

# HISPANICS & COVID-19

## ONE YEAR LATER



**CONILL**

---

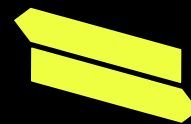
# HISPANICS & COVID-19

---

## One Year Later

As we complete one full year since the pandemic began, it is important to understand the impact it has had on the Hispanic community and the implications for the future.

A follow-up to last year's *COVID-19—A Hispanic Perspective*, this report is comprised of information gathered through a variety of sources, including digital activity and social listening. Developed to provide a snapshot of the “mood” of the market, the report identifies fact-based opportunities for brands to make culturally relevant connections, as well as pitfalls they should avoid.



# THE HISPANIC COVID CRISIS

It is no secret that this last year has been deeply challenging. Headline after headline exposed more and more crushing news, with multiple crises spiraling at breakneck speed.

As the health crisis rapidly paved the way for the economic crisis, Hispanics were hit particularly hard. **Why?**

## A confluence of several key reasons, especially that Hispanics are:

1. More likely to be frontline workers.

---

2. More likely to live in multigenerational housing or have more people in a household.

---

3. More likely to have inadequate healthcare.

All resulted in the harsh reality that Hispanics were hospitalized with COVID at a rate four times higher than their White counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the health concerns this presented,

it also created considerable financial concerns, whether in terms of missing work due to illness or losing critical health insurance due to job loss.

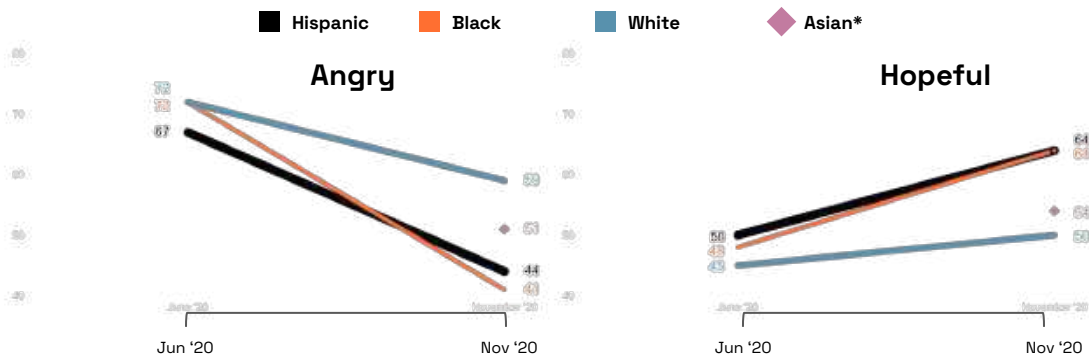
## TAPPING INTO CULTURAL STRENGTH

On the brighter side, Hispanics' ingrained, unwavering sense of optimism and perseverance is pulling them through this tough time. If we know one thing about

Hispanics, it is that they never back down in the face of adversity. They have rallied together as a community, expressing their unique grit and resilience in many inspiring ways.

For starters, as 2020 came to an end and Hispanics were still in the depths of the crisis, the share who said they felt hopeful about the state of the country dramatically increased to become the clear majority:<sup>2</sup>

% who say they feel \_\_\_ about the state of the country these days



**What’s more, Hispanics forged through these difficult times with their unique sense of humor.** For example, a creative Mexican coronavirus-themed taquería called “Tacovid: Sabor Viral” (translated as “Tacovid: Viral Flavor”) was met with great success and buzz.

