



Luis Miguel Messianu President & Chief Creative Officer Alma DDB

Luis Miguel Messianu has played a respectable and influential role in the most important developments in the U.S. Hispanic market during a career that spans three decades. Born to Romanian parents and raised in Mexico City, where his advertising career started more than 35 years ago, Luis Miguel Messianu has worked in both the Latin American and U.S. Hispanic markets. His career arc is defined by a conscious effort to help pioneer the melding of marketing niches into a nuanced and evolving total market.

His award-winning and genre-bending work with multinationals such as McDonald's, State Farm, Clorox, Anheuser Busch, Florida Blue, General Motors, Coca-Cola, Nestlé, and L'Oreal, among others, is a testament to that effort. He is an innovator, a mentor, and an example followed by many distinguished professionals in the multicultural marketing community.

Back in 1994, when Luis Miguel co-founded the agency that would later become Alma, Hispanic marketing still hadn't advanced any further than "Translate it, and they will come." Anglo-culture campaigns were crudely converted into Spanish, but the messages never reached the emotional center of their intended audience. Luis Miguel knew his agency had to pioneer a reinvention rooted in Hispanic culture, not just language.

This focus required the development of deep cultural knowledge critical to businesses looking to connect with the increasingly important Hispanic market. Thus, Alma pursues brands committed to strategic depth and creative quality. A prime example is McDonald's, which became a client early on and, 20 years later, still banks its Hispanic strategy on Luis Miguel's creative shop.

Of course the industry has dramatically changed since Luis Miguel first opened the agency. What hasn't changed is his drive to define and lead innovation in Hispanic marketing. This vision and his leadership have created a non-conformist culture, which constantly reinvents itself. That purposeful evolution has resulted in Alma becoming the sixth largest Hispanic agency in the country.

"What I learned is that in marketing, sticking to comfortable assumptions is a sure way to a slow death," notes Luis Miguel. "You must become the agency of the future, or there is no future. True insight comes from finding solutions to those problems."

Creative Innovation

Two examples of how cultural understanding fosters creative innovation exemplify Luis Miguel's philosophy. In 2008, he led Alma's effort to gently shove a very traditional client, State Farm, outside its advertising comfort zone to build a stronger brand affinity with Hispanic customers. That little push became the acclaimed "Los Felinos" campaign, which featured a regional Mexican band created through a casting call for a State Farm commercial. The overwhelming response to the multi-media advertainment campaign which included concerts, a promotional CD, music

videos, website, and countless media stories, culminated in a highly-rated reality show in 2009. This led the way for all our clients to embrace integrated 360-degree campaigns.

In 2013, Alma tapped into the environmental cultural aesthetic among millennials by inventing The Glad Tent, a breakthrough product that created brand affinity for trash bags with an unlikely demographic. The Glad Tent was created as an exciting DIY product to be used as a tent during music festival camp-outs and as a trash bag at the end to clean up the mess. This initiative garnered 25.1M media impressions and won recognition from top industry awards; two Silver Lions at the Cannes Festival of Creativity and Ad Week's Project Isaac Award for Innovation, among others.

Within the agency, Luis Miguel embraced the digital revolution early, transforming digital from an isolated discipline sourced to an external partner, to an integral part of our thinking. Today digital is not a department at Alma; it's a mindset. Our goal is to foster social creativity that meets our clients' growing needs to connect with consumers who won't stay still.

Multicultural Mainstream

As the demographics in the U.S. market have changed, it is no longer enough for an agency to operate a specialty shop catering to a niche market. Viable agencies must speak to both general market and/or the Hispanic market, or suffer diminishing returns.

It was Luis Miguel's idea in the early 2000s to convince McDonald's to be one of the first brands in the U.S. to create acculturated Hispanic commercials to run in general market media. One of these spots is "Universal Language," which won the ANA Multicultural Excellence Award in 2010. Featuring Latino hearing-impaired teenagers who communicate in sign language, the spot crossed boundaries with universal themes such as friendship, love, and community. The commercial, which ran worldwide in English and Spanish during major sporting events, underscored how the brand speaks to everyone and always highlights the importance of its multicultural consumers.

Latinos today are leading the growth of a truly diverse, interrelated and multicultural New America. Under Luis Miguel's leadership, Alma has developed a bicultural approach that offers clients the services of a regional one-stop shop that works in both cultures and languages simultaneously and effortlessly. Since 2009, Alma has managed total market for Tobacco Free Florida, and in 2013, won the multicultural account for Florida Blue (previously Blue Cross Blue Shield Florida) against BBDO, a large total market agency.

As such, Luis Miguel explained why most culturally specialized agencies are probably better prepared to address whatever notion of total market is being embraced in his Ad Age blog post in May: <http://adage.com/article/guest-columnists/total-market-giving-cultural-insights/241676/>

Industry Influence

Throughout his career, Luis Miguel has been an integral part of the industry's efforts to evolve from niche market to an essential component of the U.S. total market. His influence and leadership have been evident in many organizations, conferences, and opinion pieces, tirelessly advocating for greater recognition and an equal seat at the table. In 2001, DDB bought the agency, recognizing the spirit, passion, and creativity of the team built by Luis Miguel. He sits on DDB Latina's Creative Council and Executive committees. He's also one of the judges of DDB's Bernbach Minority Scholarship program.

