

Hispanic Advertising: Credit Cards

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Two big credit card brands - **Visa** and **Mastercard** - continue to account for the majority of the ad dollars going to Hispanic media. According to final 2008 data from Nielsen Monitor-Plus, Visa International is the No. 1 advertiser in the category by a wide margin.

But the dollars invested by Visa in traditional Spanish-language advertising dipped from 2007 to 2008. The key reason - a shift in strategy that saw an increase of local-level activity and a pullback in more expensive national media.

Overall, credit card brands and issuers combined to inject \$15.2 million into Spanish-language network television in 2008 - down from \$36.5 million in 2007 and \$43.1 million in 2006.

Yet spot television dollars in 2008 came in at \$6.7 million - a huge jump from the \$1.6 million placed in local Spanish-language television in 2007. Spot radio received \$2.6 million - an increase from nearly \$1.1 million in 2007.

A Step Ahead.- Visa Credit Card Services was responsible for \$19.8 million of all dollars placed in Hispanic media in 2008 for the category.

That compares to \$26.3 million placed in traditional Hispanic media in 2007. The reason again is a shift in strategy, with more dollars going to local initiatives.

Spot radio dollars in 2008 grew to \$1.2 million, from \$863,900. Spot television attracted \$1.3 million, up from \$743,500 in 2007. The dollar increase came as network television dollars dipped from \$20.5 million to \$15.2 million.

Visa's creative activity in the U.S. Hispanic market comes via its relationship with López Negrete Communications, its agency of record since 2001. From 2005 to 2007, Visa increased its total ad expenditure for the U.S. Hispanic market from \$16.8 million to \$26.3 million.

In March 2008, OMD Latino took over media buying and planning duties in the Latino market for Visa. López Negrete had previously handled those tasks.

MasterCard Goes Local.- A strong No. 2 to Visa in both 2005 and 2006, when it invested \$19.2 million in the Hispanic market, MasterCard finished 2007 behind Chase in terms of total ad dollars, with \$6.8 million.

In 2008, the amount of dollars invested in Spanish-language media was practically identical to that of 2007. The difference is in where the dollars went.

Last year saw the end of all advertisements placed on Hispanic television

networks. Instead, \$5.4 million was invested in spot television, \$1.3 million was allocated to spot radio and \$70,200 went to magazines.

Mastercard's 2008 efforts focused on convenience and featured a *luchador* using a Mastercard debit card to pay for different components of a makeover (*HMW Archives 7/14/2008. MasterCard Touts Convenience*). McCann Erickson's New York office produced the spot. Media buying was handled by The Vidal Partnership, which has worked with MasterCard International on planning and buying initiatives since 1999.

MasterCard's Hispanic activity also goes beyond traditional advertising. In August 2007, MasterCard teamed with Chase and Telemundo for a Latino-themed financial education tour. A Telemundo financial expert appeared with telenovela star Natalia Streignard in sessions designed to educate Latinos on finance and credit card use.

Clear Cut Messages.- JPMorgan Chase & Co. emerged as a major investor in U.S. Hispanic media for its credit card services in 2006, and in 2007 invested \$7.8 million in traditional Spanish-language media.

Among the cards it manages and offers consumers are a BP-branded Visa, the Chase Freedom Visa, the GM Business MasterCard, Hess-branded Visa Platinum cards and MasterCard accounts tied to such airline miles programs as United Mileage Plus.

In 2008, Chase retreated from advertising - a symptom of the ongoing credit crisis and Chase's unplanned fall 2008 merger acquisition with Washington Mutual.

But like many credit card companies, work has moved into cyberspace. Chase Card Services in May 2007 launched a Spanish-language website tied to its "Clear & Simple" advertising initiative. The site - www.chaseclaroysimple.com - offers financial tools designed to help customers manage their credit card accounts to avoid fees, maintain good interest rates and protect their access to credit.

Of late, Chase's Hispanic market activity has been concentrated on its banking services, with ads in Los Angeles designed to transition WaMu customers to Chase.

