



Case Study:

McDonald's: Hacer Más

Year: 2021



This case study was prepared for the client McDonald's for the Hacer Más campaign inspired by the idea to “do more” by committing to helping Hispanics go further; for themselves, their people, and their culture. It was developed and designed by Alma. In the Best Cultural Insight category, it won silver.

Executive Summary:

Coming out of 2019, McDonald's was struggling with brand relevance among Hispanic youth. Share losses were higher than ever before, and the brand was looking for every opportunity to stem these losses. For the past 35 years, McDonald's has supported Hispanic higher education through the HACER Scholarship program. But the program has not always had the visibility it deserves or the connection to the McDonald's brand that it needed to be a true asset for brand growth.

Through research and conversation with past winners, community leaders and parents, we confirmed the truth that Hispanic students today still see formal higher education as the path to a successful future, one that seemed more important than ever amidst the struggles of a pandemic. The HACER campaign, HACER MAS, was inspired by Hispanic students and their desire to "do more and be more." The campaign was a success despite the outlier year that was 2020.

Definition of your challenge:

McDonald's has been losing relevance with Hispanic youth over the past few years, with a -3.3% share loss since 2013 to prove it. McDonald's National HACER scholarship, which has been around for over 35 years, was an untapped way to improve this brand relevance issue. Up until 2020, Hispanic students were enrolling in college in record numbers, and then the pandemic hit. For many of these Hispanic students, their dreams (and quite often even their grades) took a back seat as they had to help support their families. In the fall of 2020, undergraduate enrollment was down 3.6% from previous years in the U.S., with even larger drops in Hispanic communities. Hispanic students and their families were in survival mode as they were making sure that they had food, housing, and basic needs.

With relevance as the core issue to address, McDonald's had to get Hispanic youth to again feel seen by the brand. We also had to get Hispanic high school students to pay attention to the mission of McDonald's HACER and be inspired to apply for the scholarship. What better way than through a scholarship program and support customized to their needs during the uncertain context of 2020? The overwhelming barrier of applying to college and scholarships was magnified this past year, so the campaign directly addressed three barriers to applying:

1. **Uncertainty of Future:** The uncertain context brought on by the pandemic added to students' and educators' existing fears of what the future will look like, especially from a financial perspective.
2. **Application Anxiety:** The application process and nitty-gritty details on how to follow through remains to be an obstacle in the minds of our students and their immediate supporters.
3. **Doubt in Self:** Beyond usual procrastination tendencies, the pandemic created anxiety, affecting students' psyche.

The overall campaign objective was to **deepen McDonald's connection to Hispanic youth via educational support and impact the educational future of as many Hispanic high school students as possible.**

This is measured primarily in two ways:

HACER Application Conversions:

- Achieve a 15% conversion rate (applications started to applications completed)

Social & Media Engagement with HACER program:

- Earned Media
- Social Engagement

The Key Insight & Strategy:

In developing the strategy, we dug into the context of 2020 and its impact on Hispanic students and most importantly, their personal response to the circumstances including their dreams and future outlook. We found that the pandemic was an overpowering obstacle in the struggle to go to college, but for Hispanic students, it didn't mean it was the

end. The truth is that no matter the circumstances, **Hispanic youth see higher education as the ultimate pathway to future success**, which is why in 2021, they were *never more ready to do more and be more*.

Execution:

HACER Más: It's time to hacer más (*to do more.*)

The campaign was a rallying cry to Hispanic students everywhere to take action.

Inspired by their internal fight to “do more,” McDonald’s matched their spirit with this campaign. By committing to helping Hispanics go further; for themselves, for their people and for their culture – they provided even more resources, from an additional \$500K in funds for 100 more scholarships towards laptops for every single winner.

HACER Más to give back to those who lift you up.

HACER Más to make their sacrifices worth it.

HACER Más to make your mom and pops proud.

HACER Más to be the role model your people need.

HACER Más to break stereotypes.

HACER Más to support the Latino community.

This idea came to life through a campaign that brought together a beautifully crafted animated film (since a live shoot wasn’t an option) and up and coming Afro-Latino spoken word artists to share the inspiring stories of real HACER winners. Animation gave us the flexibility to show color, symbolism, and emotions that allowed students to see themselves in the story. The look and feel extended to digital and social assets also featuring a past winner.

Prior to launching the official scholarship program in October 2020, McDonald’s announced the HACER More Scholarship, an extension of the HACER National Scholarship, to help more students (100 more to be exact) pursue college degrees despite the current crisis and its financial impact on Hispanic families. Hispanic McDonald’s Owner Operators and past HACER winners joined forces to announce the HACER More Scholarship during the top two national Spanish-language morning shows on Univision and Telemundo.

In October, the official scholarship program launched through Linear TV, Radio – both terrestrial & streaming, OLV, Social, and Display. We worked with content partners like Mitú to create additional stories with past winners to highlight HACER’s impact. Influencers were also a vital part of our social strategy to help cultivate excitement, advocacy, and interest for HACER among Gen Z throughout the funnel. We also activated at a grassroots level by partnering with CoolSpeak: The Youth Engagement Company for the 8th consecutive year to lead our McDonald’s HACER Education Tour. Of course, 2020 required a unique approach - instead of a nationwide high school tour, we executed virtual workshops that helped inform, motivate, and provide resources to support students on their journey to higher education.





Results:

In a year when educational aspirations were, in many cases, put on hold, **HACER Más** was successful in converting application starts to completions and in engagement with the program. Traditional awareness metrics and applications versus prior year were not part of the 2020 goals due to the educational dynamics of 2020.

HACER Application Conversions:

Goal:

Achieve a 15% conversion rate (applications started to applications completed)

Result:

Started: 34,104 applications

Completed: 6,115 applications

Conversion rate: 18%

Social & Media Engagement with HACER program:

Goal:

In an outlier year, gain awareness momentum through:

1. Earned Media
2. Social influencer metrics

Result:

1. Earned Media: 55 national and local media placements and 32.5MM impressions, surpassing YOY results by more than 400%.
2. Social influencer metrics: Influencer content drove 6x longer watch times and 13x more clicks than PY.

Industry Impact:

Specificity drives authenticity. Doing the work to deeply understand your audience, their motivations, values and beliefs allows you to tell more meaningful and authentic stories. These are the types of stories that emotionally move people and move people to take action.

All of the stories told in this campaign were of real HACER scholarship winners and their personal experiences. The depth of unique experiences across different multicultural segments is critical to understand if you are to develop work that connects with those audiences. The Hispanic experience is reflected in this campaign work and is a great example of putting the time and effort into knowing this audience prior to creative development.