Menu items such as pandemia (pandemic), brote (outbreak), vacuna (vaccine), and la peste (the plague) were appreciated for their witty Hispanic take on the crisis:

**Vlad**  
@VladSighisoreanu

Me queda claro que mi país, sin el clásico humor que lo caracteriza sería más decadente y difícil de sobrellevar. Dicen que toda adversidad es una oportunidad...  
#FelizViernesATodos

Translated from Spanish by Google:

It is clear to me that my country, without the classic humor that characterizes it, would be more decadent and difficult to cope with. They say that all adversity is an opportunity ...  
#FelizViernesATodos



Other expressions of Hispanic humorous coping mechanisms were more personal, like the family that threw a pandemic-themed birthday party for their sons, including custom-made shirts with bleach logos. The parents explained, “This pandemic only talks about the bad things that happen and what can happen, so we try to ‘disguise fears’ and turn them into a piñata and a cake. My children had a lot of fun.”<sup>3</sup>

**These Twins Had A Quarantine Birthday Party Designed To Ease Their Fears of COVID-19**



**Beyond Hispanics’ unique cultural humor, they also rallied together in more serious ways to honor the lives lost to COVID,** like a mobile Día de los Muertos ofrenda that made its way around their Southern California communities:<sup>4</sup>

There’s A Mobile Día De Muertos Ofrenda Traveling Around Southern California To Commemorate Victims Of Covid-19

**On Día de los Muertos, Latino families honor relatives who died from Covid-19**

The venerable Mexican tradition, selected for its somber side, is an opportunity for solace because while those who we love die, they are still here with us.

The Gabriel Moring team  
Day of the Dead takes on deeper meaning during the pandemic as Latinos honor lost lives ... the Day of the Dead, the annual Mexican holiday honoring ancestors.  
Oct 26, 2020





Hispanics have continued their great focus on their communities by offering help however they can. With this true Hispanic spirit, they are proud to help lift each other up and carry each other through this tough time:<sup>5</sup>

**Latinas Are Offering Advice To Undocumented Women, New Moms And Those Who Are Struggling On How To Receive Affordable Therapy**

**Chicago's Mi Tocaya Is Offering Up Free Mexican Homemeals For Undocumented Community**



Hispanics are also leaning on their critical family ties more than ever. They are forging even stronger familial bonds and finding comfort in uniting around the depth of their cultural roots:<sup>6</sup>

**Immigrant Families Reconnect to Cultural Practices During the Pandemic**

“Engaging in traditions and practices of one’s cultural heritage can be a psychologically meaningful experience that can engender feelings of connection.”

**Latino Dads Use TikTok to Connect With Their Children**

Latinos are known to be very family-oriented and this trait continues to prevail even amid the global pandemic.

And in this day and age, many Latino dads are using social video-sharing app TikTok to connect with their kids.

**For This Young Latino, Spending More Time With Family Is An Upside To The Pandemic**

These moments have been an opportunity for father and son to bond. Ordaz has been learning more of his father’s story immigrating from Mexico to the US in the early 1990s. His father, Simon Ordaz, faced many challenges, such as not knowing English when he arrived in the US. He was 16 years old then, even younger than his son is now.

Source: Brandwatch, Google

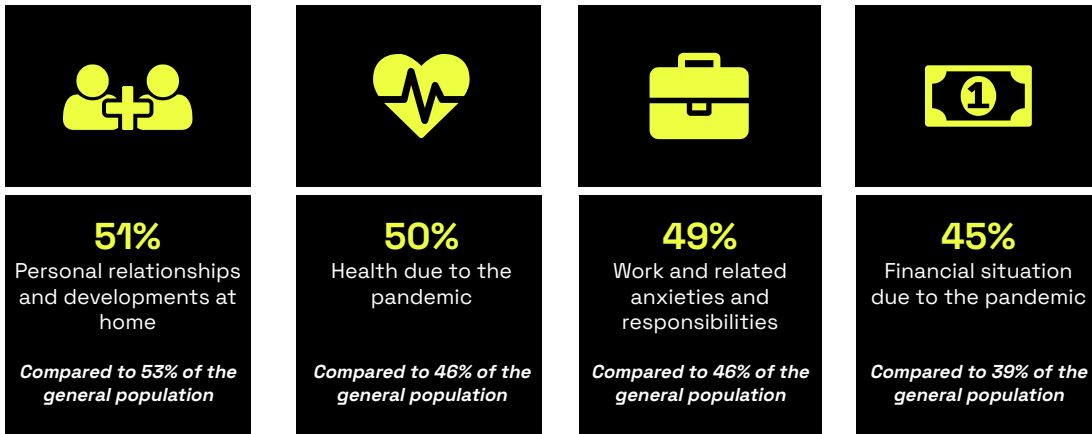
Whether through outpourings of humor or more serious sentiments, Hispanics have tapped into their unique cultural strengths to come together as a community and make it through these challenging times.

