

Jay Chiat Strategy Awards Submission

Language Choice Campaign

Comcast/Xfinity

Summary:

What happens when a brand makes an unprecedented commitment to communicate with Bilingual Hispanics in the same way they talk and live their lives? Well, Bilingual Hispanics make an unprecedented commitment to the brand. This is the story of how Xfinity turned its business around and achieved a level of growth not since seen in the company's history.

With the cable industry disrupted from new competition, Xfinity needed to prove its value to the crucial segment of Bilingual Hispanics. So Xfinity created a new entertainment system (X1) with features built specifically for Hispanics. In addition, it developed an end-to-end experience where bilinguals could choose English or Spanish at every brand interaction. Our challenge was to convey Xfinity's commitment to Hispanics, do so in an emotionally authentic and culturally relevant way while still highlighting X1's new features. We armed our campaign with insights on the bilingual experience and came up with a creative idea to emulate the way bilinguals use English and Spanish in their daily lives by using X1 in the same way.

The campaign led to an astonishing 217% YOY increase in net cable subscribers and cemented Xfinity as a progressive, innovative and culturally attuned brand committed to Hispanics.

Background:

Heard of Hulu? Netflix? Roku? Cable companies sure have - and it has been causing serious declines for the whole industry.

With new competition consumers now had more choices for their entertainment and some couldn't cut their cords fast enough. Data from eMarketer estimates that by 2019, 23% of US households won't have subscriptions to cable at all. The cable industry was declining and Xfinity had to rethink its business in order to make consumers see the value in cable.

To solve this problem Xfinity created X1, a new cable operating system designed to enhance the entertainment viewing experience. With X1 people could search, discover, access and learn about their favorite content through an intuitive interface. The X1 system didn't just drop the mic on the cable industry; it raised the bar for how people experience their entertainment.

But Xfinity didn't stop there. Knowing how important the Hispanic market is to its business, Xfinity created an end-to-end experience where consumers could choose either Spanish or English at every brand interaction. Your bill, Xfinity apps, customer service, and all facets of the X1 operating system were now available in either

language. It was an unprecedented commitment to Hispanics and a huge value proposition to their largest and fastest growing segment, Bilinguals.

Challenge:

How can we convey the awesomeness of X1 beyond that of 'another cable box', while moving away from the features' battle?

In a world of complex hard to understand tech advancements and features it is difficult for consumers to understand and see the value of each innovation. Furthermore, the market is bombarded by claims about more speed, more content, more channels, more everything, enhancing the sea of sameness in the cable category. While X1 is a game-changing product, we couldn't follow the old script highlighting its incrementally better features. We needed to change the playing field from a features arms race to a culturally relevant conversation.

Advertising is most effective when it is in line with what people already do. To effectively change the conversation, we needed to showcase how using X1 enabled Bilinguals to watch their entertainment in the same way they lived their lives. But how could we showcase this? What is Bilingual life like? When, where, why and with whom do Bilinguals use Spanish or English? These were all questions we needed to answer in our research.

Insights:

Being bilingual is not a feature it is an experience

Needing to understand Bilingual life we prepared both qualitative and quantitative research.

While preparing our research, some of our Bilingual team members started talking about how they use English and Spanish. In this context one of our team members said, "Most Hispanics speak English, they use it every day to live their lives in American culture. They don't need Spanish like they need English, they want Spanish because it connects them to their roots." With this we stumbled onto our first hypothesis; **Bilingual Hispanics don't need Spanish, they want it.**

After conducting our research, we found that not only did it support our first hypothesis, but it also led to our discovery that Bilingual Hispanics don't think of themselves as half Hispanic, half American. They feel they are 100% Hispanic and 100% American. **They have expanded access to a world with twice the possibilities and twice the number of choices.** They feel empowered by their diversity and more included by the duality of their lives.

However, their reality when interacting with brands doesn't reflect this. Most of the time, they are forced to choose between Hispanic or American, Spanish or English. Instead of feeling empowered to slide from one language to another – just as they do in their lives.

