



Hispanic Market Research Do's and Don't's

By Carlos E. Garcia & Carlos Yañez

The overarching *do* in Hispanic research – as in any research – is to define the objective. This action will govern all of the *do's* and *don'ts*!

The key *don't* that we call out is: Hispanic research is not about Spanish language. Like any population, Hispanics are multidimensional. So, let's detail the things you need to consider as you conduct **Hispanic research** with Knowledge Networks, a GfK company, using our two great panels: **KnowledgePanel LatinoSM** and **Cada CabezaSM**.



OVERARCHING ISSUES

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Know the Hispanic population you will be addressing, including demographics, geographic distribution and acculturation levels relative to the research objective.

Try to see your survey experience from the point of view of a Latino.

Respect the Hispanic consumer, whose honest and sincere opinions you hope to gather.

THE ACTION

You shouldn't try to force-fit a General Market mindset onto this quite distinct culture. For example, be judicious in the use of grids in your survey, as well as how you ask questions about "likeability."

To avoid bad study results that will miss key insights, consider the Hispanic traits. For example, simply thinking you make your research "Hispanic" by including Spanish speakers is a mistake. If you want to understand Hispanics as part of your research, you need to include at minimum acculturated, bi-cultural and unacculturated Hispanics – and ideally use an online sample source that recognizes this at the panel recruitment stage.

A large segment of the Latino population is undereducated and poor – but don't imagine they are any less deserving of respect, or that they can't grow into great, loyal customers. So, as you ask questions in your survey, include this segment; yet the question wording should take this into account.



OVERARCHING ISSUES (Continued)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Hispanics are not one large, homogeneous group – they come from many different countries of origin and social classes, and they have quite varied levels of acculturation, even within the same family.

You can't assume that Hispanics will use your product category the same way and for the same reasons that General Market consumers do.

THE ACTION

Acculturation isn't just about language; it is, in fact, much more subtle than that. Many companies design their own models that work for their categories and their niches in the market. Ensure that your survey or sample provider has captured questions from the Hispanic members of the panel that enable you to not only target the survey by acculturation level, but also easily analyze the data among these groups.

For example, if you only ask Latinos about their use of breakfast cereal for breakfast, you will miss the bulk of their uses of the category. So, bring to the table any meta information you have about the category being examined that may influence the questions you ask in the survey among Latinos.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Spanish language surveys take longer. What in English would be a 15-minute survey can take 20 minutes or longer in Spanish.

THE ACTION

Simply translating a questionnaire from English into Spanish – even the English version for Bilinguals and the highly acculturated – is not enough. It should be adapted to the Hispanic culture. We recommend pre-testing the survey not only for survey length, but in some cases for question cognition of the respondent. It is worth the time, as it improves the outcome!



QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Be aware that Latinos come from many different countries, and each has its own idiomatic expressions and sometimes quite diverse interpretations for a single word or phrase. This can be quite problematic – and a very good reason to have researchers do the translation and to do pre-testing.

If you are conducting a phone survey with a five-point rating scale, break it out into two questions to be able to get discrimination – first, “do you agree or disagree,” and then “do you agree/ disagree completely or somewhat.”

If you are using scales in an online survey, consider an alternative.

THE ACTION

Keep your vocabulary and question structures simple in the translation. KN applies this principle, and you should ask all of your suppliers if they do, too.

Even when doing side-by-side research, comparability of the data (and structure of the questionnaire) has to be sensitive to cultural adaptation and interpretation.

We recommend changing some scales to simple Max-Diff exercises that mitigate satisficing and also get you better discrimination that you can act on.

SAMPLING

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Use a sampling plan that accurately and projectably covers your target and meets your research objective.

THE ACTION

Don't apply the same procedures for sampling in the General Market to the Hispanic market. Language and acculturation levels should be part of the sample frame tied to your research objective. Know what you can discern from a probability-based sample versus an opt-in sample. The former enables a higher degree of certainty in results. Know the sample recruitment method so you can interpret the results with this in mind. KN can be your guide. Your other suppliers should provide similar transparency.



