

Mariana's Supermarket Campaign Strategy:

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Section 1 – Understanding Mariana’s Supermarket

A) Brand:

In understanding the brand image of Mariana’s Supermarket, I discovered that it is a family- owned business rooted in family traditions in food and culinary experience, representative of the Hispanic culture and community, delivered in a way that is aimed to provide these familiar family, home, community and cultural comforts to its customer base in a way that is convenient, friendly, fun and most of all makes them feel nostalgic and at home.

So, in that aspect, the following are the values and principles that are most important and reflective of the brand image and business culture of Mariana’s Supermarkets. Therefore, its staff and customer interaction and experience, advertisements, products/services, and locations should all maintain and reflect these values in every aspect, so that the name Mariana’s always carries these virtues with it.

1. Family
2. Community
3. Culture
4. Convenience
5. Friendly and Fun

B.) Experience:

In order to further gain an understanding of Mariana’s Supermarket, I visited as a first time, non-Hispanic customer. The following is the details and insight gained in my experience.

Initially when I approached the store, I immediately noticed 3 things:

- 1.) All the customers on site and in store were Hispanic
- 2.) The music playing was appropriately Latin
- 3.) The windows were covered in images of the employees hugging and smiling and like family.

So, the immediate opportunity of a non-Hispanic clientele was obvious, and the music, and entrance was perfectly representative of culture, community, friendliness and family. I would normally have questioned the fact of seeing employees first instead of food first, as the product should be immediate. However, in this particular situation the lack of food first replaced by the values first is perfect, as it separated this grocery store from others. It welcomed me as a customer and promised me before entering the doors of what to expect in the delivery of the product – something other grocery stores do not do.

Inside, I saw a whole new world of grocery shopping. The usual stuff was there, food, beverage, etc. And even some extra grocery store features like check cashing services and a bakery, which many have, but not all; especially not all niche or culture-based markets like this one. Then as I walked around and explored, I was just in repeated moments of awe, and curiosity, and surprise. Firstly, I had been to a couple Mexican markets in California. Usually, they were confusing and very little in English. They also were often disorganized to my perception and somewhat random in display. Also, they were not usually staffed well, and if I had a question, it was not usually a smooth and ideal communicative and informative exchange, due to a combination of language barrier and uncertainty, but from which party, I am unsure.

But this was not that experience. I pulled out my phone and took photos of what I saw. And as I snapped photos, people stopped and smiled and posed for the camera. Hispanic customers and employees. I watched what I expected to be a half or less staffed environment, as even larger common grocery stores usually are. But here it was all hands-on deck! Everyone was working steadily. And not just sliding items over a scanner or stocking shelves, but baking pastries, slicing meats, preparing fresh tortillas, serving food at a small dine in area with ready-to-eat meals, and I even saw a woman walk from behind the dine-in counter area and approach the table of people eating and start interacting. I don't speak Spanish and I don't know if they were friend or family, or if she was asking about the food, but I believe she was. As if she were a manager checking on customer dining experience in a proper restaurant. And if they weren't friends or family, they certainly were now!

I saw a spice wall that was sent straight from the spice gods! I took photos because it was impressive. I love spices as I am Cajun, and we eat lots of spicy foods. And this was wow! I don't even know what they all were, but I would love to learn to use them in my recipes. I saw lots of familiar items, and many things in English, but not all. There was some opportunity there. Then my 2 favorite experiences happened. I am Cajun as I said before and we have a snack food that is pretty much unique to our culture that I know of. Everywhere in Louisiana, there are gas stations, and meat shops, and places to get Cracklin's. Cracklins' are pork skin with the meat and fat still on, fried and seasoned spicy and served in little nuggets of deliciousness. I miss them as I am unable to get them in my previous new home in California, and now here in Nevada. Everywhere has pork rinds, but that isn't even close to the hot, crisp, salty, spicy, fatty and devilishly unhealthy sweet sin of taste utopia!

And then I saw it! It was a giant! Like a mutant, freakishly gifted and larger than life Cracklin! I was so excited! I couldn't believe I found them, and it was the largest ones I had ever seen. And to think, they had been here all along, but known by a different name, in Spanish "Chicharron". And when I tasted, yep.... Home!

Also, as I waited for my food to be rung up at the register, behind two other hungry customers, I looked at all the fresh, ready to eat Mexican food walked a bit away. This caused me to fail to notice when my turn came in line, and I had abandoned my place in line. But others lined up behind where I had been, and they called out to me. "Sir", I heard in English. I turned and apologized as I hurried to reposition myself at the checkout counter, expecting some irritated manner from other customers and the cashier, as a dumb white boy was holding up the line. But, smiles, kindness and all. I thanked the cashier and turned and thanked the customer who called out to me, then walked away and as I did, I received a kind, friendly response from both.

