



ISSUE 23 • SUMMER 2008



LIVEWIRE THE NEWSLETTER
Resources for Reaching 40+ Consumers

Boomer Segments

Seven Fresh Ways to Zero In

boomer grandparents
From Yes, Ma'am to Webcam

demographics
Gen X and Gen Jones –
Misunderstood?

men's fashion
One Clothing Company
Strikes Marketing Gold

PLUS
On Your Bookshelf,
Research Brief,
Latino Boomers,
and More!

J W T
JWT BOOMSM
Boomers & Beyond

THE A, B, SÍ's OF MARKETING TO LATINO BOOMERS

An Interview with Isabel Valdés



BY M. ISABEL VALDÉS

M. Isabel Valdés is a pioneer in "emotional marketing," author and public speaker. For more than 25 years, she has consulted with corporations in the U.S. and abroad. Isabel recently published her fourth book, *Hispanic Consumers for Life, A Fresh Look at Acculturation* (Paramount Market Publishers, Ithaca, NY).

The Hispanic/Latino population, which ballooned from 6.9 million in 1960 to 35.3 million in 2000, has grown faster than any other cultural or ethnic group in U.S. history.¹ There is exponential growth not just in the population size of this group, but also in income. The economic clout of Hispanics has risen from \$212 billion in 1990 to \$798 billion this year and is expected to be almost \$1.2 trillion 5 years from now.²

JWT BOOM interviewed Hispanic marketing expert Isabel Valdés about best practices for reaching out to the U.S. Latino market segment.

Q What do marketers need to know when it comes to understanding the psyche of Latino Boomers?

Q You've said that the Latino market is complex when it comes to effective targeting. Why is that?

A It's true. The Latino market consists, like any market, of several generations. However, each cohort of American Latinos is in a different stage of integration into the United States—not only when it comes to language acquisition but also the multi-level "acculturation process."

There's the first generation Americans, the people I call "Foreign-borns," who were born and raised outside of the United States—like me. Many of us migrated to the U.S. in our late teens or young adult years. Then there's the second generation (my children) who were born here and were raised by foreign-born parents. Then there's the third, fourth, etc. generations.

To be successful, marketers should be sensitive and aware of the existence of these different cultural sub-segments within the Hispanic market. When talking to consumers and crafting messages, it's important to use marketing strategies that are consistent with that consumer's culture. These "In-culture" communication strategies will help communication professionals reach the "sweet spot" of different market segments.

A It's important to understand that, as the next generation of Latinos acculturates—that is, acquires the cultural traits, values, and expectations of the host country—certain cultural parameters and behaviors of traditional Hispanics are changing. This is resulting in big, and often difficult, adjustments for Hispanic families.

One example is that some **issues are arising related to expectations around Latino children caring for foreign-born parents.** In our culture, our children are supposed to take care of us when we age. In fact, in some focus groups I conducted, Latino parents explained that educating their kids was "like putting money in a little piggy bank"—it was investing. Because when they were old, that investment was going to pay back in the form of caregiving. And now, for some Latino families, that's not happening.

These parents—the Latino Boomers—must now rethink some key elements of their old age. So when you're talking to this market segment, you need to be aware of this issue as it's affecting not only their finances, but their home lives and family relationships. Products and services that address this challenge are likely to be well-received.

Another key factor is that **Latina women tend to put family above all else**, sacrificing for husbands, kids, parents and extended relations. This trait, called “Marianismo,” tends to be stronger among foreign-born Latinas, which includes many Latina Boomers. That means these women will respond to messaging, services and products that speak to their heightened sense of duty to keep family bonds strong.

Right now, there is an **opportunity for marketers to address the “empty nest”** phenomenon with Latina Boomer moms. While this life stage is also challenging and emotionally charged for Anglo-American Boomer moms, it is doubly difficult for the Hispanic mom. Not only is it difficult for Latina moms to separate from their daughters when they leave to go to college or move away from home, but the experience may not resonate with her at all since Latina women were traditionally discouraged from leaving the home before marriage.

Products, such as cell phones and family vacation packages that appeal to fostering this deep emotional bond will capture this valuable and growing consumer segment.

Q Why should companies reach out directly to Spanish-speaking Latina moms or grandmas when we know their children or grandchildren are likely to speak English and translate for them if necessary?

A Non-aculturated Latina women are most likely to make the shopping purchase decisions—not their children or grandchildren. Therefore, if you don’t craft your communication using Spanish-language, In-culture messages, adult shoppers will simply fall back on those products and services with which they’re already familiar. This is a missed opportunity to introduce your products to families with young children who could grow up to be life-long customers. Instead, these kids are likely to perpetuate their parents’ product choices and behaviors.

It is a known fact that kids develop an emotional bond with brands and products of everyday use such as Crest toothpaste, Pepsi soda or hot cereal. Well, if I, the mother, had never been invited through In-culture marketing and advertising to try your brand or products, why would I make the choice to bring them to my home?

Q If a campaign targeting Latino Boomers already exists in a Spanish-speaking country, can the materials and messaging be used here in the United States?

A Marketers are tempted to do this, but we’ve learned that it just doesn’t work. We have to recognize that the Hispanic culture in the United States is unique. We can adapt international campaigns, but not transfer them piece for piece.

While a campaign may communicate using the Spanish language, that doesn’t mean it will “speak” to an American Latino. That particular campaign could have been designed with messaging that fits Mexican, Central American or Argentinean customers whose day-to-day experiences are completely different when it comes to influencers like pop-culture, financial picture and access to technology. A compelling message in Argentina, for example, may not resonate with a Texan Latino in the least.

Q What other advice can you give about targeting the Latino market?

A Dedicate a healthy budget if you want to see results. Latinos are not early adopters like the Anglo-Saxon community. Anglos see a new gadget and want to check it out. Not us. We tend to wait a lot longer to see who has it and how it works. So any time you have a marketing program dedicated to Latinos, you have to double the estimated amount of time that you expect to see the first results as compared to the general market. And in terms of communication strategies, personal approaches, such as word-of-mouth and community marketing tend to be the most successful.

1. 2000 US Census figure does not include the 4 million Puerto Ricans.
2. The Selig Center at the University of Georgia

