

Chapter Seventeen

Lessons from Miami

The Miami Ad School

While at Crispin Porter + Bogusky I became acquainted with The Miami Ad School. The Miami Ad School is a unique phenomenon in advertising. It is one of a handful of places students can take time to build a portfolio of creative samples that they can leverage in interviews with the nation's top agencies, and get a start in this competitive business.

Miami is an unlikely hub for advertising. Unless you want a base of operations for international marketing communications. The tropical climate and the constant influx of tourists from around the world make it a vibrant and cosmopolitan place though. While working in Miami I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with Ron Siechrist, the founder of the Miami Ad School. Ron was instrumental in building the Portfolio Center on the same premise in Atlanta. (Legend has it that Ron had to turn over the keys to that successful business to his wife as part of a divorce settlement.)

Ron Siechrist managed to start all over in Miami's trendy South Beach with the Miami Ad School. The work produced by his students has captured the attention of Advertising Award Judges and Advertising Annuals and has resulted in some pretty impressive placements so far.

Hispanic Marketing: Like it or Not

I took High School Spanish. I took Spanish to meet the language requirement in college too. I know about enough Spanish to order coffee at the Versailles restaurant in Miami and that's about it. I'm committed to lifelong learning but I'm afraid it would take me several lifetimes to learn to speak Spanish well. Some people have a gift for foreign languages. I'm not one of those people.

Miami's Dade County is more than 50% Hispanic. South

Florida like Texas and California has areas with high Hispanic populations. Like it or not, you cannot expect to make a living in the communications business, especially in these parts of the country without learning the language they speak. Without a doubt, there are huge opportunities for advertising and marketing specialists who can speak Spanish and become experts in Hispanic Marketing. I know because I was there trying to drum up business for a hot shop. Even with a limited Spanish speaking staff, I was able to help Crispin Porter + Bogusky create advertising for The South Florida Mercedes Benz Dealer Group. (We produced advertising in English and Spanish).