Lastly, I had to visit the bakery, I mean, who doesn't love sweets? So, I went to the bakery and everyone was busy working and creating delicious pastries all new and curios to my tastebuds. My favorite pastry is a bear claw, and I saw some that looked exactly like them. Had to be them. So, I wanted to buy some. But how? Everyone was working and I needed assistance. So, I stood and prepared myself for the language exchange of confusion and shyness and hoped for the best. Then, customer came up and rang a little bell and the lady came quickly and assisted her. I stood and watched and waited after to see if I'd have the same experience. Once they both left, I rang the bell and someone else came immediately over and asked something in Spanish. I pointed and tried to communicate expecting a weird feeling of wishing I spoke the language and could appear all surprising and cultured to them! And you know, she understood and gave me my pastries. And you know, they weren't bear claws, but not so unfortunately so. They were the exterior taste and texture of bear claws, but with a cream filling. Pretty darn delicious.

So, now we summarize this full experience. The grocery store was much, much more than that. Much more convenient, clean, tidy, organized, and not confusing at all. It was very well staffed, and all were smiling, kind, helpful, and very busy and productive. There were so many different things that made it not a grocery store, which I suppose is why it is called a market. But still, most supermarkets, are just average grocery and convenience stores. Often even, markets can be less than grocery stores, but more like a larger gas station type food store. I was curious, surprised, engaged and interacted with in friendly ways. I was welcomed, I was treated, and I was fed deliciousness, with little expense. I clearly had a shopping experience in a culture, not of my own, yet I felt like I would like to visit more often and maybe I too could feel like part of the family.

This is the experience that Mariana's has the ability to deliver. They have all the tools to give this experience to everyone. They already do to many, as customers all seemed to be regulars and happily shopping. But we need more to experience this. I want others to experience this. I want to help make that happen. So, based on my knowledge, and my nationality, based on my experiences and my hesitations and concerns, I want to change the perception of others like me, and give them the push and encouragement and INVITATION to walk in and shop, dine-in and experience the family, friendly, community, convenience, food, and culture of Mariana's Market. And this is how I think I can help make that happen.

C.) Focus: Products and Features

So, I think the cultural niche of Mariana's products is wonderful. And I think it should be shared with everyone and introduced to many new non-Hispanic customers. Why should they miss out on such awesome new discoveries? But there will be curiosity, and there will also be uncertainty, hesitancy, and lack of action in that regard due to cultural difference, lack of understanding and knowledge, and fear and shyness of the new and strange unknown. So, that has to be fixed and changed, but there has to be a starting point. Simple. So, let's discover what they are comfortable with and what we can give them first that isn't scary, but comfortable and common, and we can discover what they want and like and need, and we can provide. Then we can discover what they fear and why they don't consider shopping, and we can change that. We can welcome them and make them feel comfortable. And then we can teach and share with them our culture in a friendly, safe and fun way. Then, we can do so again and again, for everyone. Then we are all family under this roof.

So, let's start with the obvious. Meats, cheeses, bread, laundry detergent, etc. Marianas has a lot of common items. We can show that in ads and have those ads in English. That helps. But it doesn't invite them in. It's a start. So, let's start there. Let's start small. Let's start simply.

D.) Opportunities and Goals:

So, here is what we can and need to do. We need to find out our customer's wants, needs, culture, fears, habits, etc. We need to figure out how we are similar and show them that. We need to find out how to invite them into OUR culture and family. We need to gain a customer base outside of the Hispanic market. We need to build a bridge of cultural similarity and comfort that will lead them into a cultural experience of discovery, family, awareness and enjoyment here at Mariana's market. So, let's find out who these people are.

Section 2: Understanding the Customer

A.) Who are our customers?

So, clearly Mariana's customers are Hispanic. They are most likely diverse in further consideration and investigation, from different Latin backgrounds, places, and different levels of time spent, fluency of the English language and assimilation into their home here in America. But to answer simply and immediately, they are Hispanic. This is good, as it should be. This is a business catered to give them some sense of place and home here in America. I love it. But to grow the success of the business and to share the awesome experience they have the ability to gift to others, we need to not focus on the Hispanic customers, and focus on all other nationalities.