This reality treats their duality like a feature, something that is available or not. Sure, many entertainment providers offer both Spanish and English content. But no other than Xfinity offers an end-to-end experience where one can switch between Spanish or English at any moment across all their content. We would show how Language Choice gives our target the full Bilingual experience and not just a feature of it.

Our next step was to understand what motivates a bilingual to use English or Spanish beyond the language of the person they were talking with. What were the cues that lead bilinguals to choose one language or the other?

Through online research, social listening tools and man-on-the-street interviews with Bilingual Hispanics we determined that the environment they are in, or the topic they are discussing tend to shape their language choices. But what was more enlightening was there tended to be an overriding emotional component that influenced the decision as well.

Most interesting to us was a saying we heard from many different bilinguals, **“Spanish is the language of the heart.”** We discovered that bilinguals use Spanish often when there is a strong emotional element to the conversation. Joy, fear, love or any palpable emotion that bilinguals feel will inherently prompt them to speak or think in Spanish, even when surrounded by English speakers.

Strategy:

X1 Language Choice is not just a feature – it’s a metaphor for how Bilingual Hispanics live their lives.

Bilingual Hispanics take pride in their ability to switch between Spanish and English as easy as people switch from typing on a keyboard to texting on their phones. They relish in their ability to pick and choose when, where and with whom they use each language. That choice is what is most emotionally liberating for Bilingual Hispanics. They feel a sense of freedom and fluidity to switch between cultures and we needed to capture this.

While X1 had many new features we knew we should not get caught up in all of them. Language choice was the obvious feature we needed to focus on. Through a showcase of Language Choice, we would create a metaphor for how Bilinguals live their lives. We would show how viewing entertainment in X1 gives our target the same freedom and rich experience as their everyday life.

But this metaphor would only resonate if the comparison were made to real and emotionally authentic situations. So we set the campaign in emotionally charged scenes of everyday life: a business meeting, arguing with your mom, waking up next to your lover. All of these are situations that everyone experiences, but for Bilinguals they have a unique twist. They can be heard and spoken in Spanish or English, which entirely changes the nature and emotion of the situation.

The Idea:

In what language do you (.....)?

As part of the briefing for this campaign we encouraged the creative team to be careful not to simply reflect, or presume when and where bilinguals might switch between languages – but to invite our bilingual consumer to contemplate their language choices.

We didn't want to put a mirror in front of our consumer saying: this is you. We wanted to involve and invite our consumers' participation because we know that not all bilinguals live their experience identically.

By doing so we demonstrated a higher level of understanding by leaving the choice up to them. The questions led our target through a series of emotional situations in which certain cues would prompt them to switch between English and Spanish. This mimicked bilinguals' life experience in a way that only they could understand.

We also created 20-second online videos set in emotionally charged and easily relatable situations: a couple's argument, a sporting event and singing a lullaby to your baby. Each video contained the same bilingual twist driven by the insight that Spanish is the language of the heart. As the emotion in the scene built to a tipping point, the language would switch from English to Spanish, but using the same visual elements as the X1 Language Choice feature in order to create a visual link between the real life situation and the product.

Additionally we partnered with Mitú to further reach and engagement with our target. We had their bilingual social media influencers create videos in which they switched from English to Spanish as the emotion of the situation built to a tipping point. We also launched Interactive Display Units that hosted short videos, social media sequencing, designated landing pages and a talent partnership with Univision's Maity Interiano.

Success:

The campaign successfully turned around Xfinity's Hispanic business generating a 72% YOY increase in net Hispanic subscribers for Cable and Internet during the time that it ran (October 2015 to March 2016).

Among just its cable offerings, Xfinity garnered a 217% YOY increase in net Hispanics subscribers.

Our digital and social efforts generated the highest engagement rate in the history of Xfinity's Hispanic audience on Facebook. Our Facebook engagement rate of 22.11% surpassed our benchmark of 12.6%.

Overall the campaign was the most successful campaign in the history of Xfinity/Comcast. Not only did we turn around Xfinity's business, helping it to grow in a declining industry, but we also conveyed Xfinity's unprecedented commitment to Hispanics.