

Marketing Y Medios

Magazine Builds Hispanic Male Following at Home Depot

September 02, 2008

By Della de Lafuente

NEW YORK Looking for a hot magazine title to reach Spanish speaking Hispanic men? You may want to skip the newsstand and head to The Home Depot.

One year after launching in The Home Depot stores, *Constru-Guía al Día* (*Up-to-date Construction Guide*), a Spanish-language quarterly for Hispanic construction contractors, has emerged as a rare media conduit to U.S. Hispanic and male immigrants.

Circulation is increasing and the title is drawing advertisers from outside the building trade like Chevrolet, Coca-Cola and Mexicana Airlines.

Beginning with the Spring 2009 issue, which will be available in Home Depot Stores in January with large Hispanic customer bases, the magazine will increase its distribution to 170,000 copies in 676 stores up from 100,000 copies in 400 stores, said Kevin Kilpatrick, whose company, The Cloud Peak Firm, Marietta, Ga., publishes *Constru-Guía* through a partnership with Reed Construction Group Custom Media.

Entirely ad-supported, the upstart title has been profitable since its launch in July 2007, said Kilpatrick. Most advertisers are in the construction and home repair industry trade, including Ryobi, Ridgid, Irwin, Milwaukee, Makita and Quickrete, though a recent issue included a full-page ad for Mexicana Airlines aimed at expats.

Full-page ads from the Coca-Cola Co. and for Pepsi highlight energy drinks suited for staying alert and energized while on the job.

The Pepsi ads are cooperative placements with 7-Eleven (the unofficial breakfast and lunch destination of construction workers everywhere) and convey Gatorade's thirst quenching and electrolyte replenishing qualities, telling consumers: "Ayuda a reponer lo que tu cuerpo pierde al sudar" (Helps to replenish what your body loses when you sweat).

Another Pepsi-7-Eleven ad for Mountain Dew's Amp Energy, SoBe Adrenaline Rush and other brands offered a buy one, get one gratis coupon for those who need a boost to "Acelérate al máximo" (Accelerate to the max).

A Coca-Cola ad for its Full Throttle Blue Demon energy drink flavored with blue agave, (a Mexican plant that's distilled into tequila), features a masked Lucha Libre character.

"We're starting to get some attention from non-endemic advertisers, those who don't have products inside the construction industry, but who are seeking the U.S. Hispanic male market," said Kilpatrick. "Advertisers say these guys are very difficult to reach and many of them don't 'self-identify,' whether they are documented or undocumented."

For marketers, the magazine and its free distribution concept via Home Depot is an ideal way



Constru-Guía al Día, a Spanish-language quarterly for Hispanic construction contractors, has emerged as a rare media conduit to U.S. Hispanics and male immigrants.

to reach the end users of their construction tools and products, as well as consumer goods and services, because Hispanic males tend to fly under the radar and usually don't show up on direct mail databases.

"The [magazine's] free distribution in Home Depot is worth its weight in gold. It's in the front of the store at the Depot "pro" desk, which is just for contractors," said Mark Hartman, svp of marketing for the Ryobi and Ridgid brands, Techtronic Industries North America, which advertises in the title.

He added: "If we wanted to go out and do a comparable direct mail campaign, we couldn't. You can't even buy a database for Hispanic contractors who dominate the residential construction job site in framing/foundation work, drywall, painting and roofing because most don't show up on those lists. But they all shop at Home Depot."

Hispanic professional contractors are the growth customer for Techtronic's Ryobi and Ridgid brands with power tool purchases at Home Depot by Hispanic contractors for professional residential construction accounting for as much as 40 percent of Techtronic's sales.

"This magazine creates an avenue to put a lot of meaningful trade information into print that the contractor can carry with them, share with workers, use it as a reference piece and not just have it be product propaganda," Hartman said.

"*Constru-Guía* helps us to build a relationship with the end user for brand assimilation and product preference," he added.

Techtronic also has specifically built and marketed products to Hispanic contractors such as a circular saw sold under the name Fuego (which means fire) and is designed for framing construction, "has produced strong results for us and has really only ever been advertised in *Constru-Guía*," Hartman said, adding, "It's done well enough that we're getting ready to introduce as many as four more new items within that line."

For Home Depot, the Hispanic construction magazine is one way the retailer is aligning itself with content that is of value to its Hispanic contractor customers. The retail chain also markets its contractor-targeted products, materials and services via direct mail and radio, promoting its professional-oriented merchandise.

"The contractor is Home Depot's most important customer," said Manish Shrivastava, Home Depot's director of marketing. "A dramatically disproportional amount of our sales comes from the contractor and an important segment within the contractor industry is the Hispanic contractor, which is why *Constru-Guía* is of strategic importance to us."

"By having this publication in our stores, we are telling that segment [Hispanic contractors] that Home Depot is a source for know-how," Shrivastava said.

Hispanic ad agency Grupo Gallegos, Long Beach, Calif., serves as a consultant to *Constru-Guía*, providing the magazine with consumer insights and research on the Hispanic marketplace.