B.) Focus: Target Customer Group

So, we should focus on non-Hispanic groups. However, we want to be most effective in our strategy. So, as stated before, we will start by finding ways to comfort, welcome, deliver things they want and need and then from there we will deliver the cultural experience of learning and sharing culture and through that we will make them part of the Mariana's family. So, we start small and targeted. So, let's choose one group to start with. Then focus all our strategy on them. Then move on to others and modify our strategy for the specific needs and values for that particular group.

In researching shopping trends on different nationalities, I discovered a lot of wonderful information. First of all, there is a growing trend in all nationalities across the board in shopping within cultural focused businesses. This is due to the growing population of mixed-race families. This is good news, as it shows that we have already got an advantage working in our favor, through evolutionary human assimilation. I also discovered our cultural bottleneck. It would appear that the Caucasian race are the least active shoppers, both in stores and online. This is probably due to them spending more time eating out. From my research, this group also has the least amount of family orientation values within the majority of their group, at least through surveying and trend. Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics, all tend to display more family-oriented behavior and a sort of pack mentality as well. This is most likely due to the minority status in society here in the states. So, they look out for one another and keep close in an instinctual safety net, but not to view or say that as a bad thing, as I don't think it's as much a threat as it is a strong value for them. So, this is something that makes a great sales point in our strategizing. And through this research, we will save that great information for later, because we will start effectively by focusing on the weakest link. In business, the bottleneck is the best place to begin. As they say, you are only as strong as your weakest link. And for all intents and purposes, our weakest link is the ever-dining in restaurant and less family oriented, Caucasian group. And lucky for us, the bottleneck also is the majority group in our society. So, we now have our target group. Let's find out what they want and need, and how we can reach them effectively.

C.) Customer Values / Needs / Wants / Likes

So, Mariana's first brand value is family, and Caucasians are the least family-oriented group. So, we are already seeing what doesn't work. So, what do Caucasians' value? According to research on shopping trends, Caucasians and also some other groups, are increasingly tending to purchase healthier and organic items. Now, I do not know every product that Mariana's offers, but a quick type of the word organic in the search bar on their online ordering, provided me a full page of products. A quick typing of the word healthy, even provided a couple options with healthy in the main description. This is pretty

vague as healthy is not often in the title of a food product, but in the nutrient value. But this is enough to say that they do have these options and therefore can provide this want/need to Caucasian customers.

Next, as a Caucasian myself, I will speak from my own knowledge and experience and say that Caucasians, of course vary all around, but there are some obvious common likes. Some of these are simple and easy. In younger generations, there is a growing trend in not cooking, and according to research, its most present in Caucasians. So, ready to eat food is a huge sales opportunity. And not only does Marianas have ready to eat products, but they also have a dine-in! Wonderful. We are right on track here.

Next, what do Caucasians need and want? Caucasians are the least culturally aware and practicing group. So, they tend to be the most open to learning and experiencing new cultures. But they still are foreign and need help feeling comfortable sometimes. From my experience though, if welcomed into a cultural experience and shown the way, they take much delight in learning. They want to be cultured and they want to be family oriented, they just don't have that value within their cultural upbringing as much. Teach many Caucasians a couple words in Spanish, and next thing you know, they are watching Telemundo with a Hispanic friend, eating tacos and looking up ancestry.com so they can use their newfound Spanish word and prove that they have some Spanish in their bloodline. The pride and enjoyment are there, and we just need to find out how to welcome them into Marianas and we can give them some reason to fall in love with the Latin culture. So, where do we start? Taco bell, as ridiculous as that might be. We start with tacos, beer, Cinco de Mayo, and other most basic and common knowledge of Latin elements that every single Caucasian on earth would know. They love tacos, taco trucks, beer and margaritas, parties and pinatas and Mr. Worldwide! So, we need to show them fun as well. We have to create fun ads.

Lastly, research also showed that Caucasians when surveyed were willing to take cooking classes. So, we can make simple, easy taco recipe adverts and videos and include new ingredients that are foreign to them and tell them that Marianas has these, and we can welcome them in and introduce them in this manner.

D.) Target Customer Buyer Trends

As stated, prior, Caucasians are the group that does the least shopping in grocery stores and online. So, they are more likely to eat out or purchase ready to eat meals. Also, as previously stated, there is a growing trend in organic and healthy options.

