

As a Latina, what I'm learning from Trump

By: Veronica Cool ⌚ April 15, 2016



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Donald Trump is brilliant.

With his indifference to courtesy and his flagrant disregard for humanity — all under the guise of business savvy and unpolitical behavior — he is brilliant. There are many lessons we can take from his performance.

Branding

He is a walking PR fantasy without the associated expense! Through the end of February, Trump spent \$33 million, according to the latest available figures. As of now, he's won 19 contests and racked up 742 delegates, according to The Associated Press, the most of any candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. Trump's total spending, after adjusting for inflation, is lower than every other major party front-runner since the primary elections in 2000.

Yet, we all know his name, his every move, his every offensive commentary... And sadly in the U.S., name recognition leads the polls. Not substance.

As Latinos, we are often taught to be humble and reserved, arrogance is not an acceptable trait. But does it get us anywhere? Yes, albeit a bit slower and through circuitous routes. We can find a happy medium of ensuring we have exposure, but said exposure needs be positive and motivational not hateful vitriol and at someone else's expense.

Fearlessness

At summer camp last year, I learned that being fearless leads to growth. Exploring the path less traveled drives innovation, and one begins to explore ventures and opportunities that may not have been readily apparent.

Trump has no fear of repercussions or consequences. I mean, racking up four bankruptcies is pretty fearless. He is a banker's nightmare, yet, he is a billionaire (I still would need to review his audited financial statements to validate that fact!) with plenty of capital and funding options. The pipeline of his projects and ventures is not dwindling despite his financial performance.

Mi gente, be fearless. Regardless of your current situation, there are options. Let's strive for the name recognition (branding), to be invited into the room, to have a seat at the table and then be fearless.

Fact-checking

Yes, Trump's visibility stems from his unfiltered indifference while spewing pretty damning facts about his opposition and the current administration. But are they really facts?

Peeps, just because your statement is uttered with conviction and authority, does not a truth make. Trump has reinforced the reality that he lies – in all settings — and we need to be wise and verify.

Politico had a great piece on Trump's alternate reality, where reporters reviewed a week's worth of Trump's words through a fact-checking process, chronicling 4.6 hours of speeches and press conferences, from a rally in Concord, North Carolina, to a rally in St. Louis back in March.

The result: more than five dozen statements deemed mischaracterizations, exaggerations, or simply false – about one misstatement every five minutes, on average.

And this one is my favorite: "We're winning every poll with the Hispanics." (March 9, 2016 in Fayetteville, North Carolina.) Yet a Washington Post-Univision poll in February found that 8 in 10 registered Hispanic voters viewed Trump unfavorably.

Civic engagement

And here's the best lesson yet: Trump has motivated many Latinos to become more engaged, showing us that our voices do matter.

Nationwide, about 12 percent of the country's eligible voting population is Hispanic. This November, Hispanic voters are projected to turn out in greater numbers than they did in 2012, with a nearly 10 percent increase forecast by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials Educational Fund.

Yet the profile of the Latino Voter is changing. Latino populations are getting younger, larger and more politically engaged, and an increasing percentage of them are born in the United States. These citizens are beginning to dominate the Latino population of voters — 44 percent of Hispanic voters are between the ages of 18 and 35 this year, compared to 27 percent among white voters.

Just remember that with every election cycle, there is a wave of young Latino voters reaching voting age, with over 1 million Latinos turning 18 yearly. And as the Latino population grows, so does the rate of voter turnout.

As for those foreign-born Latinos, especially in Florida and North Carolina, there's been a mad dash to become naturalized citizens in preparation for November's election. Voto Latino and Mi Familia Voto are seeing huge lifts in voter registrations; when surveyed, most Latinos said that although education and jobs are important, Trump is not liked. His comments on Mexicans being criminals and rapists and the need to build a gigantic wall on

the border between the U.S. and Mexico is motivating Latinos to register to vote. Trump has that impact on Latinos.

Amigos, I'm a perpetual learner, even with a horrendous teacher. Mr. Trump, thank you for the life lessons.

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