Disappearing Act.- Of the credit card issuers shown to be active in the U.S. Hispanic market in 2007, only one other company invested more than \$1 million - **GE Money Bank.**

Activity from the company came during the second half of 2007, with \$1.7 million invested in network television and \$53,400 allocated to cable television. Activity was devoted exclusively to the **Wal-Mart Money Card**, a prepaid Visa card.

But the company was absent from the U.S. Hispanic market in 2008.

With \$782,550 in total ad investment in the U.S. Hispanic market during 2007, **Purpose Money** MasterCard, offered by upStar Financial, also vanished in 2008. The cards are issued by Purpose Money, with both targeting African Americans and Hispanics who have less-than-perfect credit. And given the nation's poor economy and frozen credit environment, Purpose Money's messages stopped.

Quiet Giants.- Citigroup - which issues **Citibank** and **Banamex** credit cards - has refrained from spot television since 2005 and uses national magazines to reach potential Spanish-dominant consumers. In 2008, \$278,600 went to Hispanic magazine titles.

Bank of America has been a minor player in Spanish-language media when it comes to marketing and promoting their credit cards. In 2006 and 2007, BofA used spot television exclusively to reach Spanish-dominant Latino audiences. In 2008, all \$187,120 went to Hispanic glossies.

HSBC had also been active on a regional level, with spot television in use in some of its markets. A [website](#) targeting Spanish-dominant consumers is the current focus of HSBC's efforts in reaching Hispanics, with a tag line - "El banco local del mundo" - welcoming online visitors. In 2008, spot television was replaced with \$40,000 in magazine ads.

Companies that were active in 2006 but showed no activity in 2007 or 2008 include BankFirst Corp.'s **AmigoMoney** and **Poder** card brands, **PNC Bank**, **Wells Fargo Bank**, **Discover** and **Capital One**.

US Bank opted not to use spot radio in 2007 despite the allocation of \$146,250 to Spanish-language AM and FM stations in 2006. It was also absent in 2008.

American Express in 2007 shifted its activity in the Hispanic market from magazines to television. In 2008, they were nowhere to be found.

The unanswered question - Have Hispanic marketing plans been frozen, with a thaw set for 2010? Or, is advertising to Latinos by credit card companies on a long-term hiatus?

Where The Spending Is.- Here is a quick glance at the investment in Hispanic media measured by Nielsen Monitor-Plus for credit card brands during 2007, alongside comparison dollars for all of 2006:

Parent Company:	2007	2008
Visa International	\$26,297,248	\$19,819,401
MasterCard Inc.	\$6,773,369	\$6,758,017

JPMorgan Chase & Co.	\$5,695,309	\$7,803,647
Citigroup Inc.	\$252,055	\$286,580
Bank of America Corp.	\$150,384	\$187,120
Capital One	\$181,017	\$14,116
Chase	\$7,803,647	\$11,179
American Express Co.	\$100,661	\$10,284
Total:	\$44,315,444	\$27,288,388

Note: Category includes credit card brands and financial institutions offering branded credit cards.

Source and Copyright 2009: Nielsen Monitor-Plus. Data for 2008 reflects dollars spent by brick-and-mortar stores and online retailers in the United States from January through December. Nielsen Monitor-Plus offers monitored spending data for Spanish-language local newspapers, national magazines, cable and network television, local spot TV campaigns and spot radio (local). National Spanish-language radio, mobile marketing and online spending are not measured by Nielsen Monitor-Plus. Expenditures are based on Nielsen Monitor-Plus measured media. Coverage varies by media.

Who's Got What?

Several credit card brands have recruited Hispanic advertising agencies to get their messages straight to Spanish-dominant Latino consumers. Here's a closer look at who works with whom:

- **Visa-** *López Negrete Communications* (creative); *OMD Latino* (media buying/planning)
- **MasterCard-** *The Vidal Partnership* (media buying/planning)
- **JPMorgan Chase-** *Lápiz* (creative); *ZenithOptimedia* (media buying/planning)
- **Bank of America -** *López Negrete Communications*
- **American Express-** *Latin3*