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“Survey Design and Methodology for U.S. Hispanic Research”

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The first step to take when conducting a marketing research study on any population is to determine the universe. There is no difference when conducting marketing research among the Hispanic population. I have had the privilege to work on studies among several populations: Latin American as a whole, North, Central and South American countries, United States as a whole, the Asian Market in the U.S., the African American Market, and the Hispanic Market in the U.S. just to mention a few.

Survey Design

To determine the universe of the Hispanic Market in the U.S., we need to answer to the following questions: Who is Hispanic? How big is the population? Where do they live? What language do they use to communicate?

Who is Hispanic?

People who identified themselves to be Hispanic are classified as Hispanic, according to the U.S. Census. This classification of Hispanics started in the 1970's and does not identify a race. Hispanics are usually people from North, Central and South America, or their parents were born in those countries or have family of “Latino” descent.

How big is the Hispanic Population in the U.S.?

As of the time I write this article (February 2010), the size of the Hispanic population in the U.S. is over 50 million people.

Where Hispanics live?

Hispanics are mostly concentrated in metropolitan areas and the States with the highest concentration of Hispanics are: California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois, New Mexico and Arizona. In the last 10 years, the Hispanic population has immigrated or migrated to small American cities such as, Atlanta, Georgia; Las Vegas Nevada; with the goal of looking for work. Therefore, it is important to keep up to date demographic information and be sure to appropriately include this population when conducting a National Study utilizing a national representative sample.

What language to communicate?

Another variable that researchers use to differentiate among multicultural populations is *language*. Hispanic families have the same needs as any population on a day-by-day basis. Hispanic families consume products to prepare their breakfast and other meals, kids go to school, adults go to work, they drive one or two vehicles, they go grocery shopping, they go to the mall to shop or to large department stores, they take vacations, they are worried about jobs, education, spending, etc. The only difference as compared with the General Market is in what language a company will market their products or services most effectively to reach this target. The Hispanic family is consuming Spanish and English language media such as TV, print, radio, Internet, billboards, direct mail, etc. Hispanics also consume English

language media. The important question is if you advertise only in English, who are you missing in the Hispanic market? The obvious answer is to advertise in Spanish.

Segmentation - Level of Acculturation among Hispanics

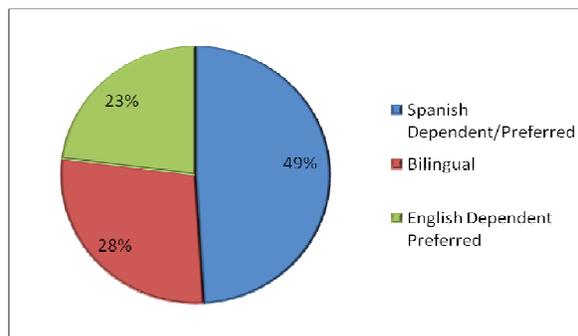
Meneses Research & Associates has developed an Index of Acculturation to help advertisers more precisely target their research needs among Hispanics. Meneses Research has identified five Levels of Acculturation based on consumption of media and language usage with family members, friends and co-workers. A score is assigned based on the frequency the consumer uses Spanish/English during their media consumption and for their spoken language. Here are the five level of acculturation:

- 1. Spanish Language Dependent:** Newcomers, foreign born, consume Spanish language media all or most of the time, Spanish is the main language used to communicate.
- 2. Spanish Language Preferred:** Few years in the USA, foreign born, consume Spanish language media most of the time, for most Spanish is the main language used to communicate.
- 3. Bilinguals:** 7 years or more years in the USA, foreign born and some US born, switch from Spanish to English comfortably, consume both English and Spanish language media.
- 4. English Language Preferred:** Mostly USA born, switch from Spanish to English language for media consumption.
- 5. English Language Dependent:** Born in the USA, proud of their Hispanic heritage, are adapters to both cultures, consume mostly English media.

