



Case Study:

McDonald's: Dorado

Year: 2021



This case study was prepared for the client McDonald's for the Dorado campaign featuring J Balvin to capture Hispanic youth while promoting Latino pride. It was developed and designed by Alma. In the Best Cultural Insight category, it won gold.

Executive Summary:

By the end of 2019, the U.S. based fast food giant, McDonald's, was no longer capturing their fair share of the U.S. youth market. Their biggest losses were among Hispanic youth, the fastest growing demographic in the nation. The immediate need was to turn up the switch on relevancy among U.S. Hispanic youth. So, McDonald's enlisted global music sensation, J Balvin, to help. Not only is he one of the top artists in the world, but he also has a consistent message of optimism and Latino pride – something young U.S. Hispanics connect with and that McDonald's could get behind.

Over one long weekend, J Balvin was briefed to write an original music track for the brand that would celebrate Latino optimism and the impact this optimism has had on both McDonald's and culture at large.

Dorado (Golden) was born – a music video, song, and experience.

The video earned 35x more views and 137x more engagements than average on the McDonald's YouTube channel in 2020, and social engagement surpassed all benchmarks. What's more, 70% of those who engaged with *Dorado* content went on to the McDonald's app and placed an order.

Definition of your challenge:

The U.S. fast-food category has been growing over the past 5 years, with much of this growth coming from Hispanic consumers. The majority visit a fast-food restaurant at least once a month and these numbers are only growing. But McDonald's, the fast-food giant, found themselves in a worrisome place as 2020 rolled around. Not only had a global pandemic hit, but the brand's U.S. business uncovered new data, proving that declines were tightly linked to youth. Specifically concerning were the numbers for U.S. Hispanics – the fastest growing population in the country and in the fast-food category. The biggest losses were among those Hispanics under 24. Not a good outlook for a brand who had traditionally done well with this segment.

Consumers were increasingly going to the competition, including Chick-Fil-A, Popeyes, Starbucks and Wendy's. Research has shown that they love McDonald's food. What they didn't love was the brand. The writing was on the wall. McDonald's had to take action to make themselves a brand that young U.S. Hispanics want to be seen with. We specifically targeted young Hispanic's ages 13-24 who have fond memories of McDonald's from childhood, but many of the positive feelings and associations have faded. The challenge was to develop a cultural moment big enough to get these young Hispanics talking about McDonald's in a new light, setting the stage for more innovative brand connections, ultimately driving them to the restaurant in the immediate and the long term.

We measured the success of this effort in four ways.

1. Improve consideration of Brand McDonalds measured by views of the music video on YouTube
2. Drive consideration through McDonald's app downloads
3. Drive purchase through the McDonald's app
4. Increase brand advocacy through social engagement with McDonald's Latin Grammys content over prior year.

The Key Insight & Strategy:

The real question for us was: how do you get young U.S. Hispanics, who are very much aware of McDonald's, having grown up with the brand, to take another look? In 2020, young Hispanics were faced with one of the biggest obstacles in their lifetime — a global pandemic in which their school, work and family lives had been uprooted. Yet, there is no question that Hispanics have always been esteemed because of their optimistic nature, and this is true for young Hispanics as well.

By the middle of 2020, young U.S. Hispanics were increasingly turning to the positivity of their culture to get them

through the tough times. One way that they did this was through music from their culture - Latin music. According to Pandora, in 2020, U.S. Hispanics were turning to Latin music more than ever, for relief and as a way of staying connected. Music was the perfect vehicle through which to share a meaningful message.

But it was in the unique Latino brand of optimism, unwavering in the face of adversity and strengthened by cultural roots, that we found direction. The pride that Latino youth have in this optimism shines through in even the hardest of times. This truth spoke to us and grounded our thinking:

There is no stronger source of pride for Latinos than the optimism of their culture.

This truth aligned well with McDonald's optimistic brand positioning: "making feel good moments easy for everyone."

