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Expert Q&A - Hispanic Digital Network, ARAnet, and PR Newswire

Tonya Garcia April 13, 2009

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ARAnet and Hispanic Digital Network (HDN) recently **partnered** to provide ARAnet's copyright-free Spanish-language content to HDN's network of media outlets. Executives from the two organizations, along with HDN's parent company PR Newswire (PRN), offer insight into reaching this growing market.

PRWeek: The Hispanic population continues to grow in size and importance to many marketers. What changes or shifts have you seen in media consumption habits within the Hispanic population in recent months?

Bill Gato, VP and cofounder, HDN: In many key respects, US Hispanics are a marketer's dream consumer, particularly in terms of their fast growth and avid engagement levels.

US Hispanics consume 30% more hours of media per week than the general market. Research also shows that US Hispanics are adopting new media and new technologies at a faster rate than the mainstream. A 2009 research study from Scarborough Research shows that Hispanics download digital content at higher-than-average rates, including podcasts, video games, audio clips, movies, TV programs, and other video. Hispanics are early adopters and trendsetters in their use of digital technology, which reflects cultural values of interdependence and socializing.

Despite strong engagement with new media, it's also important to note that traditional media consumption has not suffered, and that Hispanic audiences often simultaneously consume some form of new media with traditional media.

PRWeek: What are topics of interest to Hispanic audiences?

David Olson, VP of operations and business development, ARAnet: Generally, Hispanics' interests mirror those of the rest of the country. They are paying close attention to the economy, housing, and healthcare. More specifically, the answer varies depending on the intended target audience.

One of the largest population segments – and the most targeted among consumer brands – is Latina moms ages 18 to 40. They're interested in child development guidance, nutrition, consumer products, and how-to tips.

Many Hispanic households are multigenerational, so topics that impact family members of varying ages are also of interest, like lifestyle improvement tips and stories about keeping the family healthy. Education, immigration, and citizenship issues, and small business development are also top of mind.

PRWeek: What are some of the most effective digital strategies and tactics for reaching a Hispanic audience?

Cristy Clavijo-Kish, SVP, multicultural markets, PRN: Targeting US Hispanics in any medium requires smart in-language and in-culture strategies. The best in-language practice is to offer the content in both English and Spanish, and to give the Hispanic consumer the option of choosing their preferred language.

The in-culture approach is all about nuance. For example, you can take an English language message and translate it to Spanish. But if the English message was written to appeal to mainstream values of, say, independence, you'll end up with a perfectly translated Spanish article that doesn't connect to Hispanic values of interdependence. The goal, ultimately, is to build "share of heart" among Hispanics, and in-culture strategies are a powerful way to win over our hearts and connect us with your brand.

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