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## **Marketing to State's Hispanic Population Requires Tailored Approach**

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Doing business in New Mexico requires an awareness of — and sensitivity to — the attitudes and preferences of people who identify as Hispanic or Latino, because this demographic represents a plurality of New Mexico's population. Hispanics are 47 percent of the state's residents — the largest percentage of any other racial or ethnic group.

In its annual statewide perception survey, the Garrity Group learned how Hispanics and Anglos feel about 17 industries and institutions and 14 professions and how people in both groups use different media for news, information and shopping.

### **Likenesses and Differences**

In some areas, the positive feelings of Hispanics and Anglos toward various institutions weren't far apart. For example, both groups had similar feelings about the health-care system, with Hispanics expressing 52 percent favorability and Anglos 46 percent. Both groups also had poor opinions of journalists and lawyers.

Differences were more dramatic when asked how respondents felt about public schools and universities: 54 percent of Hispanics felt good about public schools, compared with 33 percent of Anglos; and 70 percent of Hispanics felt good about the state's universities, compared with 59 percent of Anglos. Police officers got only 28 percent favorability ratings from Hispanics, while 48 percent of Anglos trusted law enforcement.

Businesses in New Mexico that want to target Hispanic audiences need to know where they stand in their audience's eyes. The public school, state university or medical industries don't have to work as hard to share their message, and they have an audience that is willing to listen to that message — and share it.

Other companies need to win the public's trust. Those in less-trusted categories could find ways to partner with a trusted industry, to create an opportunity for connection with that industry's audience that wasn't attainable before.

### **Strategic Communication**

Television is the main source of news and information for both groups, with Anglos using

internet news sites more frequently than Hispanics. People in both groups use a computer or mobile device to read and send email, but usage among Anglos is higher (at 83 percent) than among Hispanics (64 percent).

When a company develops a public relations or strategic messaging campaign, knowing how its audience prefers to be reached is crucial. An e-newsletter campaign may not be ideal for reaching the Hispanic audience in New Mexico, so a better strategy would be to develop digital messages that can be used across several media.

It's also a mistake to make marketing decisions based on assumptions about cultural or regional homogeneity. Hispanics living in Southern New Mexico have different tastes, perceptions and dialects than those in Northern New Mexico. In cities like Albuquerque, differences can be dramatic between communities that live a few miles apart.

Companies preparing statewide marketing and communications plans must remember that one size doesn't fit all in New Mexico. The survey teaches us that if we want to see real results, we need to tailor both our messaging and conduits.

To obtain a free copy of the 2014 Garrity Perception Survey, complete the form at <http://garritypr.com/perception-survey>.

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