

## OUR MISSION: To Promote Excellence in Hispanic Marketing



### The Value of Research For Hispanic Marketing

*By George L. San Jose, President and COO The San Jose Group - Chicago*

Targeting the Hispanic market requires understanding the culture, traditions, beliefs and practices of Hispanics. Simply translating general market campaigns into Spanish rarely works. Unfortunately, that has been attempted -- with some unfavorable results.

Consider a well-known chicken company with the slogan "It takes a strong man to make a chicken tender." The direct translation into Spanish was "It takes an aroused man to make a chicken affectionate."

When a famous pen manufacturer marketed a ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to have read, "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." Instead, the company thought that the word "embarazar" (to impregnate) meant to embarrass, so the ad read: "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."

When an airline invited Hispanic travelers to try the leather seats, the literal translation asked them to "fly naked."

And, many have heard about the fiasco GM experienced when it realized the Chevy Nova meant, "It won't go" in Spanish language markets.

There are typically many Spanish words that can be used in the place of an English word when translating copy. Various Spanish words have slightly different meanings, and different sub-cultures within the Hispanic market require slightly different translations. For example, the many words for the fruit "orange" sometimes cause confusion for supermarket advertisers.

However, it's not just a matter of wrong word choices. It's also critical to consider the culture. Consider a program that The San Jose Group (SJG) worked on some years ago. The American Cancer Society had effectively used word-of-mouth to encourage women to get regular breast exams. While discussing breast exams in the general market may be acceptable and has effectively prevented many cases of cancer, it is a hurdle for the Hispanic market. Hispanics in general don't feel comfortable talking about their bodies openly. What's more, Hispanic women are not only modest, but they put themselves last when it comes to healthcare. In this culture

Home  
About Us  
Contact Us  
Upcoming Events  
Hispanic Book  
Interacción  
Interacción Submission  
Job Bank  
Join Now  
Photo Album  
Press Releases  
Reasons to Join  
Sponsorships  
Strategic Partners

are not only modest, but they put themselves last when it comes to healthcare. In this culture, women are accommodating and think about the health of their husbands and children before thinking about themselves. When approaching this project, SJG had to develop a campaign that would appeal to Hispanic women specifically. Ultimately, the messaging used was, "Do it for your loved ones."

When you consider that 70 percent of Hispanics were born outside the U.S. it's easy to understand that, as a whole, Hispanics' consumer state-of-mind is shaped by experiences in their countries of origin. Factors such as underdeveloped categories, low product accessibility, low awareness or familiarity of brands require Hispanic messaging and programs that are tailored and prioritized in a culturally relevant way.

### **The Solution**

So how are marketers able to accurately analyze the Hispanic market in light of specific products and services? Research, both quantitative and qualitative. While many Hispanic agencies can provide basic direction for what will and won't work in general, research is the best way to truly know Hispanics' perceptions in order to lay the foundation for an effective campaign. Additionally, in a growingly competitive market, segmented or niche marketing budgets are more scrutinized and call for greater results and ROI. Research can also provide a benchmark for measuring effectiveness.

### **For Example**

SJG recently won the National Pork Board account for Hispanic marketing. The client understood the need for research in understanding and reaching the Hispanic market. The first step in SJG's work with the National Pork Board was to conduct focus groups in multiple U.S. markets to gauge Hispanics' reactions to pork and the general market campaign "The Other White Meat."

This research showed that the barriers to consuming pork in the Hispanic market were far different from the non-Hispanic market. In the mass market, the barriers were health-related. The general market messaging explained that pork offers an alternative to chicken, and that is just as low in fat, cholesterol and calories. However, in the Hispanic market, the barriers were safety-related. Hispanic consumers' bad experience with poorly raised livestock in their homelands was still top-of-mind. Hispanics across the board were erroneously convinced that bacterial-related illness is highly likely when pork is consumed.

### **Creative**

When targeting ethnic segments, many marketers make assumptions about what will work in their creative executions. Instead of assuming or guessing what would work for the National Pork Board, SJG went straight to Hispanic consumers and garnered valuable insight that dictates creative direction.

First of all, it was learned that many of the campaigns that were used in the general market were simply not culturally relevant for the Hispanic market. For example, "The Other White Meat" meant little to this audience because their definitions of "white" and "red" meat were different. Another example was the programs used in the general market campaigns that focused on bringing the family together for dinner. Because there are typically close family relationships in the Hispanic market and most Hispanic families eat together at home, the same messaging doesn't resonate with the Hispanic market

Several creative concepts were tested with the focus groups. Interestingly, some of the concepts that would have worked with other products just didn't apply with Pork. Hispanics typically respond to an emotionally charged message. However, with this product, the audience demanded facts backed by sources. This research also showed what different sub-segments did or did not respond to. This will help develop the approaches taken in different geographic markets.

### **Other Findings**

In addition to cultural information and creative direction, the research conducted for the National Pork Board provided countless tidbits about shopping habits, meal planning, recipes, the competition, and what types of spokespersons would most likely be believed &ndash; all valuable gems in moving forward and developing strategies and tactics for this program. Ultimately, research was the foundation for a campaign that will be very focused on educating this segment on the truth about the product &ndash; that it is safe &ndash; and delivering this message in a style that will change behavior. Had the National Pork Board simply translated The Other White Meat to "La Otra Carne Blanca" they would have missed out on numerous opportunities to effectively reach this market.

### **Across the Board**

The examples are endless and the value has been proven over and over. Research is necessary in creating effective Hispanic campaigns. Across the board, quantitative and qualitative research takes the guesswork out of Hispanic marketing strategy. Very rarely are Hispanic agencies able to make assumptions about what will work. Factors such as geographic markets, sub-segments within the Hispanic market, knowledge of specific products and services, and brand awareness demand an accurate assessment of Hispanics perceptions. Only through valid research will marketers be able to truly know the market and create the most effective campaigns possible.

*George L. San Jose is President and COO of The San Jose Group, a consortium of Hispanic marketing communications companies headquartered in Chicago. A true pioneer in the industry, George began his professional career in general market advertising more than two decades ago in New York. He is a frequent guest speaker on Hispanic marketing techniques, has published numerous articles, and has literally authored "the book" that governs the Hispanic marketing industry &ndash; The Code of Ethics and Standards & Practices in Hispanic Advertising. He is a co-founder of the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA) and continues to shape the industry by serving as an AHAA board director, treasurer, and chairman of the organization's Code of Ethics and Standards & Practices Committee.*

[\[About Us\]](#)[\[Contact Us\]](#)[\[Upcoming Events\]](#)[\[Hispanic Book\]](#)[\[Interacción\]](#)[\[Interacción Submission\]](#)[\[Job Bank\]](#)[\[Join Now\]](#)[\[Photo Album\]](#)[\[Press Releases\]](#)  
[\[Reasons to Join\]](#)[\[Sponsorships\]](#)[\[Strategic Partners\]](#)  
[\[Previous\]](#)[\[Up\]](#)[\[Next\]](#)

HMCA - P.O. Box 56 5891  
Miami, FL 33256-5891  
Copyright © 2000-2007 - HMCA  
All Rights Reserved

---

Web Site by Moonlion Networks