Today Luis Miguel leads a team of 120+ people hailing from 31 different nationalities. Our office is a mishmash of Spanish, English, Portuguese, Spanglish, German, and even Dutch. Our diversity gives our creative work a fresh and multi-layered perspective, especially because Luis Miguel feels it's an important part of the equation to create multicultural campaigns for our clients.

He mixes and matches teams with different backgrounds that create a rich mosaic of ideas and thoughts. This translates into a creative powerhouse of multicultural thinking that is always in search of the *Alma* (Soul in Spanish) of our clients' brands. We aim to turn those brands and their consumers into "SoulMates."

Two years in a row, Advertising Age named Alma the Multicultural Agency of the Year (2014 & 2015), also having previously listed the agency in its "A-List" in 2010 and 2012—the only Hispanic agency to achieve that distinction. In 2014, the agency also won seven FIAP awards (Grand Prix, one Gold, four Silver and one Bronze), two at El Sol (one Silver and one Bronze), Wave Festival (Bronze), Andy (Bronze) and an In Book at D&AD (Bronze), among others.

In 2013, Luis Miguel led the agency to win two silver Cannes Lions and two shortlists, one Art Director's Club Bronze, three FIAP awards (one Silver & two Bronze), six Wave Festival awards (three Gold & three Silver), and an Effie Award, among others. Alma was named "Agency of the Year" at the 2013 Mosaic Awards, which recognizes multicultural excellence. The agency also won Adweek's Project Isaac Award for Innovation at the Clio's.

The AAF Diversity Achievement Awards named Luis Miguel a 2013 Diversity Trendsetter. His industry peers at the American Advertising Federation also honored him with the 2013 Silver Medal. Luis Miguel was President of the jury at the 2013 Wave Festival for the Direct category and for the Grand Prix (Blue Wave) category presiding over all presidents.

He has always been passionate about mentoring and educating a new generation of multicultural advertising professionals, and has been a member of the Miami Ad School Board and faculty since the school's inception. Luis Miguel was also one of the founders of *Círculo Creativo del Mercado Latino* more than a decade ago, and was elected its first President.

Top Level Awards Won:

Two years in a row- Multicultural Agency of the Year by Advertising Age 2014 & 2015.

2014: Shortlisted at Cannes twice in Indoor Posters, Seven FIAP (Grand Prix, 1 Gold, 4 Silver and 1 Bronze), two El Sol (1 Silver and 1 Bronze), one Wave Festival (Bronze), one Andy (Bronze), and an In Book at D&AD (Bronze), 3 USH Idea awards, 5 HAPE awards (Best of Show, 2 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze).

2013: Two Silver Cannes Lions in Promotion & Activation and Outdoor categories. Also shortlisted in Film Craft and Radio. Art Director's Club Bronze, three FIAP awards (1 Silver and 2 Bronze), six Wave Festival awards (3 Gold and 3 Silver), an Effie Award Bronze and 4 National Addy's. Alma was named "Agency of the Year" at the 2013 Mosaic Awards, which recognizes multicultural excellence. The agency also won Adweek's Project Isaac Award for Innovation at the Clio's.

2012: New York Festival (1 Silver and 1 Bronze), Epica (1 Bronze), El Ojo de Iberoamérica (1 Silver and 2 Bronze), U.S.H. Ideas Best Campaign and Association of National Advertisers (ANA) two Grand Prix and two category winners.

Other Jury Participation:

In 2014, Luis Miguel was a judge at El Ojo and the Latin American Media Festival. In 2012, he was a juror at The International Cup and U.S. Hispanic Idea Awards. In 2011, Jury President at FIAP and was in charge of the first-ever open live debate to award the TV Grand Prix via web TV.

Credentials:

AHAA Board Member, U.S. Hispanic "Círculo Creativo" founder, 1st President and Board Member, 4As, AAF, and Miami Ad School Board Member and part of the faculty.

Coverage/Mentions:

In 2014, Adlatina celebrated Alma's 20th Anniversary, recognizing Luis Miguel as a pioneer spirit in the industry. Creativity, Adweek, and Ads of the World are among those that highlighted two World Cup campaigns and the Clorox Greenworks print series. Ad Age and Creativity also feature Alma's novel digital business cards, and Adlatina ranked Alma the 6th most creative U.S. Hispanic Agency.

In January 2013, Adlatina recognized Alma as one of the most notable agencies of 2012 in the U.S. Hispanic & Latam regions (Destacados Adlatina 2012). Ad Forum awarded the agency the Greatest Hits Awards in 2012 in the Digital, Online and Web categories. Adictivo Magazine named Alma the fourth most creative U.S. Hispanic Agency of 2012. In May 2013, Luis Miguel's POV on total market was published in Advertising Age's blog. In September 2013, Adweek announced Alma's AAF Diversity Achievement and Mosaic Awards. Also in 2013, Alma was named "Agency of the Year," and Luis Miguel was named Diversity Trendsetter. In November 2013, Adlatina's Crema Book ranked Alma as #5 in the top 10 most creative U.S. Hispanic agencies.