# THE HISPANIC STRESSORS THAT LIE BENEATH

While they are holding onto hope that better days are ahead, Hispanics are experiencing mixed emotions about the present as the pandemic hits the one-year mark.

They are still experiencing great stress, particularly around personal relationships, health and finances:<sup>7</sup>

## TOP STRESSORS IN 2020



**Mental health has become a topic of concern for Hispanics, as they report higher levels of anxiety and depression.** For example, between April 23 and November 9 of 2020, 40% of Hispanics reported feeling frequent symptoms of anxiety and depression (compared to 30% for White and Asian Americans).

This rate peaked in mid-July and late November, when nearly 50% of Hispanics reported having such symptoms.<sup>8</sup>

This impact was reported in the press and discussed in Hispanics' social media conversations:

### Hard-hit by Covid-19, Latinos bear mental health burden 8 months into pandemic

"Grief is actually everywhere right now, either because people lost their family members or because they lost their job or because they lost normalcy in their lives," says one doctor.

People "report being very concerned about financial matters, testing positive for Covid-19 themselves, and feeling more isolated," said Paul Velez, the chief executive of the Borinquen Medical Centers in Miami.



**Add to all of this that many Hispanics have had two countries to be worried about: not just the U.S., but also their home countries.**

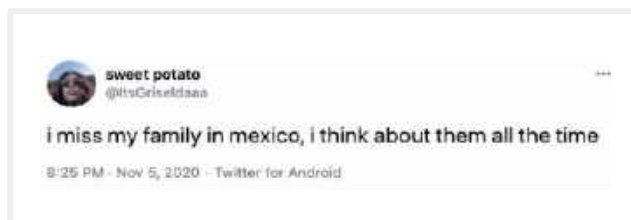
They have been keeping close track of the news from these countries, anxious about the state of the pandemic there.



Then there are the families that live between two countries, for whom navigating COVID-19 has been increasingly challenging. This is especially true when a family member dies in the U.S. and those back home do not speak English or know how to get their family member home.

**Psychologists have seen an increase in counseling between borders to assist in navigating these situations:<sup>9</sup>**

At the same time, they have been deeply missing their family members in these countries, unable to see them for so long. **Given how fundamental the close-knit family structure is to Hispanics' culture and well-being, this has taken a large toll:**

A graphic of a smartphone with a black background and white text. The status bar at the top shows the time 9:41, signal strength, Wi-Fi, and battery icons. The main text is in yellow and white. The title is "Counseling families, even beyond borders". The body text is in white. The footer is the NBC News logo.

**Counseling families, even beyond borders**

When a young Mexican man was hospitalized with COVID-19 in New York, Gasca started counseling the man's wife and two young daughters—in Mexico, where they live. The man had been working in the U.S. to support his family.

“Eventually, he died,” Gasca said. “Now, I have this poor woman with two young daughters, not knowing what to do because they didn't have any other relatives here. They would ask me: ‘What do I do with the body? How can I get ashes in central Mexico?’ It was really a horrific scene, and I can tell you that repeated hundreds of times throughout the city.”

**NBC NEWS**

These examples serve to remind us that, as Hispanics continue to have considerable daily stressors, it is imperative to understand their unique cultural context and how this makes their experience during the pandemic different from other groups in many ways.

