



DIRECTORIO *en Español*

Hedge Your Bets

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Can you sell it in Spanish by: Eugene Robinson Friday, May 6, 2005

In today's America, more and more of our aspiring is being done in Spanish. On 19 evenings so far this television season, the winning network was Univision, which broadcasts in Spanish.

Since Americans and people who want to sell them things take television so very seriously, I can't think of a surer sign that we live in a bilingual, bicultural society. Spanish has become established as a second language.

According to census data and numerous studies, a large majority of U.S. Hispanics -- between two-thirds and three-quarters -- live in a bilingual world. That helps explain why Univision and its smaller rival Telemundo are growing rapidly, though neither yet receives as full a share of advertising dollars as the nation's changing demography might advise.

A significant chunk of market share will go to companies that decode the Hispanic consumer, who controls buying power in the neighborhood of \$400 billion a year.

Felipe Korzenny, who heads the newly founded Center for the Study of Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University, says language is one of the keys. For previous generations of Hispanics, "the idea was to blend" in a progression that went from Spanish-dominant to bilingual to English-dominant assimilation. Now, he says, due in part to a reinforcement of Hispanic identity, both Spanish-dominant immigrants and assimilated English-speakers have come to see being bilingual as the ultimate goal.

Hispanics who belong to that golden 18-34 demographic watch Spanish-language and English-language television about equally, most studies suggest.

Thus advertisers have to **"hedge their bets"**.

Figure that out, deliver your message in Spanish, and you'll make some money.