

SIP DECONSTRUCTION ON THE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL "El Béisbol Es Otra Cosa," CAMPAIGN

I. COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Major League Baseball (MLB) is a professional baseball organization that operates in the United States and Canada that was founded in 1903. The organization's operations encompass broadcasting MLB games, managing media and broadcasting rights, merchandising, and promoting the growth of baseball in the United States. MLB acquired Weiden+Kennedy as their Agency in Record to help with the organization's promotion of baseball through a holistic and personal lens; as that is one of WK's specialties.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

While the official MLB website doesn't have a posted mission statement, I believe MLB's mission has always been about reinforcing the narrative of baseball as "America's pastime." It is focused on building a sense of community rooted in the United States by delivering entertainment through local and national broadcasts and highlighting the talents of its athletes.

III. BRAND POSITIONING

This campaign is for passionate baseball fans and culturally diverse sports enthusiasts. MLB delivers the American sports experience and celebrates the heritage of the game, among all professional sports leagues, because it blends rich tradition, elite athletic competition, and community-driven events that engage a broad audience and create lasting, culturally significant moments.

IV. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY

Over the past decade, MLB has seen a dramatic shift in its player demographics, with Latino athletes making up nearly a third of the league (Covarrubias, 2017). However, while the on-field presence of Latino players grew, MLB's previous campaigns have failed to fully resonate with this increasingly important audience.

The "Baseball is Something Else" campaign, launched in March 2023 by MLB's Agency in Record, WK, emphasizes what makes baseball unique compared to other major sports (Major League Baseball). MLB sought to highlight the sport's slower pace, its rich history, and the tradition of its quirks and the ballpark

experience, differentiating it from fast-paced, high-energy sports like basketball and football (Wieden+Kennedy, 2023). The campaign tried to remind fans why baseball is special. However, while it did resonate with many long-time fans of the game, it did not effectively capture the attention of Latino fans. The messaging was seen as too general, focusing on traditional aspects of the sport that didn't address the cultural significance of baseball in Latino communities or acknowledge the immense contributions of Latino players.

The cultural context surrounding baseball is shifting—Latino fans are becoming more vocal, passionate, and critical to the game's future growth. MLB realized it had an opportunity to bridge this gap by launching a culturally relevant campaign that embraced and celebrated Latino contributions to baseball, connecting with an audience that felt sidelined by previous efforts. The campaign, "El Béisbol Es Otra Cosa" would allow MLB to address underrepresentation while fostering deeper loyalty among Latino fans, thereby positioning the league to sustain long-term growth in an increasingly diverse market.

Latino players are becoming some of the sport's biggest stars, with athletes like Fernando Tatis Jr., Ronald Acuña Jr., and Juan Soto dominating headlines and becoming modern faces of the league. Their performances on the field captivated fans, yet there was a growing disconnect between their cultural impact and the way MLB communicated with Latino audiences.

By understanding the challenge that touches on the failed attempts to include Latinos in MLB campaigns, WK and MLB is seizing the opportunity with a campaign like "El Béisbol Es Otra Cosa" — a direct translation of "Baseball Is Something Else"— where MLB could both acknowledge the importance of Latino culture to baseball's heritage and future, and position itself as an inclusive, modern sports brand that resonates beyond its traditional fanbase. A public relations response at this point in time was essential for sustaining fan engagement and capitalizing on the demographic shifts reshaping the league's audience. An opportunity to not only make a Spanish-language version of the "Baseball Is Something Else" campaign, but to make sure that Latinos are at the forefront of the organization's interests.

V. RESEARCH

Research Goals: To effectively develop the "El Béisbol Es Otra Cosa" campaign, the following questions should guide the research: What are the perceptions of Latino fans regarding MLB's current marketing

efforts? How do Latino fans feel represented in MLB's branding and outreach? What cultural elements resonate most with Latino audiences? What specific messaging strategies can effectively engage this demographic?

Research Methodology:

1. Primary

a. Qualitative research

- i. Focus Groups: Organize three to four focus groups consisting of 8-10 Latino baseball fans each. Participants will be recruited from local community centers or online Latino fan forums. These discussions will explore their perceptions of MLB's current marketing, the significance of cultural representation, and suggestions for improvement.
- ii. Interviews: Conduct 10-15 one-on-one interviews with Latino players and community leaders. These interviews can take place in-person or via video calls to gain insights into their experiences with the league and their perspectives on representation.

b. Quantitative Research

- i. Surveys: Distribute an online survey targeting 500 Latino baseball fans across the U.S. The survey will assess their attitudes towards MLB's marketing strategies, representation of Latino players, and cultural significance of baseball. The survey will utilize platforms like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms to reach a wide audience.