## HISPANICS' QUARANTINE PASTIMES

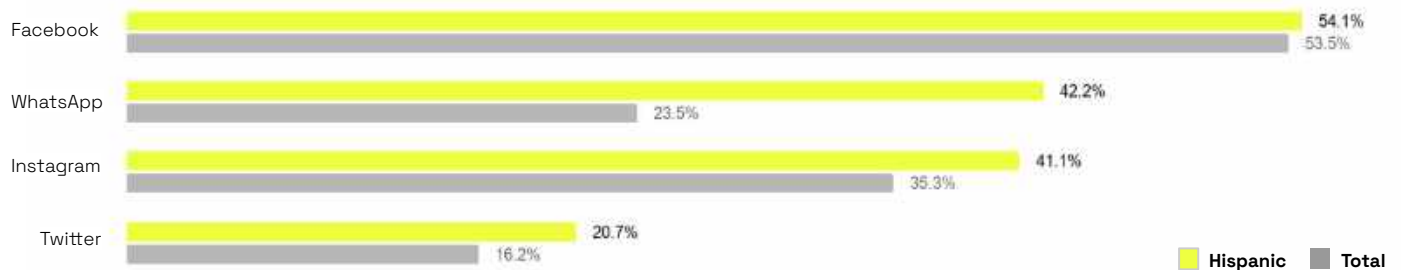
As Hispanics greatly miss the in-person daily connections that are central to their culture, they have sought comfort in connecting and streaming online. In fact, 70% of Hispanics said they have increased their amount of time spent watching movies or shows using a streaming service—well above the 55%

reported by non-Hispanics. What's more, the pandemic has resulted in the mobile phone becoming an even greater mainstay of Hispanic connectivity. During the pandemic, Hispanics have spent an average of 30 hours on their phones every single week.

**Compared to the total population, Hispanics have spent about two more hours per week watching videos, streaming audio, and social networking on their phones as a way to bridge the social distancing gap. Hispanics have relied on Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter to stay informed and connected—more so than their general market counterparts:**

**Social Networks Used by US Hispanics\* vs. Total Population, 2021**

*% of population in each group*



*Note: individuals who use each social network via any device at least once per month; \*can be of any race.*

The increased time spent at home has also caused video games to come to the forefront of Hispanics' pandemic activities. A full 31% of Hispanics say they have increased their time spent playing video games online or on a gaming device since the outbreak. Hispanic gamers also use gaming consoles to stream a variety of content such as gamer commentaries, reviews, live streams and news. As with most activities among Hispanics, mobile devices have played a large role in this gaming activity, with eight in ten Hispanic gamers using their mobile device to play video games in the past three months.<sup>10</sup>



## HISPANICS' TRANSFORMING SPENDING HABITS

As Hispanics' lives have changed, so have their spending attitudes and habits. It is no surprise that their online shopping and overall digital consumption has increased since the start of the pandemic. 30% of Hispanics are shopping online every day (compared to 26% of non-Hispanics), with 14% shopping multiple times per day. Hispanics also cite actively paying attention to online ads and offers, with 55% saying there are more ads and sales right now. This bodes particularly well for marketers given a full 63% of Hispanics say they are feeling positive towards brands and their sensitivity surrounding the outbreak.

**Furthermore, Hispanics have become an even more captive audience now that they are more open to trying new products and less likely to return to their old products.** The vast majority of Hispanics (80%) say they are likely to try new products during the pandemic (versus 70% of the general population).

Meanwhile, 25% of Hispanics say they will not switch back to their old brands (this data is not available for the general population).

Looking at purchasing behavior by category reveals the deeper ways in which the pandemic is changing Hispanics' relationship with shopping and brands. In terms of fashion, Hispanics are currently more focused on buying products for leisure like loungewear and pajamas. When it comes to gaming, one in three Hispanic gamers is spending more money than usual on video games, driving home the importance of this form of entertainment among Hispanics. Meanwhile, in the automotive world, the pandemic has inspired Hispanics to change the way they purchase vehicles, with more customizing and ordering online. A full 85% of Hispanics say they would be interested in services that allow ordering a new car online with home delivery.<sup>11</sup>