The battery of questions for the Level of Acculturation could be included in your questionnaire. These results can then be incorporated into your data base to allow for the data to be cross tabulated by the Level of Acculturation. If you would like to use this procedure, then, we recommend re-assigning the five Levels of Acculturation into three:

- a. Spanish Language Dependent/Preferred**
- b. Bilinguals**
- c. English Language Dependent/Preferred**

Based on the latest report “*Ask U.S. Hispanics*” **Consumer Profile 2009**, prepared by Meneses Research & Associates, the three Levels of Acculturation described above are distributed with the following frequencies in the U.S. market:



Methodologies

There are some cultural issues to be aware of when conducting research among Hispanic consumers. Some of these issues affect methodology selection and others impact project execution.

1. Qualitative – Recruitment Perspective

Good recruitment and ensuring that an acceptable rate of the recruits show up for the research is directly related to how you approach the recruitment selection for the focus group, mini-group, or one-on-ones. Based on our experience over the last 30 years conducting research among Hispanic/Latinos, here are some of our recommendations:

- a. When you cold call or are calling based on a reference for a recruit, ALWAYS ask first for the female head of household (*la señora de la casa*). Remember she is the keeper of the house. Anything that happens in the house has to be with her knowledge, especially, if you are recruiting for males. This applies to door-to-door or telephone recruiting. When you have the permission of the lady of the house, you have her on your side. As a matter of fact, if you are recruiting males, ask for her help, she will even remind him about the date and time of the groups.
- b. Sometimes you need to recruit Hispanics for a focus group and the group will be conducted “in English only” or “In Spanish only”. We recommend applying the battery of questions to determine the Level of Acculturation. Contact us and we will send you the six questions and their application. It is important to verify language command BEFORE the recruit gets into the groups. Test the language skills with a recruiter or host that is bilingual.
- c. Pay incentives in cash and also include a recommendation form for potential participants. Practicing this request for recommendation consistently will continuously feed your data base of new potential participants.
- d. Over recruit, especially when the weather may be bad or when more than half of the potential participants in a group are “virgins” or first time participants in a focus group.

2. Quantitative – Interviewing Perspective

Telephone Interviews

Conducting research among Hispanics utilizing the telephone methodology is no different than conducting research with the General Population. Currently, there are several challenges to successful telephone interviews:

- a. Decrease of “land” line in households due to increase in cellular phone usage
- b. Answering machines, call screening, computers and faxes sharing the telephone line all contribute to difficulty in making a connection

Personal Interviews – Face-to-face

For many research studies, especially those when an interviewer has to show stimulus such as pictures, concepts, radio, or video, face to face interviews continue to be the most reliable methodology to ensure a representative sample.

Internet

Computer presence in Hispanic households is increasing but is still far away from a representative sample and there are many security issues and concerns to completing questionnaires online. Currently, 55% of Hispanic households nationwide have a computer. 86% of the ones who have computers have a connection with the Internet and 40% have an Email address that they use to communicate.

Recommendations Conducting Data Collection among Hispanics

The Hispanic market is a sub-segment of the whole U.S. Market. Companies utilizing English language media to communicate about their products or services will reach some portion of the Hispanic consumers. The fact is that there is a significant portion of the market that requires Spanish language media to learn about products and services. The following are recommendations to increase the effectiveness of data collection utilizing either qualitative or quantitative research.

1. When contacting a Hispanic household always ask to speak with the Female Head of Household first, then, ask permission from her to conduct the interview or recruitment.
2. When translation is required from English to Spanish (in the majority of cases) utilize a professional translator with experience translating questionnaires for marketing research. Translators used for the fields of: Court or other Legal Matters or Medical, will not necessarily be the same or have the required skills. The translation must be adjusted to a 4th grade level and must be simple.
3. Pay incentives in cash. Include a referral form for potential participants. This procedure will help you keep your data base replenished with new potential participants.
4. Update your Hispanic database frequently (at least once every six months), Hispanics, tends to move more frequently than non-Hispanics, especially if they have lived in the U.S. for less than 10 years.
5. Ask for a cell phone number of the FHH and keep it in the database record. The use of land lines is decreasing and will continue to be reduced in the coming years.

The Hispanic market is very dynamic and growing. Currently, one of four newborn children is from a Hispanic/Latino family. 15% of Hispanics have lived in the U.S. less than 5 years. The population is expected to reach 100 million Hispanics before year 2050.

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