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AHAA Honors McDonald's with the 2014 Marketer of the Year Award

Fairfax, VA, April 30, 2014 – For three days, **AHAA: The Voice of Hispanic Marketing** brought together the biggest names in the marketing industry at their Annual “Thinking Under the Influence” Conference to provide insight and inspiration on how Hispanic and multicultural markets are influencing corporate growth, pop culture and marketing strategies. Speakers and attendees were challenged to forecast the impact of the multicultural market now and over the next five years. Today, AHAA honored McDonald's for its legacy of anticipating these critical demographic shifts, pioneering the total market approach, and putting the ethnic consumer at the heart of its company-wide strategies.

To be considered for this prestigious award, companies had to show evidence of the following:

- A top-down commitment to multicultural marketing
- Hispanic/multicultural strategy forming part of the company's overall strategy with measurable accountability across all business units
- Demonstrated significant spending commensurate with the opportunity in marketing efforts targeting Hispanics

“For decades, Multicultural has been central to all McDonald's initiatives,” said AHAA Chair Aldo Quevedo, principal/creative director of Richards/Lerma. “Their commitment to ‘Leading with Ethnic Insights’ ensures that all business units incorporate ethnic insights and nuances into all facets of the business and was key to their receiving a unanimous vote from AHAA's Board of Directors for Marketer of the Year. Their Total Market approach has been focused and effective long before the Total Market concept was born.”

People Come First

McDonald's dedication to LEI starts from the inside out. As a company, they ensure that their customer base is reflected within all levels of the company – from their in-store crew to corporate senior management and franchisees. Training and career growth for Hispanics is both encouraged and fostered within the McDonald's organization, and the McDonald's Hispanic Owner-Operator Association (MHOA), the largest organization of Hispanic franchises in the country, represents more than 177 Hispanic owner/operators covering approximately 550 stores – if ranked by combined sales in the *Hispanic Business* Hispanic 500 listing, Hispanic-owned restaurants would be the second largest.

McDonald's commitment to the advancement of Hispanics within their community is clearly evident in its “best in class” Hispanic scholarship program HACER®. HACER®, the Ronald McDonald House Charities® Hispanic scholarship program, along with McDonald's® support, offers scholarships of up to \$100,000 dollars to help students go to college. Since 1985, RMHC/HACER has awarded more than \$22 million dollars in scholarships to Hispanic students.

The Hispanic Influence Critical to Product Success

Ethnic insights and considerations are a cornerstone of the product development process at McDonald's. All product development starts with trends which are inclusive of the Hispanic segment, includes broad consumer testing with in-language focus groups, and ends with all-segment approval and testing in a Hispanic designated market to be considered for national launch. Examples of McDonald's products which were led by a Hispanic trend include the Chipotle BBQ Bacon Angus Third Pounder; the Premium Southwest Salad with black beans, tortilla strips, corn, and roasted tomatoes; the Southwest Premium McWrap; and the Bacon Habanero Ranch Quarter Pounder, and Jalapeño Kicker Sandwiches, which are currently being tested.

Hispanics are the Backbone of McDonald's Promotion Strategies

Historically, McDonald's is one of the first companies to support every marketing initiative with dedicated in-language and culturally relevant communication to Hispanics. When planning and executing marketing and promotions strategies, McDonald's engages its Ethnic Marketing Directors, agencies, and key owner/operators from national and local levels from the earliest stages of ideation. Once a National plan is outlined, it is shared with local markets across the U.S. for alignment with corporate encouragement to amplify their Hispanic Marketing plans – in fact, matching funds are often given to help fund local Hispanic efforts. All messages, products or promotions are equally supported for the general market and Hispanic populations - this is unlike many of McDonald's competitors who only support a few key products throughout the year.

"The ethnic consumer tends to set trends, so they help set the tone for how we enter the marketplace," said Neil Golden, Retired CMO of McDonald's. "Preferences gleaned from minority consumers shape McDonald's menu and ad choices, which are then marketed to all customers."

McDonald's commitment to the Hispanic market is most evident in the robust media purchases it continues to make year over year. Kantar Media has repeatedly ranked McDonald's Hispanic Advertising spend to be top 5 in the US, and *Ad Age* has documented McDonald's increased Hispanic Media spend year over year in its annual Hispanic Fact Pack, even during and after the economic crisis of 2008-2010.

McDonald's also invests heavily in 360 communications plans, including public relations with in-house communications team and Hispanic agencies of records working side by side; grassroots activations supporting key Hispanic passion points including music, education, and sports; and digital and social media with its Spanish-language web site, www.meencanta.com, and dedicated Spanish-language Facebook and Twitter accounts.

A Worthy Winner

Over the last few decades, McDonald's has clearly demonstrated a top-down commitment to multicultural marketing with its corporate culture, product innovation grounded in research and ethnic trends, aggressive media spend and measurable accountability across all business units. In 2013, almost all marketing windows were supported with original creative work for the Hispanic market. In many cases, the Hispanic Agency produced work in Spanish and in English to run on General Market TV networks targeting English Speaking Hispanics. In fact, it is because of McDonald's unwavering commitment to this consumer segment that numerous Hispanic advertising, PR, media, promotions and activation agencies have been given the opportunity to create best in class work in their respective fields and continue to raise the standard for in-language culturally relevant communication.

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About AHAA: Founded in 1996, AHAA: The Voice of Hispanic Marketing is the national trade organization of all marketing, communications and media firms with trusted Hispanic expertise.