

Entrant's Name: Michelle L. Tucker, Director of Public Relations
Organization's Name: The San Jose Group
Category / Division / Subdivision: Marketing Communication/7.1 Industrial manufacturing, commercial, retail sales
Title of Entry: The *Other* "Other White Meat" Program: Changing Perceptions in the Hispanic Market
Time Period of Project: July 2001 – July 2002
Brief Description: The National Pork Board hired The San Jose Group to reach the Hispanic market. Based on qualitative and quantitative research, it was clear that an educational PR program was necessary to address the misperceptions of pork in the Hispanic community. Media relations and spokespeople were utilized to reach this growing market, ultimately resulting in over \$600,000.00 in media value, 24,715,000 gross impressions, a 200 percent increase in awareness and a 42 percent increase in weekly purchases.

NEED/OPPORTUNITY

The National Pork Board, well known for its general market campaign, "Pork. The Other White Meat" set about to reach the virtually-untapped U.S. Hispanic market, knowing it was growing ten times faster than the general population. Nationally, Hispanics make up 8.4 percent of households, but they represent more than 12 percent of pork expenditures.

The National Pork Board's first instinct was to simply translate the popular "Other White Meat Campaign" into Spanish, but instead enlisted the assistance of The San Jose Group, a Chicago-based Hispanic marketing communications agency, which immediately recommended quantitative and qualitative research to accurately analyze the perceptions of pork among the Hispanic market and build the platform for its campaign. The San Jose Group quickly established that Public Relations was needed as the lead vehicle in order to address the myths surrounding pork in the Hispanic market.

The San Jose Group conducted Hispanic focus groups and surveys in five markets, revealing that pork is widely consumed in the Hispanic household, but there are barriers to consuming it. For instance, while Hispanic consumers consider pork to be the best tasting meat, they believe it to be less nutritious than chicken. The biggest barrier, however, was the perception that pork is unsafe. Because of how pork was raised in Hispanics' countries of origin, where quality and care of livestock was extremely poor, many Hispanics believe that *all* pork, including U.S. pork, is unsafe. This research unveiled vivid stories of family members who had suffered from trichinosis, "worms in the brain," swollen feet, or children whose growth had been stunted due to pork. These stories, like myths or folklore, don't easily fade and provided the biggest obstacle to changing perceptions.

As it turned out, “The Other White Meat” simply didn’t resonate with this market, due to Hispanics’ definitions of “red” and “white” meat and the understanding of health and nutrition associated with white meat and chicken. With most Hispanics, red meat is considered more “nutritious” because it is believed that the redness or blood provides nutrients, while “healthy” is more related to dieting and low fat foods. Typically, Hispanics believe “healthy” food is not necessarily “nutritious.”

With this analysis complete, The San Jose Group designed an education PR program to address the barriers and increase consumption of U.S. pork.

INTENDED AUDIENCES

- Hispanic Consumers in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Houston
- The Pork Industry

While educating Hispanic consumers, it was critical to also report regularly to the “stockholders” of the program, that is, the U.S. pork producers, who pay 0.40 of one percent of the market value of each animal, (40 cents per \$100 in value) toward a government regulated “checkoff” program whose funds support the promotion of U.S. Pork. Since this was a new and unknown venture, it was important to maintain regular communication with this internal audience to ensure the support necessary for a successful and ongoing program. Likewise, the National Pork Board’s foray into this “uncharted territory” provided many potential marketing partner opportunities. Therefore, it was important to publicize the Hispanic program among those in the general meat and food industry via articles and conference presentations.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Educate the Hispanic consumers in Los Angeles, Houston, and Phoenix on the benefits/safety of pork.
- Increase awareness, acceptability and purchase/consumption of pork.
- Create a positive perception and increase awareness of U.S. pork as a healthy and safe food choice; reverse a less-than-positive reputation, while reinforcing the idea that pork is the favorite when it comes to taste (i.e. “healthy / safe / delicious”).
- Encourage and maintain stockholders’ enthusiasm for Hispanic program.
- Prove value of program in three test markets to grow program in 2003.

