



Case Study:

Frito-Lay: Cheetos

Year: 2021



This case study was prepared for the client Frito-Lay for the product Cheetos to reignite its relationship with Latinos by inspiring a celebration of their cultural identity and the mark they are leaving on the U.S cultural landscape by partnering up with Bad Bunny. It was developed and designed by Dieste. In the Best Cultural Insight category, it won Silver.

Executive Summary:

In recent years, Hispanics have emerged as one of the most powerful and influential consumer segments. Their purchasing power and social clout have become impossible to ignore, leaving brands struggling to capture their attention, especially in highly saturated CPG categories. With new category entrants on the rise, legacy brands are shifting dollars back to their long-standing, but largely ignored, Hispanic marketing initiatives. Despite ten years without Hispanic-dedicated efforts, the Cheetos brand was able to reignite its relationship with Latino Superfans by inspiring a celebration of their cultural identity and the mark they are leaving on the U.S. cultural landscape.

Definition of your challenge:

Increasing fragmentation across the snack category has flooded grocery aisles with new products, flavors and brands. As a result, consumers are embracing variety to fulfill their snack appetites, leaving brands struggling to stand out and drive repeat purchase. This has taken a bite out of Cheetos brand's household penetration across most key cohorts, and the most pronounced declines have occurred among Hispanic households – who are also tempted by the influx of ethnic snacks into mass/grocery channels that have created even more competition for their share of basket.

In order to reverse penetration declines, the Cheetos brand set out to increase top-of-mind awareness, improve situational salience and drive overall brand appeal among Latino Superfans. This is a group that seeks to connect with brands that embrace their culture and values, recognize their unique contributions and speak to their cultural identity in modern, creative ways. Acculturation and linguistic indicators are no longer an effective means for connecting with them, and an “in-culture” approach is critical to resonate. Messages that speak to both their Latino soul and American spirit, through dual-language formats, resonate most.

The Key Insight & Strategy:

In recent years, the Cheetos brand has become a champion of self-expression, providing respite from the mundane, inspiring creativity and liberating playful mischief. By connecting the brand's purpose with the cultural tension surrounding Latino identity, we unleashed a purposeful insight that delivers the authenticity our Latino Superfans demand.

Unlike previous generations that had to forego their cultural identity to 'fit in,' Latinos today have their feet firmly planted in two cultures. No longer forced to choose, they are 100% American and 100% Latino and proudly proclaiming (symbolically and overtly): THIS IS ME – TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT! By openly embracing their cultural heritage, they are rewriting the rules and leaving their mark on the world around them. This idea is deeply rooted in the U.S. Latino experience and represents a celebration of progress. Their impact on the American landscape has become a source of pride and sign of achievement, and a homage to the struggles of previous generations. Our rallying cry, “DEJA TU HUELLA,” captures the sentiment of “leave your mark” and the literal translation, “leave your fingerprint,” brings a dual meaning for all the Cheetos dust-covered fingers that literally and figuratively leave their mark on everything they touch.

Execution:

From food, to fashion, to politics and beyond, Hispanic culture permeates the broader American psyche. But nowhere is their influence more prevalent than on mainstream music. As the infusion of Latin dance beats into popular music has given way to a growing number of Latin artists reaching Top 40 status, Latin music is now American music—a testament to the mark that Hispanics are making in the U.S. today. To launch the campaign, we teamed up with today's most popular

and influential Latin artist, Bad Bunny, whose impact transcends his chart-topping hits. He is an activist, fashion icon and philanthropist that infuses his cultural pride in everything he touches.

To get the word out, our efforts centered on Latin music as a passion point. An “in-culture” vs. “in-language” approach guided media planning and creative development choices across earned, owned and paid channels. The final plan focused on delivering against three key communication objectives:

1. DISCOVERY: Seed the campaign message where Latino Superfans feed their passion (discovering new music).
2. CELEBRATE: Bring the narrative to life through epic moments in culture (tentpole events).
3. PARTICIPATION: Engage Superfans to continue the momentum by encouraging them to leave their mark.

Harnessing the power of social media, a series of teaser posts from the brand’s iconic spokes-cheetah, Chester, created speculation about a potential collaboration between the brand and Bad Bunny. The news spread quickly and was picked up by notable media outlets, further fueling rumors of this unprecedented endeavor. Within a week, a formal announcement from the brand confirmed that Bad Bunny and Chester would bring the heat to the American Music Awards (AMAs). Press coverage across leading pop culture and music outlets helped spread the word and build positive sentiment.

In the weeks leading to the event, our duo came together to keep the AMAs top-of-mind through owned social channels, paid support across Spotify and sponsorship of the AMA voting process. On awards night, Chester and Bad Bunny were on the scene for a 360 integration. In-show segments announced the Latin Music category expansion, reinforcing the Hispanic influence on music. Our rallying cry lit up the stage at the presentation of Latin awards, and our Spanglish TV spot debuted featuring Chester alongside Bad Bunny and his hottest new track, “Yo Visto Así.” The song represents the artist’s unapologetic attitude toward his identity and how “if you don’t like it, you don’t have to look.”

We sustained momentum post-show by broadening paid support across linear, digital and OTT platforms, and a robust social presence kept the conversation fresh. The campaign launch phase wrapped up in late Q4 with a wildly successful TikTok hashtag challenge. Influencers with a range of specialties, including art, fashion and dance, called on others to show the mark they are making. This initiative provided a peek into future efforts—signaling an expansion beyond the music passion point.





Results:

Year-over-year Hispanic household penetration increased +3pts in Q4, surpassing the +1pt goal and outpacing GenPop growth by 4X. Secondary brand and media performance metrics demonstrated an overwhelmingly positive response to the campaign, indicating increased cultural relevance and its impact on achieving topline business growth. Positive social media sentiment (>90%), above-average engagement benchmarks (across all categories) on Spotify and TikTok, exponential growth in social followers (+26K) and an astounding rate of participation in the TikTok hashtag challenge (>3 billion views!) are some of the highlights proving the flame has been re-ignited with our Hispanic audience.

Industry Impact:

While many brands have begun to realize that cultural relevance can have a positive impact on short-term sales results, they need to realize it is even more critical for building long-term brand sustainability. Identifying a powerful culturally nuanced insight within the master-brand positioning enabled the development of a distinctive expression that would ladder up while also speaking directly to Latinos.

“Deja Tu Huella” centered on a unique twist, a Latino interpretation of playful mischief, and honored the mark they are leaving on society. This insightful and meaningful expression of the overarching brand strategy placed Latinos at the center of the communication and built increased affinity for the brand. To achieve complete authenticity, Latinos remained the sole focus throughout the process – from insight to creative development, strategic partnership selections, communications and media planning.