



bcw Juntos

National Hispanic
Heritage Month

Client Guide

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RECOGNIZE THE CULTURE, NOT THE MONTH:

WHY SOME BRANDS MISS THE MARK DURING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Hispanic Heritage Month kicks off every year on September 15th to recognize the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans. Its origin began in 1968 as a week-long celebration dedicated to the histories and cultures of Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a Latino is anyone of Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanic refers to a person with ancestry from a country whose primary language is Spanish. Latino and its variations refer to a person with origins from anywhere in Latin America (Mexico, South and Central America) and the Caribbean. While the terms Hispanic and Latino are oftentimes used interchangeably, they have different meanings. For more information on the use and meaning of the different terms used to describe the community, take a look at our [2021 Hispanic Heritage Month Guide](#).



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Regardless of where we're from, to most Hispanics, our roots and culture complete our identity. From the food we eat to the music we listen to, being Hispanic is embedded into our customs, holidays, and even simple things like rolling our Rs – it's ingrained into every part of our being. Therefore, it is important to understand that Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates a community that lives its *"Latinidad,"* – or *identity* – every single day and not just between September and October.

While Hispanic Heritage Month gives communities and businesses an opportunity to honor Hispanics, society tends to put all its efforts into one month of the year and celebrations are often generalized. This time of year should lift up all Hispanic communities by acknowledging that their individual heritages make them unique, and their lived experiences contribute to creating a diverse society.

So, the question is, how can a brand connect authentically across its marketing and communications efforts with Hispanic consumers who come from many backgrounds? BCW's JUNTOS ERG and Polycultural Consulting Unit offer the following guidance and best practices on how to engage and connect with the Hispanic community not just during this moment in time but, importantly, year-round. That's why we're releasing this guide ahead of Hispanic Heritage Month.

DON'T OVERLOOK HISPANIC PURCHASING POWER

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic community is the nation's largest racial or ethnic minority, making up 18.9% of the total U.S. population. In 2021, 13 states had populations of 1 million or more Hispanic residents, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

Showing such strength in population numbers, Hispanic households are also driving economic growth with considerable earning and purchasing power. **In 2019, Hispanic households earned more than \$1.2 trillion**, with many running their own businesses. Hispanic immigrants are 30% more likely than the general U.S. population to be entrepreneurs and more than 12% of all Hispanic immigrant workers have started their own business.

In 2020, the economic output, or GDP, of Hispanics in the U.S. **totaled \$2.8 trillion**. For comparison, if U.S. Hispanics were an independent country, their economic output would be the fifth largest GDP in the world ahead of the United Kingdom, India and France.

Overall, Hispanics are multifaceted, contribute to our economy, and have a growing population expected to reach **111 million by 2060**, which is why brands should communicate with the Hispanic audiences more than just once a year during Hispanic Heritage Month.



UNDERSTAND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN HISPANIC AUDIENCES

There are 20 Hispanic countries, each with unique colloquialisms, values and other diverse attributes. While we're all proud to be Hispanic, the cultural differences matter and we want to be heard, seen and understood individually because our walks of life are not all the same. It is important to not only be inclusive of the Hispanic community at large but to laser-focus on specific communities or geographies when appropriate.

When defining your audience, it is important to know what issues and values are important to the culture. For example, our [2022 National Hispanic Heritage Month Guide](#) discussed how community, family and personal relationships are extremely important to Hispanics, which are some common themes to explore in marketing. We recommend conducting additional research to understand core values and nuances across different countries and cultures, just like you would when approaching any other audience.

It's also important to note that Spanish is the predominant language, but each country has its own language nuances. While using Spanish in marketing captures the attention of Hispanic audiences, a generic translation isn't sufficient. The message adaptation must be purposeful and appropriate.

As Hispanic families find themselves integrated in U.S. culture, brands must understand the intricacies of being Hispanic. We are a rapidly changing demographic with newer generations identifying as Hispanic and embracing the culture, but not necessarily speaking Spanish, which we'll discuss more in the next section.

SHARE MEANINGFUL HISPANIC STORIES ON THE RIGHT CHANNELS

All marketers know that the way to create an emotional connection is through storytelling. This concept doesn't change with the Hispanic community, but the content should.

Hispanic stories should be at the forefront of the creative process rather than an afterthought. Many brands approach marketing with an overall general market story. When targeting Hispanic communities, it's important to share authentic stories that resonate with that audience, which is why a simple translation doesn't work. Bringing Hispanic storylines to the forefront is not a risk and should be a part of every campaign. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to building a successful campaign, but prioritizing values and culture is a start.

Reaching your audience on the right channels is just as important. Research shows that [nearly 60% of U.S. Hispanics are Spanish-first or bilingual at home](#). As a result, two-thirds of Hispanics are watching TV or listening to radio in Spanish. Hispanic audiences, at large, are staying loyal to Spanish-language media even though mainstream media newsrooms are becoming more diverse. Additionally, Hispanics are leading the shift to mobile with the smartphone being their most important device.

Meeting audiences where they are creates an authentic experience and, coupled with the right messaging, brands can create loyalty and position their companies as leaders.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR A CROWDED MARKETING SPACE

The U.S. Hispanic community is made up of a vibrant, rapidly growing and diverse population. As Hispanics continue to accumulate wealth and earning potential, many brands are beginning to understand the importance of marketing to Hispanic consumers, which means a crowded space. According to the Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing (AIMM), diversity ad spend grew by **80% per year** between 2020 and 2022.

Next time you begin building a campaign targeted to Hispanic audiences - and hopefully not just during Hispanic Heritage Month - keep the following guidance and takeaways in mind for connecting authentically with this audience:

- **Get Personal:** Show your Hispanic audiences that you understand them on a personal level. Take the time to understand the nuances of *Latinidad* and their values. To find additional statistics on the Hispanic community and media consumption preferences, review our [2021 Hispanic Heritage Month Guide](#).
- **Speak the Right Language:** Not all Hispanics speak Spanish, but when using the language, don't just translate. Use dynamic language that resonates with audiences and make sure to acknowledge and understand accents, slang and cultural nuances relevant to the specific Hispanic culture you are trying to reach.
- **Tell Hispanic Stories:** Don't just translate general storylines either. Incorporate Hispanic shared experiences that are meaningful to that culture. Take into account where your audiences are on their acculturation journey.
- **Seek Hispanic Input:** Hire and include Hispanic professionals in the creative process and seek their counsel. Putting yourself in their shoes or making assumptions will lead to stereotyping and insensitivities. Instead, ask Hispanic professionals to share their insights and lived experiences. If you're looking for ways to recruit and promote Hispanic leadership in your organization, check out our [2022 Hispanic Heritage Month Guide](#), which takes a closer look at Hispanic leadership in Corporate America.

While Hispanic Heritage Month is an important celebration of all Hispanic cultures, it shouldn't be the only time to communicate with Hispanic communities nor should messaging group Hispanics into one generalization. Because the term "Hispanic" is used to describe a large community with a wide variety of identifying features, beliefs and experiences, it's important to recognize these cultures independent of one another and throughout the year.

Whether you're planning to launch a campaign or celebrate your employees, make sure to understand your Hispanic audience and create messages that resonate with them. Hispanics want to see authentic representations that make them feel like companies understand their values and respect their individual cultures.