In my experience from living in California and now Nevada, I see a large trend in Caucasians purchasing Mexican food. In fact, A Lot of it. However, the understanding and depth of this culture's food is not deep. In fact, my last two Caucasian girlfriends and their entire families ate tacos, nachos, and quesadillas, and drank corona and margaritas so often that I was sick of it! So, the desire is there, it's just a shallow pool and we just need to add some agua

E.) Target Customer Opportunities

So, lets summarize what we know. Caucasians want to be invited into a family-oriented setting as they don't have the strong family presence in their cultural up-bringing. They have an appreciation and desire to learn other cultures and they have a strong love for Latin food, but their knowledge of it is very little,

and their desire to learn and experience is hindered both by their lack of knowledge, and their lack of understanding of the most strongly prevalent values that Latinos have, which is family and culture. So, we have to teach them. Not only do we need to teach them Spanish food items to increase their willingness to shop in a Latin market, but we have to teach them how to respond to family-oriented culture. I have been invited into many Latin family home for dinner or for a holiday celebration. And I love it, but I get shy as I don't really know how to respond right away when I am given this family style treatment and welcome. I have slowly accepted that I am being welcomed. And that usually always happens during dinner. So, food is the way!

Section 3: Matching Business Opportunities with Customers

A.) Products

So, let's start planning. What can Marianas give to our potential Caucasian customers. We give them what they know and feel comfortable with that is Latin to them. We want to make them less foreign in a Latin market, so we make them feel like they already know what Latin is. Let them be at ease from the start. So, we have basic ingredients and products that are not uniquely Latin, and we also have generic "Latin" items. Taco ingredients, beer and liquor, chicken, steak, pork, seafood, avocado, salsa, chips, on and on. These have to be a simple starting point as far as products go. Then we teach them more later.

B.) Services

As for services within Marianas, we can consider things like the check cashing or phone repair. However, this is not the best route. Obviously if they know that it exists and they live in close proximity, it is an opportunity when their phone breaks. But likelihood that they will stick around, explore and shop is slim.

So, we should focus service opportunities on the customer engagement and interaction, the dine-in and ready to eat aspect as trends show Caucasians eat out a lot more than cooking at home. Also the biggest service opportunity is in education. Caucasians are known to be willing to learn about cultures, open to cooking instruction, and love what they know of Latin food. So, we aim our focus on teaching them more.

And the other big service opportunity is with online ordering. This is a great place to put two efforts in one. If they can watch a video recipe and be taught new ingredients and how to use them, and then purchase them right then and there online, then they are given all the push they need in one simple url address.

C.) Values and Brand Image

Latin Culture and Marianas Supermarket both highly value family. This is somewhat foreign to many Caucasians, and therefore can be scary at first as they do not necessarily know how to respond or behave in these situations. But they are open and willing to adapt if guided in a friendly, convenient, and fun way with a little education to make them feel more knowledgeable. So, hitting them with Marianas strongest value of family first, may not be the best way. This is better saved for later. So, instead, we use

a different value from our list. Friendly and Fun is probably the best. Marianas doesn't have Mr. Worldwide unfortunately, or at least I don't think so. But they do have birthday cakes!

Also, beer on sale and tacos is pretty much a party to many Caucasians. Then, there is also the convenience part. So, with the help of the internet, and some great content that is funny, cool and hip, with elements of pop culture reference, popular music, etc., and the pitching of tacos and beer and online shopping with curbside pickup, the party is about to go down!

D.) Opportunities and Goals

Teach them. Let them feel like they already know who we are. Give them comfort in tacos and beer and show them a friendly welcome, not a family welcome first, and theme advertising with elements of popular culture and fun! Teach them more Latin ingredients through easy recipes and guide them to the convenience of online shopping to purchase their items. This is the opportunity and the goal. We need to teach them how to be part of our Marianas family.

Section 4 -Strategy and Implementation

A.) Communicating with Target Audience

Everything, and I mean EVERYTHING needs to be in both English and Spanish. Caucasians are open to learning other cultures and languages. However, they are not the minority group in this country, and therefore do not respond well when their native language is secondary. This is somewhat narcissistic perhaps, but it is our reality. So, they have to know how to read everything. And, what helps even further, is descriptions. For example, in a Japanese restaurant I might read an entrée name in Japanese, and under it says, "spicy red snapper in a tomato sauce over rice" and I might order that. If that weren't included, I'd be eating California Rolls!

Aside from language, the tone and themes are necessary. So, with Caucasians we need to speak in pop culture all day. Caucasians value celebrities more than they do family. This is because they are often raised in front of the television, phone, radio and computer and their family is the family on the tv show Full House or another television family. So, utilize pop culture themes, music and elements in advertising. Use Spanish words they know like Adios or Fuego, (they know this term often because of Mr. Worldwide).