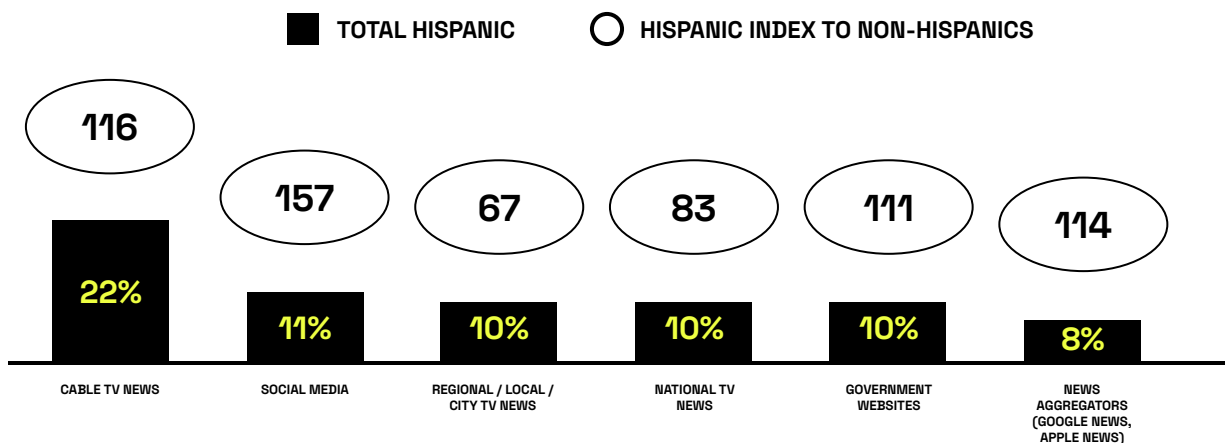
## NEWS AND TRUST IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Hispanics, like the general market, have experienced information overload unlike ever before this last year. **With all kinds of new data and information about the coronavirus flooding their screens, it had become tough to decide which sources to trust. This caused Hispanics to turn to radio and social media to decipher fact from fiction, relying on these sources to put them at ease.**

Radio has played an important role in Hispanics' lives this last year, with six in ten saying radio is a good source of information during COVID-19. What's more, radio hosts have been top sources of comfort, with four in ten Hispanics saying their favorite radio host made them feel less concerned and less alone during the pandemic. In addition to radio, cable TV and social media are the top coronavirus news sources for Hispanics.

However, many Hispanics are wary of what they see on cable TV news, as only 20% say it is a trustworthy source. Meanwhile, social media has stood out in terms of Hispanics being 57% more likely than non-Hispanics to use it as a primary source of information:<sup>12</sup>

## PRIMARY NEWS SOURCES FOR CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION



## THE HISPANIC TAKE ON THE VACCINE

Just as the Hispanic market is not monolithic, neither are Hispanics' opinions surrounding the vaccine. Researchers have found differences in attitudes around the vaccine, particularly by national origin and gender, and it is imperative to address these concerns in a culturally relevant context.

Hispanics' conversations on social media reveal a high level of negative sentiment towards the vaccine. **This sentiment has improved somewhat since Spring/Summer of 2020 as the vaccine has gained approval and distribution.**<sup>13</sup> However, considerable skepticism remains among Hispanics:<sup>14</sup>

**Skepticism and mistrust challenge COVID vaccine uptake for Latinos**

**Worcester health experts work to dispel myths, allay fears of vaccine among Latinos**

**Some Latino groups more wary of Covid vaccine, so messaging needs to be tailored, experts say**

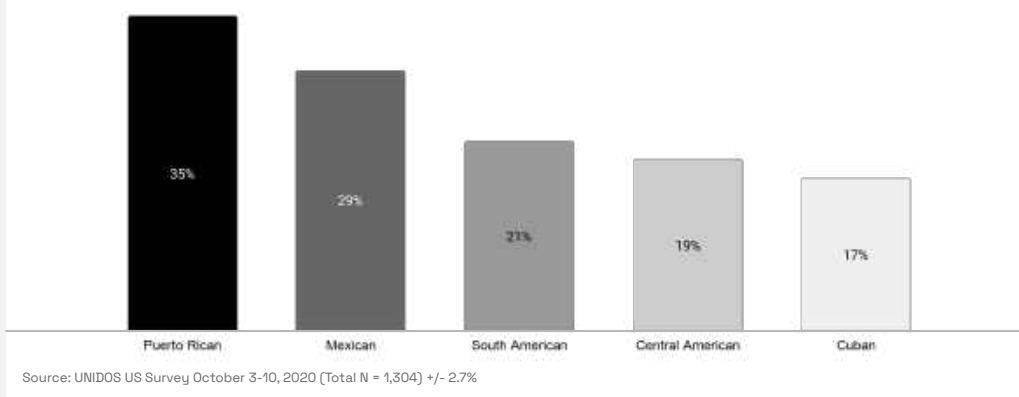
**White Americans receiving Covid vaccine at higher rates than Black and Latino Americans**

