

## Don't Ignore The Melting Pot

Written by Business News

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I was listening to the radio this evening and heard an interesting report. The latest U.S. Census Report indicates there are 54 million Hispanics living in America as of July 2013. Hispanics have replaced African-Americans as America's largest racial minority – if only by a slim margin. And while the Hispanic population has seen explosive growth, Asians were the fastest growing minority group in America in the past two years. America is more of a melting pot now more than ever.



I was interviewed once for the paper. I was dating a Polish girl and her friend was a reporter for the paper. She was doing a story on Poles dating non-Poles. The funny thing about the interview is that they mentioned what I did for a living. I was working for an Internet company at the time and the next thing I know I start getting all kinds of emails from people with a lot of Z's in their last name telling me how much they liked my company's website. After that incident, I pushed our PR people to reach out to minority publications. Unfortunately, they didn't.

I heard all the excuses.

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“They’re not our target audience.”

“There’s a language barrier.”

“Why limit ourselves to a certain audience?”

I was not a happy camper. These people were our target audience, I argued. They’re consumers and that is all that matters. Language barriers can be broken down easily – find someone who speaks the language and hire them as a consultant (or get an intern for a short-term project). And it’s not limiting ourselves to a certain audience, it’s expanding our audience.

Another argument I heard was that the PR people didn’t know how to tailor their pitch to a minority audience. What needed to be tailored? It’s the same pitch. This point was driven home when I did an interview for a publication targeting gay readers. I asked the reporter if he wanted me to talk about gays in business or something like that. I thought the guy was going to kill me. It was a stupid question for me to ask. The interview covered the same ground as any interview I’d ever done. It just so happened that the magazine’s target audience was gay. Gay, straight, bi-sexual – whatever my orientation happened to be, didn’t matter. It was a story about an interesting, albeit an obviously ignorant, person.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of media outlets aimed at minorities. There are television networks aimed at African-Americans, Hispanics and soon Arab-Americans. There are magazines targeting everyone from women (technically still considered a minority) to Jews to people over the age of 55.

For instance, Modern Maturity (recently renamed AARP The Magazine), published by the American Association of Retired Persons, is the largest circulation magazine in America. PlanetOut, an online community aimed at gays with plenty of content and PR opportunities, recently became profitable – something a lot of online companies aimed at the “general populace” have never been able to do.

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A few weeks ago I wrote about Jeremy Pepper – a young PR guy who recently launched his own PR firm. He happened to be online while I was writing this so I asked him his opinion on the subject.

“When doing a test market run for a consumer product the team needed to land more interviews for the launch, so I decided to target the African-American newspaper for Indianapolis. The editor was so happy to be invited for an interview with a company spokesperson that it dawned on me that most PR firms ignore minority magazines and newspapers,” Pepper said.

That's a nice PR story, but it's also a sad commentary. Thinking about this topic has caused me to take a look at my own media list. The entire list is comprised of reporters at mainstream media outlets. There's no one at any Spanish-language publications and no one at media outlets that target African-Americans. No wonder I haven't gotten any ink in months.

Ben Silverman was previously a business news columnist for The New York Post and the founder/publisher of DotcomScoop.com.

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