Execution:

***Dorado*: A musical love letter from McDonald's to Latino youth.**

This idea was inspired by the generations of Hispanics who have brought the optimism of their culture through the doors of McDonald's restaurants across the country. From the young athlete passing through, to countless crew members, every Latino has been a part of the history of McDonald's and still is today. We partnered with a global Latin artist who embodies optimism, J Balvin, to create a music video experience that would speak directly to young Hispanics. The brief was simple. Write a letter to young Hispanics via an original music video, recognizing how their optimism and culture has impacted the McDonald's experience and culture at large.

The lyrics of *Dorado* were crafted by J Balvin to deeply connect with the cultural pride of young Hispanics. The song echoes "donde hay Latino, hay fiesta" (where there is a Latino, there is a party), celebrating the positivity that follows every Latino. The prideful words continue with "gracias mama por hacerme Latino" (thank you mom for making me Latino). In essence, it is a love letter from McDonald's to young Latinos.

We leveraged J Balvin's multi platinum album, *Colores*, as the context in which to launch the music video. The album, which was made up of songs each titled with a color of the rainbow, did not include the color most associated with optimism and with the McDonald's brand: "Gold." It was meant to be. *Dorado* (Golden) was born. We started the journey of *Dorado* by teasing fans on Twitter. While the world was trying to figure out what was coming, we made sure his biggest fans had the inside scoop. When it was finally time for the world premiere, we did it during the Latin Grammys, a night when all eyes were on J. Balvin and we turned everyone's attention to the McDonald's app, the only place to see the video.

Linear TV and pre-show support from Univision amplified the idea, while news outlets across the country picked up the story. After the initial launch of the video on the app, we posted the video on both the McDonald's and J Balvin YouTube channels to expand our reach. The content continued with J Balvin dropping a video about the meaning behind the lyrics, amplifying the conversation and generating interest.





Results:

The main objective of this effort was to develop a cultural moment big enough to get young U.S. Hispanics talking about McDonald's as a modern brand, ultimately driving them to the restaurant. We used four key metrics to determine the success of the effort, all meant to measure how much young U.S. Hispanics engaged with the brand after becoming aware of the Dorado music video via linear TV or social media channels.

1. Improve consideration of Brand McDonalds measured by views of the music video on YouTube
 - a. On the night of the Latin Grammys, one of the top viewed awards shows in the U.S., the music video was only available to the public via the McDonald's app. This strategic choice was made to 1) provide a sense of exclusivity to the audience and 2) encourage app downloads that serve as a long-term reminder of the brand on their device.
 - a. The day after the Latin Grammys, the video was released on both J Balvin's and McDonald's YouTube channels without paid support, to increase reach among the target audience. The *Dorado* video earned more organic views than years prior and versus other McDonald's content. Garnering over 12MM views, the video earned 35x more views and 137x more engagements than the average on the McDonald's YouTube channel in 2020 and ranked as a top 10 video.
2. Drive consideration through McDonald's app downloads
 - a. We measured app downloads among Hispanics compared to the same time last year. Over only 7 days, the campaign drove 1700 incremental app downloads (above and beyond the expected) among this specific Hispanic target.
3. Drive purchase through the McDonald's app
 - a. To determine if the Dorado content on the McDonald's app was encouraging brand interest, we measured what percentage of those who engaged with *Dorado* made a purchase on the night of the Latin Grammys. Of the 133k visitors who engaged with the Dorado video on the McDonald's app, 70% went on to place an order
4. Increase brand advocacy through social engagement with McDonald's Latin Grammys content over prior year.
 - a. We measured engagement with *Dorado* content and video via social channels, calculating over 7.7M impressions generated across social media efforts. This is more than 13x the 2019 McDonald's Latin Grammy impression benchmark (558,665 impressions).

Industry Impact:

The Dorado music video and experience is a great example of how a deep understanding of Hispanic culture and that specificity drives real authenticity. J Balvin agreed to create this original piece of music and video because the story we wanted to tell was true, relatable, and emotional.