

You've probably already heard about the rapid growth of the Hispanic/Latino population. This population in some cities around the United States is rapidly becoming the majority. Meeting the needs of this emerging Hispanic market is an important part of any business and planning a strategy to target this group is no easy task. Like everything else in business you have to do your research. You have to understand their culture, target where they live, speak their language (or employ someone that does) and know what they buy and why.

Let's begin with a little understanding of the terms Hispanic/Latino. You may have heard these terms used interchangeably, but what exactly is the difference? First let's define Hispanic. The word Hispanic was used in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to refer to residents of the Iberian Peninsula. They spoke either Spanish or Portuguese. Latino dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It originated in Napoleonic France to differentiate the Latin countries (Italy, France, Spain) from Great Britain and its North American colonies. Depending on where you live, for example here in San Angelo, you often hear the name Hispanic but if you go to other parts of the U.S. you may often hear the name Latino used when referring to the Hispanic population. According to *USA Today*, the minority population (Hispanic/Latino/Blacks) is rising across the USA. The estimated population projections of Hispanics in the United States (source Sellig Center for Economic Growth) in the year 2000 is 12.50% in 2006 it is 14.63% and in 2010, 15.93%. This shows an increase by at least 1% from 2006 to 2010. Interestingly enough, but not surprising is the majority percentage of origin is Mexican. In Texas, the Hispanic population in 2006 is estimated at 8,283,988. By 2010 the population projection is estimated to be 9,363,457. Locally, the Hispanic population makes up 37% of our population and that translates to 32,432 people (U.S. Census Bureau).

So what can you expect from this emerging market? You can expect to see more businesses opening by Hispanics across the U.S. and locally. Equally as important, is this population has buying power. Yes! You will want them to shop in your stores and purchase your products and services. There are some simple things you can include in your next marketing campaign to target the Hispanic market. You can start by:

- Translating some of your promotional pieces to Spanish
- Diversifying your employees
- Using the website (have forms/applications/registration in Spanish format)
- Advertising in bilingual newspapers, radio, and television
- Knowing what they are buying
- Understanding their culture

With the earlier stated Hispanic population projections, it's probably safe to say this emerging market cannot be overlooked. Targeting this population is good business depending on your specific industry and it could also give you a competitive advantage. In efforts to target the Hispanic entrepreneur the Small Business Development Center will be hosting a "Business Start-Up" seminar in Spanish in November. If interested please visit our website at [www.angelo.edu/services/sbdc](http://www.angelo.edu/services/sbdc) for updates on this upcoming seminar.

***"Business Tips" was written by Ms. Grace Garcia, Training Coordinator of Angelo State University's Small Business Development Center. For more information on the topic of this article or the services of the ASU • SBDC, contact her at [Grace.Garcia@angelo.edu](mailto:Grace.Garcia@angelo.edu).***