

# When is a song more than a song?

By: Veronica Cool ⌚ June 16, 2017



Summer has arrived...Windows are down, wind is blowing and music is blasting- And most likely, you are hearing "Despacito" blaring from the radio, a Latin pop single from Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi, featuring Daddy Yankee, that just topped the charts to #1. Yes, a SPANISH-LANGUAGE song just topped the US Billboard Hot 100, yes, in English. We could simply attribute this to the catchiness of the melody, the romantic lyrics or beautiful video showcasing the glorious Isla del Encanto (Puerto Rico is known as the Island of Enchantment for very valid reasons!)

Although the song performed outstandingly well in Spanish mediums, it exploded in April, 2017 when American superstar Justin Bieber partnered with Luis Fonsi to create a remix where Bieber sang some of the lyrics in Spanish. Fonsi, re-worded some of the Spanish verses into Spanglish....and Voila. The horde of teeny-boppers instantaneously jumped on iTunes and downloaded "Justin's New Song." The video received over 23 million views in ONE day.

This craze validates some points: Culture Matters. Language Matters. And Influencers Matter. Period.

How can a product sell when it is technically incomprehensible to its target market? Well, because Bieber said it was cool. He leveraged his status to brand this song, in a foreign language, as a cool song; in other words, he became an "influencer", a trusted source (to the teeny-boppers, readers, to the teeny-boppers) and guided their opinion.

The influencer strategy is very effective across the spectrum, whether guiding folks to a new restaurant, new device, new car or new beauty product. That's why Jennifer Lopez and Serena Williams lend their name to so many brands. These celebrities, or influencers, are perceived as savvy, trusted and knowledgeable by the main stream community. And we then proceed to buy whatever the influencer has deemed as "Cool" or "Great."

Bieber's collaboration certainly propelled "Despacito" to cross over into mainstream pop-culture, but the sheer number of Hispanics, over 57 million across the US, also drove the results. Hispanics want to see their language, or rather, hear it via songs across the radio waves; Hispanics enjoy seeing their culture, their beaches, their dances on display, especially when shared with the general population.

This is a function of cultural affinity- we gravitate to what we know, resonating and plucking at our emotional strings. The product reflects cultural symbols that draw us in. For instance, the scene in the "Despacito" video of the domino game with the older gentlemen evoked nostalgic days of old when our families would gather around a domino table. Smiles ensue with the fond memories filling our soul.

This song and video collaboration is truly one of the most effective cross-over repurposing marketing tactics in the industry. But this is not just about a song.

The Influencer and Cultural Repurposing tactics can be transferred across industries- That is, if you want chart-topping success for your firm, widget, team, school, promotion or store.

You are currently competing for a finite number of consumers, with finite number of dollars- the goal is to woo and engage them faster than someone else. Here are some tips:

- **Identify the untapped market opportunity for your product or service.** Who doesn't know about your good/service that can benefit from acquiring it? Is it Hispanics? Is it Millennial Hispanics? Is it retirees? Is it second career professionals?
- **Identify the Influencer**– You can build relationships and trust, by courting your target prospect over time. Or you can accelerate the process by engaging an Influencer, whether a celebrity, DJ, journalist or local leader to connect you to your prospect faster.
- **Repurpose your Message**- Tweak your message so it resonates with your target. Identify the resonating hooks to your audience. Is it patriotism? Parenting? Holiday celebrations? Using these cues advances the engagement processes.
- **Modify your delivery**- It is not what you say, but HOW you say it. Is it radio? Social Media? Español? Text or through Spanglish lyrics song by a Canadian pop artist?

It's not about this awesome song... But rather the ingenious collaboration and the slight repurposing that led to 23 million views and a chart-topping performance. 23 million people met Luis Fonsi for the first time, while Bieber created another vehicle to maintain engagement with his adoring fans.

Amigos, although the pace of summer slows to match the relaxation of school break, consumers, especially the dollar-wielding students on break, continue to spend. Their parents continue to conduct business. These students and parents are not monolithic...This is your opportunity.

Go ahead, Google Despacito and enjoy.

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