

Driving diversity toward dollars

Advertisers discover thriving new populations

By JEFF MILLER

Long Island's segment of America's melting pot has never burned hotter.

A study five years ago by the Fiscal Policy Institute in Albany found some 30 percent of New York's downstate suburbs were Hispanic, Asian or black, up from 10 percent in 1980. The number is projected to hit 50 percent by 2030.

What's that mean in terms of dollars? Lawrence Levy, executive dean of Hofstra's National Center for Suburban Studies, points to an Adelphi report showing immigrants added \$10.6 billion to Long Island's total fiscal output in 2006 and created some 82,000 jobs with their consumer spending.

"It's not your mother and father's suburbs anymore," Levy said. "The pace of demographic change is so dynamic it's not even your children's suburbs anymore. Businesses have to realize these are their new employees, their new customers, their new investors and suppliers."

Long Island is getting the message.

Three years ago WBON-FM was a heavy-metal rock station, just one in a crowd trying to reach the 25-to-35-year-old male audience, said John Caracciolo, president of the Morey Organization, which owned the station. Something had to give, and that something was the format.

"I could be one of 10 guys fighting over 60 percent of a client's advertising dollar, or one guy taking 40 percent," Caracciolo said. Deciding to be the 40 percenter, he scuttled the heavy metal and created La Nueva Fiesta, Long Island's only Latin music station.

Some listeners, to put it mildly, weren't pleased

"My garbage man in Yaphank still won't talk to me," Caracciolo said.

But lots of other people started talking to him because businesses like P.C. Richard & Sons, Best Buy, Home Depot, Huntington Honda and other car dealers all wanted to

reach the Hispanic demographic, Caracciolo said.

Ernie Canadeo was the first to point Caracciolo toward his new destination. "I felt there was a need. Latino radio didn't exist here," said the chief executive of EGC Group, the Melville advertising agency.

EGC has been moving into cultural diversity, too, launching Spanish-language campaigns for Brother International and Bethpage Federal Credit Union. The latter featured wordplay with the ubiquitous soccer (*futbol*) ululation, "Goooooooooooo!"

Now other vistas beckon. "We haven't done any Asian marketing yet but we should be," Canadeo said.

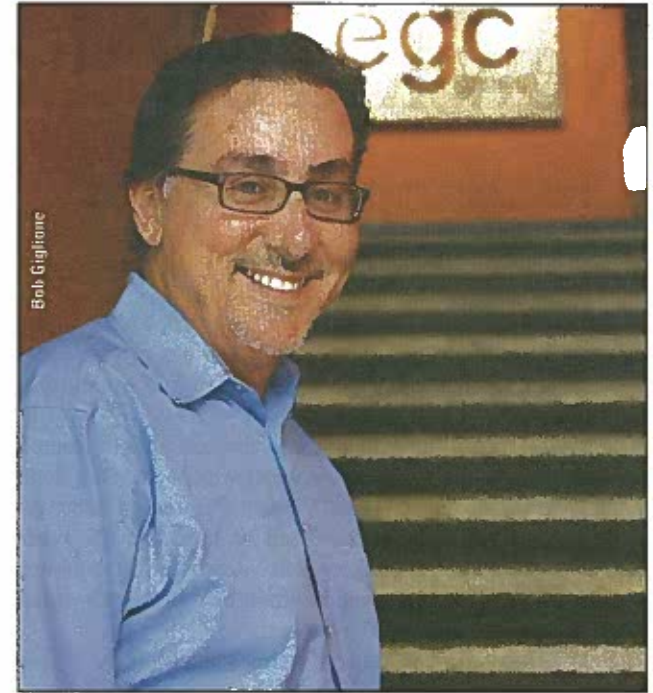
Some companies have, including Progressive Marketing Group in Melville. "We specialize in health care and hospitals," said PMG vice president Gary Cucchi. One client, Parker Jewish Institute in New Hyde Park, is in the heart of "a tremendously diverse ethnic population," Cucchi said. "So we recognized the need to market to the different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. In fact, I created a campaign specifically for them in Chinese."

Cucchi spots a cultural mix moving out from Queens and into Long Island. So PMG is wading into that rainbow river, having ads translated into Spanish, Chinese, Polish, Russian, Indian, Farsi and more.

One great advantage to multicultural marketing is strong loyalty to ethnic publications and radio stations. Speaking of the regional Chinese audience, Cucchi said, "We know if we put a message in their magazines, they will read it and share it with friends and family."

And so, ironically, as white suburban consumers move away from traditional media like newspapers and become ever more difficult to target, the culturally diverse audience becomes more reachable.

Some of the outlets PMG has been using are Chinese American Voice (radio), Chinese World Journal (print), Shofar Cultural Foundation (Farsi monthly newsletter), El



Ernie Canadeo: Seeing a need in diverse audiences and cashing in.

Correo de Queens (a newspaper covering the Hispanic communities of Queens and Nassau County) and Nowy Dziennik, (the Polish Daily News).

Now PMG is preparing a campaign for the chemical dependency and mental health programs available at South Oaks Hospital. "It will launch this fall and we're using local Hispanic newspapers and websites in and around Amityville," Cucchi said. "We'll probably run in only two publications." The beauty is there's a smaller array of media to wrangle with because the demographic is easier to pinpoint.

One of the many charms of this new culturally diverse Long Island is the loyalty of that audience. Another is the loyalty of the business community to the media outlets that help them connect with it. John Caracciolo likes to use Huntington Honda as an example. "Huntington Honda is in with me 52 weeks a year," he said. "They don't miss a week. It was just a matter of finding an outlet."

And with La Nueva Fiesta radio, they have. In other words, "Goooooooooooo!"