

ROLLING STONE SPEAKS LATINO: LATEST ISSUE CONTAINS SECONDARY COVER ENTIRELY IN SPANISH



Changing times demand changing postures. Rolling stones, for the first time in its almost half-a-century of existence, is on the verge of featuring Spanish ads in a special section. Its November 22 issue was reflective of the magazine's thought process, as it had two covers, one featuring Daniel Craig and the other Latino hip hop singer Pitbull, with the cover lines solely in Spanish. The Pitbull section of the magazine contains 15 pages and features some celebrated Latino names that along with many artists and performers, included Pulitzer-prize winning author Junot Diaz. The articles in this issue are in English but the interview sidebars in Spanish, without any translations, sending a message that they were meant exclusively for the Latino and Hispanic community alone. Matt Mastrangelo, the publisher of Rolling Stone said that the idea behind using both the languages in the same issue was that today's generation of Latinos were straddling both English and Spanish and were conversant with both the languages. According to Nielsen a little more than a quarter of Hispanic adults speak only Spanish whilst 15 percent speak only English, with a majority of them speaking both the languages. Ad agencies and other marketers are facing up to the reality that Latinos can no longer be put in a language cage and segregated from the rest. The thought process that Latino's lived in a world of their own and related only with the Spanish language and media is now passé. Today's Latinos', nearly three-fourths of them, are bicultural and equally proficient in English as well as Spanish. Data shows that the Latino consumer responds to bilingual media engagement. Moreover, they are taking to smartphones, social media and multi-screen entertainment just the way an average American would do. Mastrangelo said, "I think that all publishers need to think outside of their natural or normal comfort zone. When you look at the trends of the Latin marketplace, it is a huge growth opportunity." Brands are slowly realizing that to connect with them they have to follow the metamorphosis that they have undergone. Latinos do not like it when they are perceived or projected as different and those who come out second best when compared to their white American counterparts. Latinos are proud of their culture and heritage and are very sensitive to how their ethnicity is portrayed. By putting a Spanish cover and carrying specific editorial content for the first time in its history, the Rolling Stone is paying a huge welcome tribute to the Latinos in America. To be thus recognized by a hugely popular US pop culture icon, will go down well with the community. There is no denying that the Latinos played a significant role in giving President Obama a second term. But known for their low turnouts, the Time magazine's first ever Spanish language headline, "Yo decido" meaning " You decide," acted as the catalyst that pushed them to vote in hordes. It made them feel that it was in their hands to decide who the next president would be. They embraced the headline as America's acceptance of their value and that they were influencers and not mere followers. Why the Rolling Stones and Times covers connected with the Hispanic community is because it addressed their cultural values. They engaged with them and did not just communicate with them. There is a strong lesson for other marketers in these moves – they need to empower the people and recognize the significant role that they are playing in the country today. Pitbull makes no bones about his community's emerging strength when he raps: "Latin is the new majority, ya tú sabes. Next step, la Casa Blanca." - la Casa Blanca for those uninitiated with the Spanish language, means, the White House.