, she mentored the undergraduate online courses of Hispanic Marketing and Multicultural Marketing Communication. Joana was also fortunate to be mentored by one of the Center's advisory board members, Rochelle Newman-Carrasco, who gave her much-valued advice and guidance.

Through the Center, Joana decided that she wanted to focus her studies on cultural research. During her Master's, she interned at Alma DDB in Account Planning, where she worked on accounts such as McDonald's, Cricket, Tobacco Free Florida, Florida Blue Cross Blue Shield and PNC Bank. Through this internship she learned a lot about how Hispanics tend to act. For example, she saw how Hispanics often prefer some kinds of burgers versus others, and how they think of health care differently than the "general market."

Currently, Joana works at a full-service startup agency in Miami. She really loves it because she does a lot of research and account planning and is able to get to know the consumer. While her current employer is not marketed as a "Hispanic agency," Hispanic culture is part of their DNA, since a lot of its workers come from big Hispanic ad agency backgrounds.

In the future, Joana would like to travel more. She has already lived in three continents, which has opened her mind to different points of view, but she feels that the more that she travels, the more she is able to understand people. Professionally, Joana wants to be a part of seeing her current agency grow, and know that she was a critical part of that development. She explains, that "obviously, as young professionals, we all want to have senior position titles with more impact and responsibility. But because of the impact the Center and its mentors has had on me, I want more than that. I want to make an impact on people's lives . . . Mentors like Rochelle , Dr. Chapa, and Dr. Korzenny, along with my current bosses have made such an impact on the way I think. Someday, when I'm more experienced, I'd like to pay it forward."

Ultimately, Joana's experiences at the Center—including going to conferences, doing research projects, taking ground-

breaking courses, and breathing culture in-and-out—has made her much more aware of cultural differences. Also, connecting with other curious minds at the Center (professors and students alike) made her realize that she was interested in consumer behavior and research. At the same time, these experiences have made her a better professional: she learned very early to network in a room full of important people, to become a wonderful public speaker and to present herself professionally during interviews. It is this skill set that is propelling her forward on a professional road that is sure to be paved with success.

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## Spanish: Essential to Understanding the Hispanic Market

Being Colombian-American, my parents told me my entire life how powerful knowing the Spanish language would be. I always thought they were exaggerating, but seeing how extremely powerful the Hispanic market has become in the United States today, one must acknowledge how important being able to communicate with consumers is. Maybe they were right all along.



Texas State University professors Gloria Velásquez and Alba Melgar gave an insightful presentation on the power of bilingualism with emphasis on the Spanish language at this year's Hispanic/Latino Media and Marketing International Conference. Fluency in a market's language and culture is critical to successfully reaching the consumer. Being raised in a primarily Colombian-cultured environment, I found the professors' studies very relatable. It may be an unknown fact for many non-Hispanic Americans, but I can personally attest to their statement that 94% of Hispanics born in the U.S. learn how to speak Spanish before they learn English. Although, knowing the language will get you in the mix, understanding the culture is what will keep you there.

In today's markets, reputation is a key aspect of any company, so the importance of finding excellent translators is not to be overlooked. During her presentation, Professor Velásquez shared a poignant piece of Hispanic wisdom. "Traducir es importante," Velásquez said, "Al hacerlo mal, la reputación de la empresa puede ser dañada." Translating is important. When done wrong, the reputation of the company may be damaged. I know firsthand what a struggle translating can become due slang and the misuse of words; just one single wrong translation can ruin a company.

The age of overlooking the Hispanic market is over. Instead of ignoring it, we should adapt to and learn from it. Fluency in the Spanish language is a crucial element when working in the Hispanic market, but knowledge of Hispanic culture is equally important. It's great to be able to talk the talk, but consumers are more interested in seeing you walk the walk.

A much deserved thanks to Professors Gloria Velásquez and Alba Melgar for their thorough studies and exciting presentation.

Jenice Bastidas  
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