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Arthur Emerson
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TIP: Effective Branding

In creating an effective brand, you need to establish a sense of belonging, loyalty and dependability between your customers and your product. Branding, much like any relationship, needs a sustained drumbeat in order to become and remain effective.

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Annual mariachi festival brings culture to life



MARKETING & MEDIA

ANDI RODRIGUEZ

Those without sombreros and guitars may feel a bit left out next week, as more than 15,000 mariachis descend upon the city for the 14th annual Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza. Cynthia Muñoz, whose firm Muñoz Public Relations (MPR) has spearheaded the Extravaganza for 14 consecutive years, speaks of the music festival with great pride, having nurtured it to its present level of success. But even traditions must be kept fresh and appealing, and Muñoz doesn't disappoint.

"This year, we've created quite a few new collaborative alliances," she says, "with a book author, Trinity University and a Norwegian film crew ... all who are a part of this year's Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza."

MPR also has produced Mariachi Vargas concerts in McAllen, Houston and Austin. Next year, the company plans to roll out an eight-market tour throughout the state due to the interest of major companies that are looking for ways to reach the Hispanic consumer at a grassroots level, says Muñoz. "The Mariachi Vargas concert gives sponsors the opportunity to have a personal connection with consumers with an

event that has proven success in reaching multiple generations and various socioeconomic levels," she adds.

Among her new connections, Muñoz is excited about a partnership with John Smith, an author of "The Best Mariachi in the World," a children's book about a young aspiring mariachi. "He'll participate in the Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza via readings and help to promote higher education among Hispanic youth."

In addition, Zennor Film, a Norwegian-based film company with backing by one of Scandinavia's top producers, is filming a documentary in S.A. on cultural identity. A Mariachi Vargas presentation at Trinity University will also debut, thanks to Dante Suarez, an associate professor of Finance and International Business at the school. Suarez is spearheading a multiple-performance mariachi initiative on campus, including a special one with the Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlan, a Mexico City based group that celebrates 111 years of mariachi music tradition this year. The seven-day festival will run Nov. 30 through Dec. 6. For more information, visit www.mariachimusic.com.

IABC

It's time for "Year in Review," International Association of Business Communicators' (IABC) annual luncheon program, now a popular holiday favorite among communicators, marketers and business professionals across San Antonio. Join some

of San Antonio's media insiders from television, print and radio as they share which 2008 campaigns make up their list of "The Good, the Bad and the Newsworthy!"

IABC leaders stress that "...it's a fun and lighthearted way to learn from media professionals what works and didn't work and how to plan for trends of 2009." The Dec. 9 luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Plaza Club; register online by Monday, Dec. 8 by visiting the calendar section at www.iabc-sanantonio.org.

CineFestival

Attention aspiring cinematographers; the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center announces the 31st CineFestival call for entries. Communications specialist Lorraine Pulido-Ramirez says the CineFestival en San Antonio is the nation's oldest Latino film festival and will celebrate its 31th anniversary. The theme for this year's festival is "New World Onda: Building a Dynamic Media Society."

CineFestival is seeking the best Latino features, shorts, documentaries, animation, experimental films and youth works. The call for entries deadline is Dec. 8, 2008. The CineFestival kicks off Feb. 5, 2009.

Pulido-Ramirez explains that the four-day event will feature film screenings, workshops, panel discussions, networking opportunities, gala celebrations and musical performances. Sunday will be a seniors and family-friendly film day and innovative uses of new technology will also be high-