ENTRANT'S ROLE IN THE PROJECT

Michelle L. Tucker, director of public relations, created the strategy for the Hispanic PR program for the National Pork Board. She, along with her staff, implemented the tactics

and followed up as necessary to ensure publicity and to measure placement value. Implementation of the program included:

- Analyzing research findings to create strategies.
- Creating targeted media lists including outlets per market as well as appropriate national outlets.
- Recruiting and training Spanish-speaking dietitians, including media training, pork presentation methods, and a Hispanic market overview.
- Researching and pitching appropriate conferences and trade publications.
- Developing and employing program for tracking and reporting results.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

CONSUMER/HISPANIC PR

Because of the barriers to consumption, it was important to communicate the health and safety story about pork to Hispanics in ways that were:

- Credible
- Visual
- Applicable to shopping decision makers
- Grassroots focused
- Accessible in popular Hispanic media, locally and nationally
- Relevant to season/topics/holidays year-round

Messaging

Based on the research conducted, it was clear that specific messaging needed to be developed to address barriers. Advertising was developed, with the same messaging, to complement the PR program. The campaign capitalized on multiple impressions to drive home the “healthy / safe / delicious” message.

Primary messages:

“Pork is good.” (*El cerdo es bueno*)

In Spanish, the word “good” here can mean healthy, safe, or “good” versus evil. The logo developed for the complementary advertising used a halo over the “e” in “cerdo” (pork) to illustrate this and drive home the “good” message. This supported the effort to overcome the myths surrounding pork.

“U.S. Pork Quality” (*Calidad U.S. Pork*)

The differentiating feature of the National Pork Board’s product, versus the pork already known by the Hispanic market, was that it was “U.S.” pork. Understanding this difference created a rationale to eat pork without the safety concerns Hispanics might have had in their countries of origin. The San Jose Group focused on this feature by creating the phrase “Calidad U.S. Pork,” which literally means, “Of U.S. Pork Quality,” illustrating that the quality of U.S. pork is the standard for quality. A logo was created

using this line along with the pork icon used in the general market. This allowed carryover from general market impressions of the icon.

Secondary messages:

“Pork is safe, healthy, delicious.”

The communications efforts, including scripting written for media pitching, focused on these three words, almost as a mantra, as it was crux of educating the market. In line with this thinking, phrases such as “it is virtually impossible to get trichinosis from U.S. Pork,” were interspersed in media materials. Additionally, communications were developed to specifically educate the market on ways to ensure safety while preparing pork. Healthiness was addressed in ways that were relevant to market. Communication materials featured cuts of pork that were low in fat and Hispanic recipes were developed to encourage use of those cuts. Focusing on delicious simply included messages that reinforced the market’s love of the taste of pork. Including cooking tips, not only assisted in safety, but also inhibited overcooking. When pork is not overcooked it tastes much better, providing a long-term motivation to increase consumption – newfound flavor. The recipes and references to traditional Hispanic dishes reinforced this messaging.

“Pork is backed by the National Pork Board.”

The pre-campaign research revealed that most Hispanics were not aware of the National Pork Board’s existence or purpose, and simultaneously desired an entity of this type to “stand behind” the product. Fact sheets were developed to communicate who the National Pork Board is and what they do, and the National Pork Board was quoted as the authority on pork, along with the United States Department of Agriculture.

“You can eat pork guilt-free/more often.”

As a natural response to the pre-campaign research findings, this good news angle was developed. Much like the general markets “love affair” with chocolate, Hispanics love pork and welcomed the idea that it could be consumed without worry.

Press Materials

The San Jose Group developed culturally relevant press materials to educate the Hispanic consumers in Los Angeles, Houston, and Phoenix on the benefits/safety of pork. Additionally, a few strategic national media outlets were targeted.

The San Jose Group developed general pork information press kits that educated and equipped the Hispanic media. These kits contained materials in both English and Spanish and included:

- Press release on safety/health – Making the messaging “news”
- Article proposal on safety and health – Often helpful with the grassroots publications
- Fact sheets – Educational materials on health, safety, and the National Pork Board
 - Recipes (with photographs)
 - Cuts of meat (in most common Spanish dialects)
 - CD including all graphics

Because grilling is extremely popular among this segment, press materials were also developed outlining summer grilling information specifically for Hispanic tastes. It provided a relevant platform for discussing pork. The summer grilling information sent to the Hispanic media included:

