

Spanish-Language Paper Seeks Independence; L.A. Family Aims to Buy Tribune Co. Share

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Body

Los Angeles's La Opinión, the nation's largest **Spanish-language** newspaper, wants to buy out the Tribune Co.'s stake in the **paper**, possibly clearing the way for the media giant to begin its own L.A. daily targeted at Hispanic readers.

The family-owned La Opinión sold 50 percent of its business in 1990 to Times Mirror Co., which Tribune purchased in 2000. La Opinión sought the capital of the larger company to grow; Times Mirror wanted an entry into the nation's top Latino media market.

But the partnership never worked out as well as each party had hoped, said José I. Lozano, publisher of La Opinión and grandson of its founder, Ignacio Lozano, a Mexican journalist and entrepreneur.

"I think [Times Mirror and Tribune] lost interest in us after a while; the board meetings got very tense," Lozano said yesterday. "We were not as focused on the bottom line as they would have liked us to be."

The partnership continued after Tribune bought Times Mirror and, despite some encouraging early conversations with Tribune executives, Lozano became convinced this spring that Tribune wanted to launch its own **Spanish-language paper**, Hoy, in Los Angeles, as it did in New York in 1998 and in Chicago in September.

Louis Sito, who oversees Tribune's **Spanish-language** strategy, was traveling yesterday and could not be reached. In a prepared statement, Tribune Publishing President Jack Fuller said, "The Lozano family has expressed a desire to operate La Opinión as an independent newspaper once again."

La Opinión is a privately held company. Terms of the Times Mirror acquisition were not released, and Lozano would not say how much he expects it to cost him to buy back the other half of his **paper**.

According to the most recent U.S. census, Hispanics are now the nation's largest minority, about 13 percent of the population, and are among the fastest-growing minority groups.

The Spanish-speaking media have experienced simultaneous growth. Newspaper wars are cropping up all over the country, and the first **Spanish-language** media giant was just created with the merger of No. 1 television network

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Univision Communications Corp. and Hispanic Broadcasting Co., the nation's largest **Spanish-language** radio chain.

A third Hoy could prosper in Los Angeles, which has 7 million Hispanics. Lozano said his **paper**, which has a circulation of 127,000, targets about 1.7 million of those potential readers.

Classification

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Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: HISPANIC AMERICANS (89%); MINORITY GROUPS (89%); MERGERS (78%); WRITERS (78%); FAMILY COMPANIES (77%); PRIVATELY HELD COMPANIES (76%); CENSUS (76%); ENTREPRENEURSHIP (76%); GRANDCHILDREN (72%); TALKS & MEETINGS (68%); BROADCASTING SECTOR PERFORMANCE (65%)

Company: TRIBUNE MEDIA CO (92%); TIMES MIRROR CO (84%)

Ticker: TRCO (NYSE) (92%)

Industry: PUBLISHING (78%); WRITERS (78%); TELEVISION INDUSTRY (71%); BROADCASTING SECTOR PERFORMANCE (65%); BROADCASTING INDUSTRY (64%)

Geographic: LOS ANGELES, CA, USA (93%); CALIFORNIA, USA (89%); NEW YORK, USA (69%)

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