SAMPLING (Continued)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

If you want to talk to all Latinos, you have to have a bilingual survey instrument and a sampling plan that accommodates that.

Shopper Insight needs can require a multi-mode approach of data collection. About 40% of Hispanics live in just the big five markets – LA, Houston, Miami, New York and Chicago. But the remaining 60% live in much smaller places, such as Sacramento, McAllen, Tampa, Fresno, and Hartford.

Phone-based surveys require Hispanicity! For phone, KN uses a combination of listed surname samples in areas with low Hispanic density and RDD in high-density areas. For intercept, we use intercept-to-online to keep the experience as similar as possible from interview to interview.

THE ACTION

You have to craft a sampling plan that reflects the geographic distribution of Latinos across the U.S. as well as country of origin.

Firms (such as KN) can do online surveys for big and small issues; but if you need store-level or geographically tight areas around your stores, you may need to supplement this with intercept or phone work. Generally we recommend that studies be opened up beyond the Big 5 markets. Solutions are available using our Shopper Insight expertise – just give us your objective, and we can craft a sample plan that takes other modes into account.

Just because a DMA doesn't have the reputation of having a large Hispanic population doesn't mean one hasn't taken root there recently. There are many emerging markets in the Hispanic space, such as Little Rock, Milwaukee, and Charlotte, to name just a few. So, use broader geographies in your research, or you run the risk of urban skews in your Latino research.

CODING/DATA PROCESSING

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Coding is often taken for granted but shouldn't be – it can take some subtle market knowledge to appropriately translate and code open ends that tell a clear story.

THE ACTION

Even crosstabs can be culturally specific; consider that when you are thinking about what you will need to analyze relative to the research objective. For example, you could have breakouts for acculturation and language or stubs of media usage and country of origin, along with the regular gender, age and region breaks. KN codes into English directly from the Spanish with bilingual coders; we do not translate first.



CODING/DATA PROCESSING (Continued)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

How should I handle mixed samples from Cada Cabeza and KnowledgePanel Latino?



THE ACTION

Calibration is the KN tool for integrating data from an opt-in panel (such as Cada Cabeza) with KnowledgePanel Latino (KPL) data. We use calibration weights to blend KPL sample with opt-in panel samples. Specifically, KN conducts the actual survey with the same instrument to KnowledgePanel and opt-in non-probability web panel samples such as Cada Cabeza. Steps in this process include

- We collect 200 or more KN interviews
- KN interview data function as statistical benchmarks for the study population (e.g., purchasers of a particular product, local area pop., etc.)
- KN blends the two samples, calibrating the opt-in panel interviews and correcting for sampling errors

INTERPRETATION/ANALYSIS

WHAT TO CONSIDER

It is important to understand the historical context of Hispanic consumer behavior, which includes what that behavior might have been in the consumers' home countries.



THE ACTION

Data isn't just a pile of numbers; it should reflect the thoughts, feelings and opinions of real people, and therefore must be put into a culture-specific context, and interpreted in that context based upon the sample and ultimate research objective.



INTERPRETATION/ANALYSIS (Continued)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Know that the Latino population is disposed to respond positively to ratings scales.

Across the years we have seen that Cubans and Puerto Ricans (and New Yorkers and Miami residents in general) tend to be much more willing to use an entire ratings scale, while Mexicans and Central Americans tend to focus on the positive.

THE ACTION

As mentioned above, the survey instrument must take this into account, or you will have analytic issues that can't be fixed. Use forced choices, opposed positives, rankings (and max-diff) to find meaningful discrimination where you might otherwise not. Direct comparison of General Market data with Hispanic data can be misleading if this is not done at the question level. "Oh, they love us" can be a dangerous conclusion. "No matter what they do they'll like it" can lead to disaster in the long run that could have been avoided.

Yes, Hispanics are inherently loyal – it's how they live their lives in every way. But that doesn't mean they won't switch when given a good reason to do so. Just ask Chevy and Bayer Aspirin.

A leading innovator in Hispanic research, Carlos E. Garcia founded Garcia Research Associates and is now Senior Vice President at Knowledge Networks. Carlos Yañez is Director of Client Service at Knowledge Networks.