

# HISPANIC WOMEN POWER 25

## How They Were Chosen

In selecting the 25 Hispanic Women in Entertainment, *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Billboard* focused exclusively on behind-the-scenes players within the film, TV and music industries and only included performers who are also active as producers, writers or directors. The list includes those who work within both the English- and Spanish-language media in the U.S.

### We considered:

- What a candidate has achieved in the past 12 months (including the boxoffice performance and awards potential of projects on which she has worked)
- A candidate's track record and overall standing in the entertainment industry
- Each candidate's position within her company
- Force of personality: How much impact a candidate has in her corner of the industry
- What a candidate's work has done to raise the profile of Latinos in Hollywood, whether her projects are Hispanic-themed or not

Profiles were written by Rebecca Ascher-Walsh, Cristy Lytal and Trisha Tucker.

1.

**Nina Tassler**  
President, CBS Entertainment



**At a glance:** As president of CBS Entertainment, Tassler is the highest-ranking Latina in network television, overseeing the programming of primetime, late night and daytime.

**Education:** B.F.A., theater, Boston University

**Big deal:** Keeping CBS' top ratings in viewers with anchors like "CSI" and "Two and a Half Men," while developing new shows like "Cane." After years of trying to lure Jimmy Smits to the network, Tassler snagged him with the starring role in the Cuban family saga.

**Year in review:** In addition to overseeing current programming and greenlighting new ones for development, Tassler led the search for Bob Barker's replacement for "The Price Is Right," something she considers "one of the most extraordinary opportunities of my life."

**Key to success:** Her employees herald Tassler's discipline and focus; she says her strength is "the ability to be in the present moment but also keep an eye on the future."

**Up next:** CBS has some high-profile projects in the works, including "Kingdom," from director Barry Sonnenfeld; an adaptation of the British limited sci-fi series "Eleventh Hour," from producer Jerry Bruckheimer; and "Yo," a project from Salma Hayek and Julia Álvarez. Besides that, "I don't know what the future holds. Just look at 'Jericho,'" she says about the failing show that was saved by fans. "I now call it the 'Jericho' factor. There's an element of pixie dust."

2.

**Belinda Menendez**  
President, NBC Universal International Television Distribution



**At a glance:** As president of NBC Universal International Television Distribution, Menendez oversees all TV sales and licensing of NBC's film and television library.

**Education:** M.A., theology, University of St. Andrews, Scotland

**Big deal:** With a library that includes 55,000 television episodes and 4,000 feature films, the sheer mass of Menendez's purview is extraordinary; still,

the sale of "Heroes" to 150 countries followed by a cast world tour stands out.

**Year in review:** Traveling constantly between the 12 worldwide offices for which she is responsible, Menendez oversaw thousands of deals, including the sale of programming from Bravo and Sci Fi Channel. She also maintained crucial long-standing foreign relationships for shows like "House" and the "Law & Order" brand.

**Key to success:** "I think it's my passion," says Menendez. "I've been in this business for a very long time, and I still feel the same way as when I first started. But it's also the team I work with; without them, my job would be impossible."

**Up next:** Alas, it's not a good night's sleep. "I'm very blessed that I don't need much," admits the executive, who will soon begin the worldwide launches of the second season of "Heroes," freshmen "Bionic Woman" and "Tim Gunn's Guide to Style" and the midseason "Lipstick Jungle"; Menendez' group has recently also added news to its portfolio.

3.

**Salma Hayek**  
Actress-producer



**At a glance:** The entrepreneur has translated her boxoffice draw into a reputation as a heavy-weight producer and tastemaker.

**Education:** Studied at Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City

**Big deal:** Hayek joined forces with MGM to establish her film studio, Ventanazul, which will both produce and acquire Latino-themed films aimed at mainstream audiences. The company plans to distribute two to four films a year. Hayek's other company, Ventanarosa Prods., has an exclusive TV producing deal with ABC Studios.

**Year in review:** In addition to serving as executive producer of the award-winning "Ugly Betty," Hayek's guest appearances earned her an Emmy nomination; she also voiced a role in the Disney animated film "South of the Border." As a producer, she is working with Julia Álvarez to develop "Yo," a drama project about four Latino sisters, for CBS.

**Key to success:** Hayek respects and nurtures the Latino market while also understanding its mass appeal.

**Up next:** Ventanazul is developing "Bones Family," the first feature from Mexican writer-directors Gabriel and Rodolpho Riva Palacio Alatraste; and "Diego Ascending," Ligiah Villalobos' English-language adaptation of the 2003 Israeli film "Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi." Ventanarosa is developing a comedy by Issa López titled "La Banda." Hayek is attached to star in an untitled romantic comedy for



Disney, written by Ed Decter and John Strauss (2002's "The Santa Clause 2," 2006's "The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause").

**4.**  
**Lucia Ballas-Traynor**  
General manager,  
MTV Tr3s



**At a glance:** As general manager of MTV's new bilingual channel, MTV Tr3s, Ballas-Traynor has her finger on the pulse of America's English- and Spanish-speaking youth.

