

## Multicultural Marketing:

### *Uncovering the Insights that Drive Business*



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Talk of Hispanic marketing, or any multicultural marketing, typically includes anecdotes about getting it wrong. For example, the highly touted “Got Milk?” campaign, when adapted for Hispanic audiences, translated as “Are You

Lactating?” And when Coca-Cola was initially written in Chinese, it ended up as “Bite the wax tadpole.” The stories, real and apocryphal, grab our attention. But the stories that really count are about getting it right—culturally speaking—and delivering major business gains by talking to consumers, so they clearly recognize what you’re offering and feel it’s right for them.

Sometimes our concerns require initiatives that extend well beyond words and the norms of traditional research. In the quest for critical or differentiating insights, agencies will go so far as to hire anthropologists to live with consumers to observe product use in the household. Their mission: to seek clues leading to the essence of one’s connection, rational or emotional, to the product.

To assume links between consumer and product will be the same across cultures is to walk away from the power of personal relevance. Multicultural marketing experts experience that power again and again. Talking with consumers, in their own language and drawing out their cultural perspectives, often exposes reactions, positive and negative, that never occur to an outsider. That is the key issue for marketers who want to tap the revenue potential of non-English speaking consumers. Your brand is the outsider here. Learning to be an insider, as you have always tried to be with general market consumers, unlocks your brand’s connective power.

Sometimes the link we look for seems obvious in retrospect. In its highly successful launch to Hispanic consumers, we elevated corn oil as the key feature of Fleischmann’s Margarine. We built on the iconic status of corn—an archetype in Hispanic culture and a dietary staple. Corn’s wholesomeness had

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a halo effect on the brand that countered low health perceptions of margarine. The positioning “Everything a Margarine Should Be” gave important assurance to Hispanic consumers, mainly Latinas committed to carefully choosing quality ingredients for cooking. It also supported Fleischmann’s positioning as a premium margarine.

A similar consumer insight surfaced in research for CPC Knorr’s launch of its brand of sazón, a key ingredient in Latin cooking. Feedback comparing attitudes toward the product versus the category leader revealed issues critical to refocusing the brand for “authentic” Latinas and led to a complete and successful change of direction.

My past work on Dannon involved, among other things, helping to develop flavors, naming and positioning, and advising on packaging. Creative research produced a rich brand story of a father telling his son about a childhood memory evoked by the mango-flavored yogurt. The Dannon Tropicfruta campaign and tagline “Return to What’s Yours (your roots),” based on real consumer insights, earned ADDY and Worldfest Awards.

Intimate knowledge of a consumer’s culture is but one piece of the multicultural marketing puzzle. Combining in-depth cultural knowledge with a diversity of creative talent and experience creates, we believe, a sum greater than its parts. By joining, under one roof, creative and cultural experts from many countries, we’re fortunate to enjoy a fruitful cross-pollination of ideas and insights that makes all our work more effective. The resulting creativity has enriched our Brand and Technology practices and also made us better brand explorers on behalf of our general market clients.

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