

## **Global Language Solutions Offers Marketing and Communication Tips for Reaching the U.S. Hispanic Community**

### ***Understanding the role of culture in a diverse business climate***

Whether the label “Hispanic” or “Spanish-speaking” community is used, this is a group of about 45 million, economically diverse people, living in the U.S. with an approximate spending power of \$750 billion per year currently and projected to reach \$1 trillion by the year 2010<sup>1</sup>. It is no secret that states like California and Texas have a large Hispanic demographic. However, a lesser-known fact is that in the majority of other states, ones that most would not identify with a large Hispanic demographic, Spanish is the most frequently spoken foreign language. For instance, Illinois has over two million Spanish-speaking residents.

Numbers like these have caused the marketing world to stand up and take notice of its growing Hispanic customer base. It is a segment that is clearly demanding to be addressed within its own cultural dynamics.

All communication is cultural – it draws on ways we have learned to speak and give nonverbal messages. Analysts and scholars attach technical terms to these characteristics and beliefs that can be confusing, such as whether or not a culture is high or low context and individualist or collectivist. These technical terms and topics are best addressed by multicultural communication experts. However, for those businesses that simply want to incorporate cultural sensitivity and accuracy into their marketing and advertising, Global Language Solutions offers the following tips for targeting messaging and campaigns to the U.S. Hispanic community:

- 1. Reinforce a strong sense of family.** Family is of the highest importance to Hispanics, and family members participate in both the shopping experience and the decision-making process. Appealing to the entire family or centering your product or service around a wholesome family image, recognizing the importance given to elders will go far with the Hispanic audience.
- 2. Formality is key.** Do not use first names, but rather Mr., Mrs., Sir, or Ma'am unless invited to use familiar names. Respect, especially for elders, is extremely important.
- 3. Build relationships and trust.** There needs to be a familiarity or acceptance of trust before engaging in a business proposition. U.S. based companies typically like to move quickly when garnering new customers. Expect the lead time and efforts to be greater in the acquisition of new customers. The upside of this, is that Hispanics tend to be much more loyal to brands than their English-speaking counterparts.
- 4. Focus on the group and the community as opposed to individual achievements.** In collectivist settings, members are rewarded for allegiance to group norms and values, interdependence, and cooperation. Wherever they go, their identity as a member of their group goes out in front. Why is this important to your business and your marketing efforts? Because of the strength of family and the close-knit nature of the Hispanic community, word of mouth or referral-based marketing is a

huge asset. Keep this in mind when marketing to new customers. Maintaining one happy customer is very likely to lead to many more new customers down the road.

5. **Translating your branded marketing messages is not always possible.** When translating your marketing materials from English to Spanish, understand that some words are so culturally significant that they cannot be translated. A slogan or phrase that works in English may not have the same meaning, impact, or relevance in another language. To ensure the effectiveness of marketing communications, it is crucial that translations are completed not only by translation experts in your target language, but also someone who understand how to write marketing/advertising copy AND the target culture.
6. **Develop materials that are appropriate for the education, literacy level, and potential language barriers of the audience at hand.** For instance, many Hispanics in the U.S. today are first-generation immigrants with language barriers and a general lack of higher education. According to 2004 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 58 percent of Hispanics have finished high school, while just 12 percent hold a bachelor's degree.
7. **Use cross-cultural marketing teams.** Most organizations form cross-functional teams. GLS recommends creating cross-cultural marketing/advertising teams to include people with diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and multicultural perspectives. Or, if you outsource your marketing and advertising communications, confirm that your agency or contractor has representation from the culture your organization is trying to reach.

For additional tips on marketing to Hispanic-Americans, as well as incorporating cultural sensitivity into your business initiatives and promotions, whatever the culture or language, please call +1-949-798-1400 or visit <http://www.globallanguages.com>.



### About Global Language Solutions

Global Language Solutions (GLS) is a full-service translation company delivering solutions in over 100 languages to increase its clients' multicultural and international market share. The company's expertise includes translation of product labeling, instructions for use (IFUs), manuals, informed consent forms, protocols, advertisements, IVRS scripts, and more. GLS has several industry tip sheets available including: *How to Select a Translation Provider*; *Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Translations*; *Using Interpreters in the Legal Setting*; and more. For additional information, visit <http://www.globallanguages.com> or call +1-949-798-1400.

<sup>1</sup> [HispanTelligence](#)®, the research division of Hispanic Business Inc. (2004)