**Education:** B.A., New York University

**Big deal:** Under Ballas-Traynor's leadership, Tr3s — which launched unofficially only last September — is growing rapidly as a multiplatform channel with online and mobile offshoots.

**Year in review:** While the first ratings are just being gathered in the L.A. market, Ballas-Traynor spent the year establishing what she calls "an authentic voice" for the channel. "It's been a challenge," she admits, "because it's nothing we've seen on television before. Programming has either been in Spanish or English." One sure success is the reality show "Quiero mis quince," as well as the nascent interactive programming that allows audience members to text dedications and shout-outs.

**Key to success:** "Staying focused on the consumer with an understanding that goes beyond defining them just by language," she says. "A lot of that comes from being a part of the audience database."

**Up next:** Ballas-Traynor plans to develop more shows like "Quiero mis quince" that hit what she calls "cultural passion points," as well as new comedies; she's also strategizing on how to expand interactive programming.

**5.**  
**Alina Falcón**  
Executive vp and  
operating manager,  
Univision



**At a glance:** Falcón, Univision's executive vp and operating manager, in the past 24 years has risen through the company's ranks by displaying standout managerial skills and a keen eye for hit programming.

**Education:** B.A., communication, University of Miami  
**Big deal:** In September 2007, Univision bested all English-language networks to capture the No. 1 network ranking among all adults 18-34, and Falcón's leadership has been instrumental to Univision's growing popularity.

**Year in review:** It's been a banner year for both Univision and Falcón. The network was purchased by investor group Broadcasting Media Partners in March, the same month that "Nuestra belleza latina," a 10-week combination beauty pageant/reality show whose winner received an on-air position at Univision, debuted. The show was such a hit for the network that Season 2 will be extended to 13 weeks. Falcón also oversaw a miniseries produced with Jennifer Lopez's Nuyorican Prods. that will air later this year and a Spanish-language "Desperate Housewives" that promises to be a big hit when it debuts in early 2008.

**Key to success:** "The first key is a sense of passion for what we do. To succeed in the media management business requires an immense amount of dedication, and it surely helps to feel passion about what you do."

**Up next:** Falcón is "very, very excited" about the big celebration plans surrounding the Premio Lo Nuestro music awards' 20th anniversary next year.

**6.**  
**Darlene Caamaño Loquet**  
President,  
NALA Films



**At a glance:** Caamaño Loquet, president of NALA Films, co-founded the company with Emilio Diez Barroso in 2005.

**Education:** B.A., communication with an emphasis in journalism, Azusa Pacific University; studied at Fordham University, media communications program

**Big deal:** Caamaño Loquet fulfilled a dream she'd had since first seeing "Crash" when she teamed up with writer-director Paul Haggis on his father-son drama "In the Valley of Elah," starring Tommy Lee Jones, Charlize Theron, Susan Sarandon and Jason Patric.

**Year in review:** The company's first project, Warner Bros.' "In the Valley of Elah," was released earlier this year. Buena Vista's "Dan in Real Life" is set for release Oct. 26, and ThinkFilm's "The Air I Breathe" is set for wide release in 2008.

**Key to success:** "I don't take anything personally," she says. "Hollywood's tough, and you have to have your eye on the ball, and you have to keep that belief in yourself that you're here for a reason and you're going to succeed regardless of what's being thrown at you and the obstacles."

**Up next:** Upcoming projects from NALA include the comedy "Mr. Burnout," the horror film "Open Grave,"

the exorcism tale "Night of Light," the Griffin Dunne-directed "Only Ever You" and the Spanish-language film "La Magdalena." "I've just had my first baby, too!" says Caamaño Loquet. "So I've got a lot on my plate, but I love it."

**7.**  
**Christina Davis**

Senior vp drama  
series development,  
CBS



**At a glance:** Recently promoted to senior vp drama series development at CBS, Davis co-heads the network's drama department, working with writers and producers to develop a roster of one-hour shows.

**Education:** B.S., UCLA

**Big deal:** Davis dedicated herself to Cynthia Cidre's new series, "Cane," starring Jimmy Smits, Hector Elizando and Rita Moreno. The show, about a family of Cuban immigrants in Miami, has the largest Hispanic cast ever to appear on network primetime television.

**Year in review:** Davis has also been involved in the development of the new dramas "Viva Laughlin," "Moonlight" and the midseason replacement "Swingtown." "It's truly a groundbreaking year for us because we have been able to develop such a diverse slate," Davis says.

**Key to success:** "I think it's my passion for finding creative ways to tell stories that are engaging and important."

**Up next:** Davis, who will continue working closely with the creators of the newly launched dramas, is developing another with Julia Álvarez and Salma Hayek called "Yo," about four Latina sisters. As for other projects: "It's early to talk about, but I can continue to promise a diverse slate," she says. "It's really important, both for the network and for me in particular."

**8.**  
**Antoinette Zel**

Senior executive vp  
strategy,  
Telemundo



**At a glance:** As senior executive vp strategy for Telemundo, Zel is responsible for overseeing its cable networks as well as marketing, digital media and new initiatives.