- Press release
- Fact sheets – Educational materials on s, and the National Pork Board
- Summer grilling recipes (with photographs)
- Cuts of meat (in most common Spanish dialects)
- CD including all graphics

Broadcast Media

Based on audience analysis, it was clear that dietitians were the ideal spokespersons for this program. Dietitians were deemed the most trust-worthy, credible, believable and desirable among the choices given to research participants. Four dietitians were selected as spokespersons on behalf of the National Pork Board and were trained on how to best work with the Hispanic media, the best ways to present pork, as well as general media training. The San Jose Group worked with Hispanic broadcast media outlets to pitch these spokespeople and coordinate interviews. One dietitian in each of the three key markets conducted interviews, and another dietitian was appointed to national opportunities.

Additional Vehicles

To support the media relations efforts, outdoor, print, and web vehicles were used to educate the market about the safety and health of pork.

TRADE / INDUSTRY

On the internal / industry side it was critical to position the National Pork Board as

- Effectively reaching the Hispanic market
- Authorities on Hispanic marketing

The San Jose Group developed a targeted database of organizations with which to communicate, including:

- Pork Producers
- Packers / Processors
- Meat Industry Organizations / Associations
- Retailers
- Retail / Grocer Organizations / Associations
- Marketing Organizations
- Packaged Goods Companies & Organizations / Associations
- Non-Hispanic Media

The San Jose Group targeted these groups with key trade publications and organizations to communicate the Hispanic plan and results via

- Placing articles

- Delivering presentations

CHALLENGES

- Alienating general market customers: “The key is appealing to the growing market segments without alienating retailers’ core customers. “ explained John Hagerla, the National Pork Board’s assistant vice president, retail/foodservice marketing, in a trade article. “Also, supermarket chains are trying to balance an efficient national marketing program with localized Hispanic programs and maintain profitability.”
- Pork seen as unsafe to Hispanic consumers: Due to experiences in their home countries where quality and care of livestock was extremely poor, Hispanics believe pork to be unsafe. This leads to Hispanic consumers believing that they can contract trichinosis and other illnesses just by eating pork. To guard against the parasite disease, Hispanics eat pork less frequently, and wash and cook it well.
- Not able to leverage existing campaign: The U.S. pork industry’s “Pork. The Other White Meat” slogan means little to Hispanic consumers because their definitions of “white” meat and “red” meat are different. Many don’t understand the implied comparison of chicken and pork. For instance, almost all of the focus group participants were familiar with the terms “red” and “white” meat, but the majority classified pork as “red” meat. While there were some that considered some cuts of pork “red” meat and others “white.”
- Health issues: Many participants in the pre-program research expressed health concerns with pork and specifically mentioned that their doctors had told them not to eat pork for health reasons.
- Finding dietitians in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Houston, who speak Spanish and also have media experience.

MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

- Because the messages were culturally relevant to the target, they were well received by the Hispanic media. Additionally, it was received as “good news.” Typical responses from editors and reporters were, “Yes, that’s true. I love pork, but I have concerns about it. Our audience will be glad to hear this.”
- The targeted potential marketing partners were enthusiastic about the program. As planned, retailers and vendors partnered with the National Pork Board based on the success of the Hispanic program, including Jewel, Food City, Smithfield Packaging, Albertsons, Ralph’s, and Calina Wine.
- Among Hispanic consumer publications, the placements resulted in over **\$600,000 in media value** and **24,715,000 gross impressions**. This is **more than three times what the client invested** in the program!
- Based on pre- and post-program research, there has been a rise in pork consumption by Hispanics in the three markets where the Hispanic campaign has run. Overall, **awareness has increased more than 200 percent** and **weekly**

purchases increased by 42 percent. (Please see Section 5, “Post-program Research”)

- The client is happy! As John Hagerla, the National Pork Board’s assistant vice president, retail/foodservice marketing explained, “The program has successfully begun to break down Hispanic consumers’ barriers towards eating pork and improved their perceptions. Findings indicate that Hispanic consumers value ‘America’s Pork Producers’ as a trusted source. Ultimately, consumers increased the amount and frequency of pork purchased.” Another gauge of the client’s satisfaction is that they have signed on for another year of Hispanic communications and are rolling out in additional markets.