2. Secondary

- a. Analyze existing articles and reports from reputable sports media outlets, such as ESPN and The Athletic, focusing on how Latino players and communities are represented in baseball coverage.
- b. Review research papers examining the cultural impact of Latino players in MLB and the significance of representation in sports marketing.
- c. Utilize reports from organizations like Nielsen Sports, Fanáticos: A Nielsen Sports Guide focused on Hispanic/Latino sports fans to understand demographic trends and the engagement of Latino audiences in sports. (Latinos in Sports)

VI. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Strong Caribbean and Mexican fan base that is reflected on the field with a strong Caribbean and Mexican presence.
- Established brand recognition as “America’s pastime,” creating an opportunity to leverage nostalgia and tradition.
- Increased engagement and loyalty from Latino fans through community initiatives and partnerships.
- Growing awareness of the need for inclusive marketing/advertising strategies.

Weaknesses

- Historical disconnect between marketing efforts and Latino fan expectations.
- Previous campaigns may not have effectively represented the cultural contributions of Latino players.
- Limited understanding of the cultural significance of baseball within Latino communities from commissioners and executives in MLB.
- Not enough Spanglish representation in the MLB which overlook the true Latino in the U.S. culture (Ostrowski).

Opportunities

- The “Baseball is Something Else” campaign left out latino audiences but *this* campaign can now be solely focused of Latinos in the MLB.
- Recent partnership with TelevisaUnivision expands their reach to Latino audiences (TelevisaUnivision)
- Potential to capitalize on the cultural significance of baseball in Latino communities through storytelling.
- Growing support for diversity and inclusion in sports, aligning with broader societal trends.

Threats

- Competition from other sports leagues actively engaging with diverse audiences.
- Negative perceptions if the campaign is seen as inauthentic or opportunistic since it is coming out a year after the “Baseball is Something Else” campaign.
- Using mainstream music that would attract younger fans for the campaign like Reggaeton may push away older, traditional fans.
- Potential backlash from traditional baseball fans resistant to changes in marketing strategies.

VII. STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

- **Cultural Representation Matters:** The underrepresentation of Latino culture in past MLB marketing efforts has created a disconnect with a significant portion of the fanbase. To bridge this gap, the campaign must authentically highlight Latino player experiences and cultural narratives, aligning with community values and aspirations.
- **Community Engagement is Key:** The existing relationships MLB has fostered with Latino communities present an opportunity to deepen engagement. This campaign should leverage these connections, positioning the league as a genuine supporter of Latino culture and its contributions to baseball.
- **Demographic Trends Favor Growth:** With the Latino population in the U.S. continuing to grow, MLB has a unique opportunity to capture this market by emphasizing inclusive messaging that resonates with younger fans. Tailoring content to reflect their interests and cultural identities will help build brand loyalty.
- **Storytelling as a Strategy:** The campaign should focus on storytelling that celebrates the cultural significance of baseball within Latino communities. By sharing authentic narratives, MLB can foster a deeper emotional connection with its audience, enhancing its relevance and appeal.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS GOAL(S)

The primary communication goal of the "El Béisbol Es Otra Cosa" campaign is to position Major League Baseball as a culturally inclusive brand that authentically celebrates and engages with the Latino community. This will enhance MLB's relevance and connection with an increasingly diverse fanbase, ensuring long-term audience growth and loyalty. By achieving this, MLB seeks to not only solidify its status as the leading professional baseball league but also foster deeper relationships with Latino audiences and bridge cultural gaps in its existing marketing strategies.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

- By the end of the campaign's first month increase positive sentiment toward MLB among Latino fans by 10%, as measured by social media engagement and fan surveys.
- Within six months, increase Latino fan engagement with MLB's digital platforms by 20%, as tracked by website visits, app usage, and social media interactions.
- Achieve a 15% increase in the visibility of Latino players and stories in MLB marketing content by the end of the campaign, monitored through content analysis and media placements.

- Expand MLB's partnerships with Latino community organizations by 10% within a year, with measurable increases in collaborative events and programs.

X. TARGET AUDIENCES

▸ **Latino Baseball Fans (ages 18-45)**

Demographics: Predominantly male, but inclusive of women, with a mix of ages. Often employed in blue-collar jobs, but spans all socioeconomic levels. Mainly those of Dominican and Caribbean descent.

Geographic: Urban centers with large Latino populations (Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Houston).