B.) Theme and Message

We want to invite them into our family and culture, but these are foreign values to them. So, we theme things with fun, party, pop culture, white-washed American Latin products and then we teach them by showing them a friendly welcome and help them learn the culture and family values of Latin culture. The message ultimately is to come have dinner with us and be a part of our family, but this starts with let's have a fiesta cook up some carne asada tacos, drink horchata and watch George Lopez. Then while we party, teach them Bachata. While we cook, teach them how to use some new Spanish spices or how to make something new, and then while we watch George Lopez, use some cute term to address them like Mija and invite them over another time. Don't call them gringo or güero repeatedly. This makes them

feel like they don't belong. So, we have to use this in advertising and in imagery and videos and also in customer interaction.

C.) Channels and Content

Caucasians are raised with pop culture as their only image of family values typically. So, video is important, through television and online. YouTube and social media are a perfect way to interact with them and utilizing pop culture music, simple Latin products and common products, and lots of humor and entertainment. I realize a grocery store is not a nightclub or a fiesta, but commercials don't have to be limited to what you sell, in order to show a value, emotion, personality, and change the way we perceive the business. Subway is Jared. Progressive insurance is funny because of Flo. AT&T got a whole lot more business when they started putting that same hot girl in their commercials. Chihuahuas are EXTREMELY Mexican to Caucasians thanks to Taco Bell. Advertisements can greatly show the personality of the business. And if Marianas is Fun and Friendly then we should show themes of fun and friendly with popular music and humor. Latin humor is awesome. So, ads need to be creative and fun.

D.) Products and Features

Educational recipe videos are a great way to introduce new products. But there are other ways. We can create fun commercials or videos online with interaction between Hispanic character and a Caucasian character. Address the issue head-on. Caucasians know we have limited knowledge of Hispanic culture. It's not entirely our fault. It's not taught to us that strongly for most. I never even met a Hispanic person until I was 18 and moved to California. Californians know a lot more Spanish words, phrases, foods etc., than people who grew up in Louisiana or Nebraska. So, teach us. Show us in ways with fun and personality and welcoming us in to a friendly and ultimately a family environment that we unfortunately weren't blessed with as deeply engrained in our cultural upbringing. We desire it in many ways, like a boy without a father in his life desires to have a fatherly figure present. But he may be shy or scared at first because he doesn't know how to react to this foreign concept. So, don't overly family them initially. If I come into a large Hispanic family gathering, it can be overwhelming. So, fun, friendly is the start, and then add a little educational aspect into the advertisement, and then they will start feeling comfortable. Then when they come shop, then give them the family treatment that Marianas is built upon.

E.) Goals and Evaluation

The Goal is to start small and safe. Create a balance between Latinos and Caucasians through fun, friendly, shared popular culture and entertainment themes, and simple tastes and elements of Hispanic culture and values. Build a friendship and then teach them what family is all about. Teach them new foods and products, by introducing them with labels and descriptions in both Spanish and English. Give them a reason to feel like they are not dumb just because they don't know the culture and language. Give them a reason to feel ok for not having the same family orientation experiences. Show them how and let them see what they are missing. The family, the fun, the food...it's all there. Marianas has it all there. I experienced it. But I was brave and went looking. You can't wait for them to be brave. Show them. They spend all their time online and in front of the tv, on their phones, computers, and listening to the radio. Just make it fun and easy and simple. Oh, and don't start with the candy aisle. Spicy candy is a tough thing to get used to if it has always been sweet since birth.

Caucasians are very social and interactive. They will respond if asked to. So, surveys, contests, interactive forums, etc. are a great way to get feedback for evaluation. Simple discounts for check-ins or reviews on yelp are great. There are lots of ways to get the reception back, if you just ask.

Ending Summary:

Caucasians are extremely open to the culture of Hispanics; they just need some help learning a little and they will feel confident enough to assimilate. The common ground to start from is simplicity and the basic concepts that they know to be Latin. The strongest value of the Marianas brand is family, and this is the best gift you can give to All your customers. With Caucasians though, you first have to teach them what that means. Address the issue head on with adverts that clearly show that white boy doesn't know Spanish, but that doesn't mean he isn't welcome and how much he might gain from being shown what family is supposed to be. So, you show them that Marianas is fun and has personality. Show that Latino are fun, and funny, and like tacos too! Show them that it's ok that they don't know and teach them. They will immediately start dating a Hispanic person. Guaranteed!

Invite them in for dinner, make them a part of the family. Just make sure the first family dinner is tacos and a little tequila helps too!