

Telenovelas and Reggaeton: The Myth of Latine Media Consumption

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Editor's note: In this article, ADWEEK deviated from its style of using "Latinx" due to the writer's preference. "Latine" is a gender-neutral form of the word Latino.

Early in my career, I sat in a job interview for an entertainment writer position when the senior editor hit me with a question I'll never forget: "Do you have experience covering celebrities beyond Sofía Vergara and Jennifer Lopez?" It was the kind of moment that stays with you—not because it's rare, but because it's so painfully common. The assumption was clear: As a Latine, I must only consume Latine content. I must only watch telenovelas, only listen to Bad Bunny, only read about Latine celebrities.

Wrong.

This reductive view is exactly why platforms and brands often fail to connect with Latine communities. The numbers are there. We know our buying power, our influence—everyone does. Latines have the highest film attendance, accounting for 24% of ticket sales. According to SiriusXM, "Hispanic audiences are listening to 46 more minutes of audio compared to general audiences."

We consume everything from digital platforms to print media at

significant rates. So, if we have the numbers, why aren't we seeing more successful Latine-driven content? Why are shows canceled after one season, brands missing the mark, and labels failing to reach this powerful audience?

The answer is simple: outdated myths about who we are and what we consume. To move forward, we need to debunk these myths and understand three truths: (1) We're being spoken at rather than listened to, (2) we are nuanced—our interests span far beyond Latinidad—and (3) if you invest the time, we'll show up—but trust is earned, not bought.

Stop trying to tell us about us

One of the biggest mistakes I see media companies and brands make is assuming they need to teach Latine audiences about themselves. Too often, content feels like a lesson on our own identities, wrapped in forced Spanglish or cultural clichés.

Leave those within our communities to educate one another. We live these experiences every day. What we're asking for is authenticity. Let Latine actors and writers speak Spanglish if it's natural for them, not because it checks a diversity box. Allow Afro-Latines to embrace both their Blackness and Latinidad without reducing them to one or the other.

Publications are guilty of waiting until a Latine celebrity reaches "mainstream" stardom before deeming them worthy of coverage. The solution? Let Latine collaborators and writers lead the conversation. We don't need to be taught; we need to be trusted. If you want engagement, you must show you're invested in our stories as we see them unfold, not when they're trending.

We are nuanced

Yes, we're Latine, but we're also so much more than that. Our culture is important to us, but we're much more than just our Latinidad. We're multidimensional and layered, and our interests span across cultures. The assumption that we only consume Latine content is not only outdated, it's wrong. We're just as likely to be listening to Sabrina Carpenter as we are Bad Bunny, binging *The Bear* while sipping café con leche or a pumpkin spice latte. Brands need to understand that we aren't confined to one box—we are general market consumers who engage with content and products beyond our heritage.

Take Glow Recipe, a non-Latine, Asian-founded beauty brand expanding to markets in Mexico and Brazil. *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*, which premiered this past summer, debuted with a \$56 million domestic box office, with 26% of the audience being Hispanic and Latino. Despite not having a “Latine storyline” and the two leads not being Latine, the film resonated by including culturally relevant elements in a natural, unforced way.

Latine consumers are drawn to quality, innovation, and storytelling, no matter where it comes from. The key is to stop treating us like a multicultural afterthought. Once you see us as part of the broader market, you'll find that what engages us is the same thing that engages everyone else—genuine connection and relevant content.

If you build it, we will come—but trust takes time

Time and time again, platforms and brands expect instant results with Latine audiences, and when they don't see numbers skyrocket after one campaign or one season of a show, they

pull back. But here's the reality: Trust takes time. Our communities have seen this pattern too many times—promises made, excitement built, and then we're left hanging when things don't deliver overnight. Latine audiences, like any other, want to feel a genuine, long-term commitment, not a fleeting attempt to check a box.

If you want to build a lasting relationship with Latine audiences, you need to show long-term commitment. That means investing beyond a one-off effort, whether that's in content, campaigns, or representation. I've been in newsrooms that ask why their Latine audience numbers aren't growing after years of neglect. The answer is simple: We won't trust you if you don't put in the time.

Brands and platforms need to understand that engagement isn't immediate; it's earned through time, consistency, and respect. We want to know that we're being valued, not just in Hispanic Heritage Month but every day of the year. When you prove that, we'll show up—and we'll show up big.

This article is part of a special Voice series, El Mainstream Chat, in partnership with Latinx publisher Remezcla. The series is designed to educate the modern marketer on the Latinx cultural nuances embedded in everyday American life.

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