Psychographic: Passionate about baseball's connection to their heritage. They value cultural pride, community, and familial gatherings around the sport. They follow their favorite players on social media and consume both Spanish and English content.

▸ **Young Bicultural Latinos (ages 16-30)**

Demographics: Mostly second-generation immigrants, tech-savvy, currently enrolled in higher education.

Geographic: In urban and suburban areas in states like California, Texas, Florida, and New York.

Psychographic: Highly engaged in social media (Instagram, TikTok), they value both Latino and American cultural identities. They are trend-conscious, care about brand inclusivity, and want to see themselves represented in media and entertainment.

▸ **Latino Families (multigenerational households)**

Demographics: Middle-income, often with children and elderly family members living together. A significant portion speaks Spanish as their primary language.

Geographic: Large Latino neighborhoods in cities like New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami.

Psychographic: Strong family values, they view baseball as a family event. They gather to watch games together and prefer Spanish-language content that reflects family traditions and cultural pride.

▸ **Spanish-Speaking Audiences (ages 25-55)**

Demographics: Primarily first-generation immigrants, many of whom speak Spanish exclusively, especially Caribbean Spanish such as Puerto Rican and Dominican.

Geographic: Concentrated in cities with high Spanish-speaking populations like Phoenix, Miami, and San Antonio.

Psychographic: Loyal to media in their native language, they value authenticity in cultural representation. They prefer watching games on Spanish-language TV networks and listening to Spanish radio for updates. Brand loyalty is strong when companies engage with their culture respectfully and accurately.

XI. CURRENT AUDIENCE BRAND PERCEPTION

Latino audiences view MLB positively for its strong representation of Latino talent on the field, but there is a perception that the league's marketing doesn't fully reflect their cultural significance. There is also a desire for more content in Spanish and increased visibility of Latino players in promotional materials.

XII. DESIRED AUDIENCE BRAND PERCEPTION

MLB is to be perceived as a league that not only recognizes the contributions of Latino players but is also actively fostering a deeper connection with its Latino fanbase. It should be seen as inclusive, culturally resonant, and committed to authentically representing the diversity that strengthens the game.

XIII. KEY MESSAGE MAPPING

‣ **Single-Minded Message**

"MLB embraces Latino culture, recognizing the vital role it plays in the sport and its future."

This message showcases MLB's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. (Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association)

‣ **Audience-Specific Messages**

For Latino fans: "Baseball is a sport where your stories, traditions, and contributions are reflected —Baseball is something else."

This reinforces the message that Latino culture enriches the sport and connects with the audience's personal pride and identity.

For general fans: "MLB is celebrating the rich diversity within the game, with a focus on Latino heritage."

This communicates MLB's commitment to diversity, inviting all fans to appreciate the role Latino culture plays in shaping the sport.

For players: "Latino players are driving MLB's success, showcasing the beauty of diverse talent on a global stage."

This recognizes the role Latino players have in driving MLB's success, emphasizing the importance of diverse talent

XIV. CREATIVE PLATFORM

- › **Audience:** The campaign targets Latino fans, general baseball enthusiasts, youth, and families, highlighting their emotional connection to the game. The goal is to engage them in a conversation about the contributions of Latino players to baseball's rich culture.
- › **Brand:** Major League Baseball (MLB) is positioned as an inclusive and diverse entity that celebrates the vibrancy of Latino culture within the sport. This positioning emphasizes MLB's commitment to recognizing and elevating the voices and stories of Latino players.
- › **Culture:** The campaign taps into the growing cultural appreciation for diversity in sports. By showcasing the unique experiences of Latino players and fans at the ballpark, it aligns with broader societal trends advocating for representation and inclusivity in all facets of life.

XV. STRATEGIES

- › **Approach (Grassroots Engagement):**

Invite Latino Influencers with a love for baseball, Latino baseball fans to share their unique stories and experiences as an MLB fan. This project will engage families and baseball fans, allowing them to share their experience of the essence of baseball that others can relate to.

- › **Thematic (Cultural Celebration):**

Emphasize the theme "Baseball is something else" by showcasing the unique cultural contributions of Latino players. Highlight their stories in promotions and advertisements, framing baseball as not just a sport but a celebration of diverse identities.

- › **Timing (Phased Approach):**

Implement a phased campaign, starting with a commercial that builds excitement leading up to the MLB All-Star Game. Follow this with the extra stories and small commercials launched during the game, capitalizing on high viewership to spread the message widely.