Only 16 states currently provide data on vaccination distribution based on race and ethnicity

**It is critical to understand the nuances that exist among Hispanic subgroups when it comes to vaccine attitudes,** such as when looking at gender and national origin. For example, Hispanic women are less open to the vaccine, with about one in three saying they will not get it versus just one in five Hispanic men.

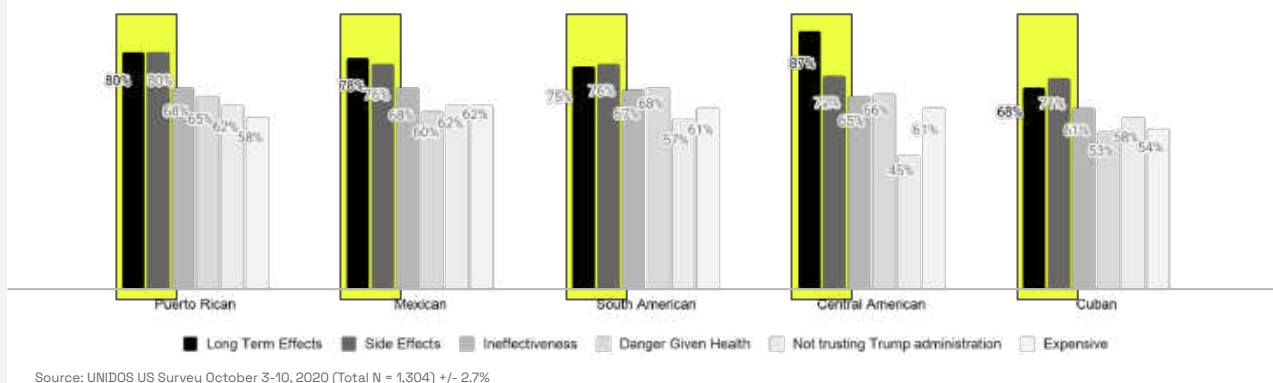
Meanwhile, Mexican-Americans—who make up the majority of the Hispanic population—are among those most likely to reject the vaccine. **This raises concerns about the ability of the overall U.S. population to reach herd immunity without them:**

**Figure 1. Percentage reporting they are not planning to get vaccinated for COVID-19 by Latino national origin group**



**Across all Hispanic groups, top concerns include potential long-term effects and side effects:<sup>15</sup>**

**Figure 2. Top concerns with getting vaccinated for COVID by Hispanic subgroup (% reporting concern)**



Privacy emerges as another concern. If required to provide their name, address, and phone number in order to be vaccinated, one-quarter of Hispanics would be less likely to get the vaccine.<sup>16</sup> While privacy is not a primary concern for most Hispanics, it is an important factor to keep in mind given the public health goal of vaccinating as many people as possible.

Much of the confusion and lack of trust around the vaccine can be attributed to misinformation campaigns targeting Hispanics, including on WhatsApp. **Experts are urging an aggressive use of fact-based messaging to counter the overwhelming amount of bilingual vaccine disinformation that Hispanics have been exposed to over the past months:**<sup>17</sup>

### **The Cure for COVID-19 is a Hair Found in a Bible and Other Misinformation Fact-checked**

Documented partnered with Univision 41 to fact-check rumors being spread during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **The Scams Targeting Latinos Via Messaging Apps**

Thanks to alerts sent to us by members of our community in WhatsApp, Documented identified some of the scams targeting Latino immigrants in need during the pandemic.

