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# LIZ

## *Castells-Heard*

BOLD.  
INTELLIGENT.  
CULTURAL POWER.  
A CATEGORY ALL HER OWN.

THE  
50 MOST  
BEAUTIFUL &  
INFLUENTIAL

MEET

# LIZ

CASTELLS-HEARD

*The cultural visionary elevating  
brands and business growth*

HER FEARLESS JOURNEY FROM  
CUBA TO A STANFORD MBA TO  
LEADING ONE OF AMERICA'S  
TOP CULTURAL AGENCIES

Some women lead. Some women transform. Some women are unforgettable. And then there is Liz Castells-Heard — who does all three with a fierce elegance entirely her own.

CEO and Chief Strategy Officer of INFUSION by Castells, Liz is one of the most influential forces in American marketing. She's known for her fearless voice, strategic brilliance, cultural fluency, and her signature mantra: "Anything is possible."

Her story begins in survival mode. Born a seven-month preemie in Cuba, she was exiled at age four — birthday cake in hand, family jewels hidden in the frosting — while staring down a guerilla squad. That moment wired her to adapt, push forward, and rise. From Puerto Rico to Pittsburgh, New England to Geneva and London, she became what she calls a "translatina mutt," absorbing cultures, decoding people, and shaping the instincts that would define her career.

**FAST FACTS**  
**LIZ CASTELLS-HEARD**  
*aka María Isabel Cristina*  
*Castells de García Heard*

- CEO, INFUSION by Castells
- Cuban-born, globally raised
- Stanford MBA
- Creator of the Transculturation™ model
- Published, awarded industry leader
- Married 40 years to Alan Heard
- 7 godchildren, 3 German Shepherds
- *Motto: "I set the example with grit, truth, art, science and heart, I am fearless so we can fly. Anything is possible."*



"I've always been this mix of numbers, intuition, creativity, and corazón," she says. "Analytics is my lifeblood, strategy my superpower, but my heart is the compass."

That precision-meets-passion duality became the foundation of INFUSION by Castells; the agency she launched in 1998 to fill a gap few recognized: the business power of culture. Long before "inclusion" entered the corporate lexicon, Liz created **Transculturation™**, a model helping Fortune 500 leaders embed cultural fluency across product, marketing, media, operations, and creative — and profit from it.

Her agency's work for Toyota, McDonald's, and Charter/Spectrum has generated record sales, category firsts, and earned more than 125 awards. But the force behind it isn't chance. It's Liz.

A triple major in Economics/Math/Psychology with a Stanford MBA, she built her discipline at DDB, Campbell's, Saatchi, and Oriflame. She's led categories from CPG and health to telecom and tech, and departments from creative and media to operations and finance. She sees the whole board — and moves ahead of it.

She also carries the grit of an immigrant, the passion of a Latina, the optimism of a global citizen, and the curiosity of a lifelong learner. "I'm forever 16 and still asking why. I read studies for fun, learn from every culture and generation, and I use AI for everything. If you stop learning, you stop leading."

Her fighter spirit shaped her early. Bullied for being "a spick" in second grade, she learned to stand her ground. She pushed for girls to wear pants in junior high, burnt bras for women's rights, and later carved her way through the "good ol' boys" worlds of Madison Avenue and Hollywood — even losing out on three partnerships she'd earned. "I was told I was 'too much' — too educated for a Latina, too pretty to be smart, too loud, too assertive," she says. "So, I worked three times harder. 'No' isn't in my vocabulary — only 'How.'"

A pivotal chapter in INFUSION's evolution was meeting her business partner: **Leticia "Lety" Juárez**, a marketing and media maven with deep cultural insight who manages the key clients and staff day-to-day. Together, they've built one of the strongest female-led duos in cultural marketing — Liz as the visionary fire, Lety as the grounding force who elevates the agency's work.

"Our clients and teams know we're all-in and have their backs. That creates trust — and magic," Lety says. Liz adds, "I deeply trust and respect Lety as my successor." Lety teases: "Liz will still be telling us what to do at 105." Their laughter says everything about their partnership.

Liz leads with a blend of strategy and soul. She demands excellence but operates with compassion, fairness, and her signature **No BS ethos**. She rejects ego, layers, and politics in favor of truth, analysis, collaboration, and heart. "It's 'we,' never 'I,'" she says. "I've had brilliant teams and mentors — even bad ones teach us what not to do. And it's important to take risks and follow your passion."

Her career was not linear. After college, she worked in investment banking and entered business school planning. But in her final semester, she took a marketing class "just for fun" — and everything clicked. "I fell in love with figuring out the 'why' of human behavior from data," she says. She pivoted instantly.

INFUSION by Castells, a national WMBE, now operates with \$100M in cap billings, dual-language expertise, and a reputation for



**AGENCY SPOTLIGHT:**  
**INFUSION BY CASTELLS**

**Culture-led.**  
**Strategic Firepower.**  
**No BS. Just Results.**

- Premier U.S. cultural agency with \$100M in cap billings
- ROI-Powered Ideas® that create brand value, growth, category firsts for Fortune 500 clients like Toyota, Charter/Spectrum, and McDonald's
- Led by visionary Liz Castells-Heard, a tell-it-like-it-is Stanford MBA, and partner Leticia Juárez's masterful client and team stewardship
- Infuse analytics, strategic acumen, disruptive creative, AI, and cultural fluency across the 5Ps to unlock real insights, connection, and sales



**ROI-Powered Ideas**® that merge analytics, creativity, and cultural authenticity.

It's the formula brands need in what Liz calls **"the era of Cultureonomics"** — when nearly half of America is multicultural and driving population, household, and job growth. Culture shapes how people live, buy, believe, and choose. "If brands ignore culture, they ignore connection, impact, and revenue," she says. **Cultural fluency is the silver bullet for CEOs** today navigating the pressures of efficiencies, AI disruption, media fragmentation, and short-term earnings vs. long-term equity — and to **future-proof their businesses.**

**"Culture isn't context — it's the truth code,"** Liz says. "We can drive human connection and move culture forward with truth. It's not just a career. It is purpose. It's legacy."

Liz is also an awarded, published speaker, philanthropist, mentor,

and advocate for education and empowerment — especially for young Latinas. "Education is the equalizer of opportunity," she says. "Confident informed voices change lives." Outside the boardroom, Liz lives between NYC, LA and her Scottsdale homestead — and in constant motion with Alan, her fellow-Scorpion husband of 40+ years. From bungee jumping off Victoria Falls to Tuscany sunsets and Vegas fiestas, she embraces adventure, chocolate, cognac, and dancing 'til dawn — balanced with Pilates, power shakes, meditation in the labyrinth Alan built, and the love of seven godchildren, a grandniece, and three German Shepherd "babies."

In a world that tries to simplify women, Liz is proof we contain multitudes: **beauty and brilliance, grit and glamour, analytics and art, fire and heart.**

She isn't simply one of the "50 Most Beautiful & Influential Women." **Liz is in a category of her own.**





**SIGNATURE STRENGTHS**

- ROI-Powered Ideas®
- Transculturation™ Model
- Cultural fluency is the growth engine
- Human + AI-powered strategy and creative
- A team with "brains, heart, and grit"



**FAST FACTS**  
LETICIA "LETY" JUÁREZ

- Partner, EVP Marketing, INFUSION by Castells
- Mexican-born, Dana Point, CA raised
- UCSD Alumna
- Leads with clarity, empathy and keen strategic insight
- 100+ close family members
- *Motto: "I am the client voice of reason. I lead the agency orchestra, set the priorities, pace, and performance."*