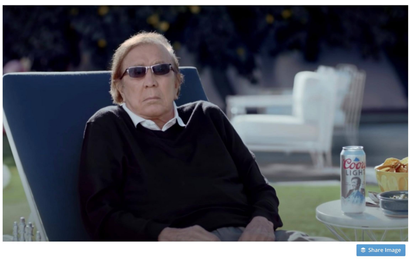
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This Cinco de Mayo, do more than just sell beer to the Latinx community



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This past year has provided great examples of how brands can push culture forward.

For advertisers, Cinco de Mayo seems like a culture-crossing holiday powered by (mostly) clever creative to sell more cerveza. This self-serving narrative, though, minimizes the significance of the holiday for 40 million or so Mexican Americans.

Cinco de Mayo is about more than the brew. For about 50 years, the holiday has become part of elementary school curricula and city sponsored cultural programming in the U.S. It's been integrated into religious life. So why, then, does the beer industry continue to create cliché ads featuring Mariachi and sombreros as the singular vision of Latino culture?

Beer brands are in a unique position to represent Hispanic identity and values. They can use Cinco de Mayo to help push culture in the right direction — not just sell more beer.

Brands have to stop equating Cinco de Mayo with St. Patrick's Day. While there might be a shared appreciation for revelry between the two immigrant groups, Mexican-Americans and expressions of our culture operate under heightened suspicion.

Immigrants are referred to as aliens, immigration policy places kids in cages, brown youth are regularly on the receiving end of police brutality, small business owners are under violent attack and we're under- and misrepresented in popular media.

But this past year has provided great examples of how brands can push culture forward.

Coors Light, The Ice Man & The Pro Hall of Fame

In January, Coors Light launched a campaign to support former Oakland Raiders Quarterback Tom Flores' bid to be honored in the NFL Pro Hall of Fame.

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The spot, The Iceman, features the 83-year-old Flores lounging while enjoying a cold one. A voice-over points out his pioneering achievements — the first starting Latino QB and the first Latino Head Coach and General Manager to win a Super Bowl — and asks viewers to sign a petition in support of a movement that was already gaining momentum with fans.



The campaign highlighted Flores' and other Mexican American's contributions to both football and American culture while pointing out the ways we've been underappreciated.

A month later, and after three years of grassroots support, Tom Flores was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in February. Score!

Craft brews for community good

In September, a trio of Latinx-owned breweries in Southern California — Norwalk Brew House, South Central Brewing and Brewjeria — collaborated with Pulitzer Prize-nominated cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz to release a pair of "good beers" for good causes.

The first release raised money for street vendors in Los Angeles who'd been the target of racial attacks. In January, they released Los Car Washeros, donating proceeds to support CLEAN, an organization helping car washers unionize in Los Angeles.

These activations reflect the connective tissue between local issues impacting Latinos and the entrepreneurs who live and work in their communities. Craft brewers can be nimble and respond to issues that resonate with their consumers in a way larger brands can't.

Regardless of whether it's a global beverage company or a local brewery with deep ties to the community, Cinco de Mayo is an opportunity to make more than just a "good beer ad."

The Latinx beer-drinking segment will continue to expect more from the beers we drink — and the brands behind them. We want good beer — but we want good representation, good ads and good acts for the Latino community overall.

Carlos Aguilar is editorial director of Quantasy and Associates

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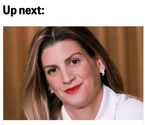
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