## **Hispanic Adults Use WhatsApp More Than the General Public. Disinformation Campaigns Are Targeting That Vulnerability**

Fast-growing Latino electorate is prime target for disinformation, with nearly half maintaining accounts on the messaging app

The bottom line here is that in order to address concerns about the vaccine, messaging and outreach needs to be tailored to the Hispanic audience and come from leaders and sources they trust. A prime example? Voto Hispanic and Media Matters launched the “Latino Anti-Disinformation Lab,” which they claim is the largest investment in combatting disinformation in Hispanic communities to date.

It is in this way that it is crucial to understand the cultural context surrounding Hispanics’ vaccine fears, and is not enough to assume that general market messaging will reverse their opinions. With 61 million Hispanics in the U.S., improving their opinions about the vaccine is critical for the country’s overall goal of reaching herd immunity.



## THE HISPANIC OUTLOOK & OPPORTUNITIES

Though the last year has been exceptionally challenging, Hispanics have embraced it with their one-of-a-kind optimism, perseverance, and grit. They look forward to better days ahead, knowing the world will be forever changed. **It can help to segment Hispanics' mindset by time frame to understand how they view their lives are changing:**

### TODAY:

"I am feeling **hopeful for the future** but know there is a long way to go. It is overwhelming that it has been a year since COVID started, and I take solace in knowing **I am a part of something bigger** and that I am not alone, although it feels like it at times. The struggles we face today will be lessons for tomorrow. The only thing I am certain of right now is that nothing will be the same, for better or for worse. All we can do now is continue taking it one day at a time and **be grateful for what we have.**"

### TOMORROW:

"Once I feel that the vaccine is safe to take, I will be able to slowly return to my normal life. I am excited to **hug my family** that I have not seen in over a year and **begin rebuilding our community** that has been devastated by the virus."

### FUTURE:

"The effects from COVID are not gone, but we have a **renewed sense of strength and determination** to rebuild all that was lost. We can celebrate again and embrace one another. I have visited my family back home and no longer fear endangering those I love. I have shared countless tears, hugs, laughs, and human connections that I longed for months ago. While **I look at the future with optimism**, I make sure to remember the lives lost and those who were greatly affected."

Credit: photo by [Leure](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A key to accelerating this timeline for Hispanics is combatting the misinformation campaigns that have targeted them. These campaigns have sowed doubt among Hispanics about the vaccine, making it difficult to decipher fact from fiction. Education around the vaccine is needed, as Hispanics are skeptical about its reliability and safety. Not only is there an opportunity for marketers to address these concerns, but an absolute need for this information. When messaging to this diverse, nuanced market, it is critical to have a cultural understanding of where their concerns stem from, paired with a culturally meaningful way to overcome them.

Beyond the vaccine, the Hispanic market presents substantial growth opportunities for many industries, such as automotive, leisure, gaming, and telecommunications. Hispanics are not only very aware of ads now, but are also highly receptive to them. Plus, the vast majority of Hispanics cite being more likely to try new products currently, with many saying they will not switch back to their old brands. All of this makes now a prime time to capture Hispanic consumers and leverage the greater lifetime value they provide for brands.

## KEY ACTIONS FOR MARKETERS



Make quick, concrete business and marketing decisions. Being able to **react quickly and assertively to unexpected situations** shows the strength of your brand.



Frame your brand's or product's value around how it can **enhance Hispanics' experiences with loved ones**. The pandemic has made Hispanics realize that this is what truly matters -- not showing off or pleasing strangers.



Focus on **messaging that supports the Hispanic community**, including that which recognizes their positivity and resilience. Do not underestimate Hispanics; they bounce back in a big way.



Give Hispanic consumers options to **make them feel in control**. The last year has taken autonomy out of their lives, yet they strongly desire it.



Partner with the **people Hispanics consider familiar and trustworthy**, who they look to for help assessing where to spend their money. These are often radio personalities, influencers, and celebrities they admire and consider an extension of their inner circles.



The healthcare industry can **build trust among Hispanics via the vaccine** during this critical time. While Hispanics traditionally distrust healthcare, the vaccine can be leveraged as an entry point to grow a positive, long-term relationship with them.

