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## A Census CTA 'en Español'

*By John Barnes*

The 2010 U.S. Census process has officially begun. Preliminary field activity is under way, advertising and public relations campaigns are being planned, and marketers across the land anticipate “the ultimate” in statistically significant data revelations.

I have always looked forward to U.S. Census Bureau reports. They have never failed to serve as proof positive that the American marketplace, like our population, is both dynamic and diverse.

One data set in particular, has been especially significant over my last 30 years in the traditional, hybrid and now direct response agency business. There are reams of historical and predictive data about the U.S. Hispanic market and its socio-economic and cultural composition.

What I cannot explain is what the vast majority of advertisers are waiting for. Between the Census and the already high response we get from this segment we have more than enough data points to justify a go-to-Hispanic-market strategy for virtually any product or service in the country.

### **DRTV AND THE HISPANIC MARKET**

DRTV operates on a week-to-week basis, with or without Census numbers. That’s because the numbers that we manage every day (MERs, CPCs and CPAs) will hardly be affected by

anything the Census takers tell us. Unlike our traditional agency brothers, we buy for response, not tonnage.

That said, I wonder how any direct response marketers can justify not integrating Spanish-language campaigns. If there is one thing we will be able to count on from the U.S. Census Bureau is that it will continue to quantify the opportunity costs of failing to recognize and address the needs of a \$1 trillion buying bloc.

U.S. Hispanics swing elections, they drive U.S. population growth, and already represent 17 percent of all U.S. viewers age 18-49. To this day, advertisers spend less than 4 percent of their budgets to attract them as consumers. We are putting our clients at risk. It is safe to say that we are way past a tipping point—which is why we have recently launched Mercury en Español.

According to Simmons, in 2008, Hispanics placed almost 12 million orders via phone, Internet or mail. This represents a 50-percent increase from 2004. In the time that you read this column, 100 new Hispanic orders will be taken. According to Univision, 46 percent of these orders will be taken with a credit card and another 23 percent with a debit card.

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To be sure, some of these orders will come through English-speaking channels. But the vast majority require Spanish-language acquisition. We live in a subscription TV world with “Latin programming tiers” across cable and satellite providers. Sixty-five percent of Univision’s audience is unique. In other words, it is exclusive of all major English-language networks.

Consider this column and the 2010 U.S. Census a call to action to all of our Hispanic marketing partners, vendors, media and colleagues—let us define once and for all: “Exactly how much it costs our clients to keep resisting direct response ‘en Español.’”

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