

trendwatching.com's free Monthly Trend Briefing

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# MI CASA ES TU CASA

Why more and more consumers in South & Central America will jump at the chance to help solve social issues.



[trendwatching.com/trends/micasaestucasa](http://trendwatching.com/trends/micasaestucasa)



# Definition

Many of South & Central America's (SCA\*) newly empowered consumers (not just economically, but those who feel more technologically, socially and politically empowered too), see rampant materialism as somewhat unsatisfactory – if not wholly selfish – when society remains racked with insecurity and inequality\*\*.

Which is why many more consumers in the region will embrace the MI CASA ES TU CASA trend and **enthusiastically support brands that don't close their eyes to social inequality, and (better yet) offer consumers a chance to play a part in fixing social issues.**

*\* In this Trend Briefing, we're defining South & Central America (SCA) as including Mexico. Yes, technically it's in North America, but many characteristics of the country's consumer arena more closely resemble those found in Latin American societies. For all the region's key consumer trends, check out our forthcoming exclusive [SCA Consumer Trend Report](#).*

*\*\* Poverty and social issues have long been a feature of SCA societies, so much so that consumers (traditionally those in the AB classes) simply blocked them out. The region has the world's highest Gini index – a measure of inequality (UNICEF, April 2011). However, thanks to the growth of the region's middle classes, this figure has fallen rapidly since 2000, and was lower in 2010 than at any time during the past 30 years (World Institute for Development Economics Research, August 2012).*

# Driving this trend:

## 1. EMPOWERMENT



The past decade has made SCA consumers feel more empowered than ever: greater political inclusion, tangible economic success and technological access, mean that the region's **consumers are optimistic about the future and their ability to shape it**. For example, Edelman's Goodpurpose study found 73% of Brazilians believe that compared to five years ago, 'people like me' now have more power and influence to make a difference, significantly higher than the global average of 44% (Edelman, April 2012).

## 2. STATUS SHIFT



Brazil's rising middle class (C-class) grew by over 40 million people between 2003 and 2011, while the upper classes (AB classes) grew by 9 million (Fundacao Getulio Vargas, March 2012). This rising affluence is leading to a fragmentation in the **STATUSPHERE**, as consumers increasingly attribute social value to different 'symbols' (driven in part by Maslow's theories of self esteem and actualization). **Making a positive social impact is just one of these 'new' forms of status.**

Added to this, technology has given consumers new ways to flaunt their social impact: participating or contributing to a cause is now often carried into the online world, where it can be **more visible and longer lasting** (see the Techo example below).

## Driving this trend:



*It's becoming increasingly difficult for consumers to simply ignore social issues*



*Don't be bland ;-)*

**More (and better) information, especially online, is making SCA consumers more sensitive to the needs of others around them.** Information about social inequality and issues is now so pervasive, that it can no longer be blocked out (and indeed inaction is now more visible too, which further drives the STATUS SHIFT above).

This is especially true with consumers for whom this abundant information is a near-constant reminder that while they might be experiencing an increase in personal wealth, society as a whole remains poor. Indeed, the millions joining the consuming class are often more keenly aware of social issues, and more willing to do something about them: a global study found 49% of SCA consumers are willing to pay more for products and services from companies that give back to society, significantly higher than in Europe and North America, where only 33% are willing (Nielsen, March 2012).

The explosion in new and more exciting brands, products and services is making SCA consumers more sophisticated than ever. Therefore, they will be **more and more turned on by businesses that are more direct or demanding**, that don't simply kowtow to consumers' needs but stake out more of an expressive (and dare we say it more *interesting*) brand attitude themselves.

When it comes to social issues, this means **not ignoring them** – as too many brands in the region have done in the past – **but confronting or shocking consumers with them head-on**, even 'celebrating' them as La Fabrica del Taco did (see below).

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Here are just a handful of examples of how brands and non-profit organizations are already tapping into the MI CASA ES TU CASA trend:

## Buchanan's: Time to Share



From March to May 2012, Diageo-owned Scotch Whisky label Buchanan's asked young people in Bogotá, Mexico City and Caracas to participate in a volunteer project called '[Tiempo Para Compartir](#)' ('Time to Share'). Through Facebook, participants could sign up for projects such as neighborhood cleanup and construction. Once the program was finished, Buchanan's offered a free concert to participants, featuring The Smashing Pumpkins.

## Techo: Build a house with a 'personal' nail



In August 2012, Chilean non-profit [Techo](#) ('Roof') came up with an innovative reward for those who donate their time, energy and effort to the NGO's cause, constructing homes for the underprivileged. The organization printed nails used in the construction with the name of donors or volunteers. Donors received an image of 'their' nail and could then see the place where the house was built on the Prego Maps website.

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## Satisfeito: High-end restaurants offer smaller portions for same price



In November 2012, 20 restaurants in São Paulo – including high end establishments such as Jun Sakamoto, Kaa and Girarrosto – launched an initiative where diners could opt for smaller portion sizes, while still being charged the full price. **'Satisfeito'** ('Satisfied') dishes were 1/3 smaller than the usual menu options, with the money saved from serving these smaller dishes being donated to the Instituto Alana, an organization fighting child malnutrition in Brazil.

## La Fabrica Del Taco: 'Eat so they eat' commercials



**La Fabrica Del Taco** is a Mexican restaurant in the upmarket Palermo district of Buenos Aires that donates a portion of takeaway orders to local homeless charities. In July 2012 (in the middle of the Argentinean winter), the restaurant launched its 'The Homeless Sellers' campaign, featuring five local homeless people talking about their lives on the street. The commercials aimed to remind people that even if they didn't want to go out as frequently during the winter, their orders would still help local people in need.

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## Carbono Zero: Become a bike courier for a day

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On 22 November 2012, bike courier service [Carbono Zero](#), based in Sao Paulo, launched its 'Pedalada Para O Bem' ('Pedal for Good') campaign. For one day, the brand asked its customers to volunteer to act as couriers and make deliveries on behalf of the brand. The courier fees were then donated to the social project 'Pedal Zezinho', which offers workshops and repair workshops to disadvantaged children. To encourage participation, the company also entered all the volunteers into a competition to win a new bike.

## Atados: Latin America's first volunteering portal



June 2012 saw the launch of [Atados](#), Latin America's first volunteering portal. The site aims to increase the number of people volunteering by helping to give people more information about the opportunities available. Non-profit organizations register on the site, and post details of projects or tasks they require assistance with, while volunteers create profiles detailing their skills. In the first two months over 4,000 people and 100 organizations signed up.


# NEXT

Even as SCA gets wealthier, stubborn social problems are likely to remain for many years to come. Alongside this, the pressure for brands to roll out innovative 'social' solutions (both on behalf of, or ideally with their consumers) will grow as audiences in the region get more demanding. So whether you're an ambitious local brand, or a global brand in the region, please by all means do jump on the MI CASA ES TU CASA trend. But when applying this trend, be sure to:

- **Spur real action:** Just as transparency is driving this trend, it also shapes it. Learn from the Buchanan's example, and see how consumers want to move beyond simple, distant, low-impact campaigns and feel that **their** actions are making a tangible difference, not just leaving it up to brands to take those actions for them.
- **Challenge consumers:** As shown by the Satisfeito example, consumers are increasingly receptive to brands jarring them into acknowledging social inequality, or at least their (im)perceptions of this fading taboo subject. Be bold!

And if you're a brand in the rest of the world (and SCA isn't on your radar), why not get going and start targeting the social issues that are most relevant in your market? After all, consumers *everywhere* will thank you for learning from the examples above.

Time to do well AND do good ;-)

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