## KEY WATCHOUTS



Curiosity is key. Brands that aim to connect with Hispanics **must truly comprehend the cultural context** of their fears, emotions, and behaviors. Without this understanding, brands will fall short in authentically connecting with Hispanic consumers.



Humor goes a long way with Hispanics, but not all brands have permission to use it. The only brands that can join in on the joke are those which have done the work to **understand the when, where, and how humor should be leveraged in the Hispanic market**.



Research has shown that vaccine opinions vary widely by Hispanic national origin. For wellness and healthcare messaging, there are **instances in which a niche approach is more effective** than casting a wide, national net.

## SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> NPR. "Why Latinx people are hospitalized from Covid-19 at 4 times the rate of Whites." July 1, 2020.
- <sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center. "After the election, fewer Latino and Black adults feel angry and more are hopeful about the state of the U.S." December 9, 2020.
- <sup>3</sup> Mitú. "These twins had a quarantine birthday party designed to ease their fears of Covid-19." May 14, 2020
- <sup>4</sup> Mitú. "There's a mobile Día de Muertos ofrenda traveling around Southern California to commemorate Victims of Covid-19." October 28, 2020; NBC News. "On Día de los Muertos, Latino families honor relatives who died from Covid-19." November 1, 2020; The Dallas Morning News. "Day of the Dead takes on deeper meaning during the pandemic as Latinos honor lost lives." October 30, 2020.
- <sup>5</sup> Mitú. "Chicago's Mi Tocaya is offering up free Mexican homemeals for undocumented community." January 14, 2021; "Instead of celebrating her quince, this teen donated it all to help victims of Covid-19." August 6, 2020; "Latinas are offering advice to undocumented women, new moms and those who are struggling on how to receive affordable therapy." October 20, 2020.
- <sup>6</sup> Latin Post. "Latino dads use TikTok to connect with their children." July 27, 2020; Texas Standard. "For this young Latino, spending more time with family is an upside to the pandemic." October 1, 2020; Yes! Magazine. "Immigrant families reconnect to cultural practices during the pandemic." January 26, 2021.
- <sup>7</sup> HCode. "Connecting with the Latinx consumer during the pandemic." December 2, 2020.
- <sup>8</sup> NBC News. "Hard-hit by Covid-19, Latinos bear mental health burden 8 months into pandemic," November 20, 2020.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> eMarketer. "Social networks used by the US Hispanic vs. Total Population, 2021." August 2020; Nielsen. "Cultural Connectivity Transformed: How Latinos are connecting while social distancing." 2020.
- <sup>11</sup> HCode. "Connecting with the Latinx consumer during the pandemic." December 2, 2020; "The shifting retail & commerce preferences of Hispanics in the U.S." 2020.
- <sup>12</sup> Nielsen. "Cultural Connectivity Transformed: How Latinos are connecting while social distancing." 2020.
- <sup>13</sup> Brandwatch
- <sup>14</sup> Brookings. "Skepticism and mistrust challenge Covid vaccine uptake for Latinos." January 25, 2021; Independent. "White Americans receiving Covid vaccine at higher rates than Black and Latino Americans." January 26, 2021; NBC News. "Some Latino groups more wary of Covid vaccine, so messaging needs to be tailored, experts say." January 26, 2021; Telegram & Gazette. "Worcester health experts work to dispel myths, allay fears of vaccine among Latinos." January 29, 2021.
- <sup>15</sup> Brookings. "Skepticism and mistrust challenge Covid vaccine uptake for Latinos." January 25, 2021.
- <sup>16</sup> Langer Research Associates. "Covid Collaborative Survey: Coronavirus vaccination hesitancy in the Black and Latinx communities." November 2020.
- <sup>17</sup> Documented. "The cure for Covid-19 is a hair found in a bible and other misinformation fact-checked." April 15, 2020; "The scams targeting Latinos via messaging apps." December 23, 2020; Morning Consult. "Hispanic adults use WhatsApp more than the general public. Disinformation campaigns are targeting that vulnerability." October 30, 2020.

***CONILL***

**Contact us:**

[www.conill.com](http://www.conill.com)