- › **Tonality (Relatable and Engaging):**

Adopt a relatable tone in advertising and social media messaging. Create engaging content that resonates with younger audiences, using humor to connect while keeping the core message that "El Béisbol es Otra Cosa" at the forefront.

XVI. TACTICS

Paid Media Tactics

Digital Ads Targeting Latino Audiences: Launch targeted digital ad campaigns on platforms popular with younger Latino audiences, such as Instagram and TikTok. These ads will feature vibrant visuals of Latino players and community activities, emphasizing the campaign's theme that "Baseball is something else."

Campaign Commercial: Release a video starring popular latino figures such as Marcello Hernandez, an ethnically Dominican-Cuban American Saturday Night Live comedian and Myke Towers, a Dominican rapper that will engage younger audiences and represent the large Caribbean presence in the MLB. Using mainstream music and culture-specific terms.

Earned Media Tactics

Media Outreach to Hispanic Publications: Engage with Hispanic media outlets for interviews and features on Latino players and their impact on baseball. Highlight personal stories that exemplify the campaign's core message, fostering authentic media coverage.

Community Storytelling Initiatives: Create opportunities for community members to share their personal baseball stories through local news segments. This grassroots storytelling will help generate earned media by amplifying local voices and experiences related to baseball.

Shared Media Tactics

Social Media Hashtag: Initiate a social media challenge encouraging fans to share their baseball experiences, using the hashtag #BéisbolEsOtraCosa. This user-generated content will foster engagement and community sharing, while also spreading the campaign message organically.

Collaborations with Influencers: Partner with popular Latino influencers, musicians/artists and content creators that are passionate about baseball to amplify the campaign across social platforms. These influencers can share personal stories or promote campaign events, helping to engage younger audiences.

Owned Media Tactics

Dedicated Campaign Microsite: Develop a microsite that features interactive content, such as player profiles, community stories, and resources for aspiring young baseball players. This platform will serve as a hub for all campaign-related information and engagement.

Monthly Newsletters: Create and distribute newsletters that provide updates on campaign activities, share success stories from the community, and highlight upcoming events. These newsletters will help maintain engagement and keep the audience informed about the campaign's progress.

XVII. KPIs – MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

1. Increase Positive Brand Perception

KPI: Achieve a 10% increase in positive brand sentiment among target audiences.

Measurement: Utilize social listening tools to analyze sentiment in social media conversations and surveys before and after the campaign launch.

2. Engagement Rates on Social Media

KPI: Reach a 10% increase in engagement rates (likes, shares, comments) on social media posts related to the campaign.

Measurement: Monitor analytics from platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to track interactions on campaign-related content.

3. Participation in Community Events

KPI: Attract 1,000 participants across various community events sponsored by MLB.

Measurement: Count attendance at each event and collect demographic data to ensure alignment with target audience goals.

4. Website Traffic

KPI: Increase traffic to the campaign microsite by 20% within three months of launch.

Measurement: Use Google Analytics to track the number of unique visitors, page views, and average time spent on the site.

5. Media Coverage Quality

KPI: Generate at least 10 positive media placements in influential sports and Latino media outlets by the end of the first 3 months after launch.

Measurement: Evaluate the reach and sentiment of articles, using metrics such as readership numbers and online impressions.

These KPIs will not only gauge the effectiveness of the campaign but also inform future strategic decisions where MLB can allocate resources efficiently and optimize their approach for ongoing and future campaigns.

XVIII. TIMELINE

Milestone	Date	Tactic
Campaign Kickoff with commercial	May 1, 2024	Launch event with community partners
Hashtag Release	May 1, 2024	Release social media hashtag for awareness
Social Media Campaign Launch	May 2, 2024	Daily posts highlighting Latino players
Influencers join the Hashtag	May 3, 2024	Influencers to share their unique stories with baseball
Digital Engagement Drive	May 28, 2024	Targeted ads and content on MLB apps
Community Partnership Expansion	June 3, 2024	Outreach to Latino organizations
Content Analysis	August 25, 2024	Review visibility of Latino stories
End-of-Campaign Evaluation	September 15, 2024	Measure success against KPIs

XIX. BUDGET

Tactic	Description	Estimated Cost
Launch Event	Community kickoff with stakeholders	\$5,000
Social Media Campaign	Weekly posts and sponsored ads	\$8,000
Digital Engagement	Targeted ads on MLB-adjacent apps	\$5,000
Commercial	Baseball field and celebrity booking	\$5,000
Content Analysis	Research and analysis of visibility	\$3,000
Evaluation and Reporting	Measure success against KPIs	\$2,000
Total		\$28,000

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