



**Case Study:**

Kia Motors America: Kia Telluride, Kia Seltos, Kia Sportage

Year: 2021



This case study was prepared for the client Kia Motors America for the product Kia to showcase stories about undervalued and underappreciated people who behind the scenes are the true heroes. It was developed and designed by the Inspire Agency. In the Best Cultural Insight category, it won bronze.

## **Executive Summary:**

Kia Motors, the automaker that for years was thought of as just a value brand is evolving in more ways than one. The vehicles themselves are now built better than ever before and their advertising is maturing. As part of the coming of age, Inspire, Kia's Hispanic agency, is focusing on deeply connecting with the consumer. By identifying that both Kia and Hispanics are undervalued and underappreciated we were able to tell a three-part compelling campaign about a Chef, a Stuntperson, and a Meteorologist that could resonate with a broad audience, but even more so within the Hispanic community. By showcasing people working outside the spotlight, letting their work do the talking for them, and displaying Kia's values, we were able to deeply connect with a Hispanic target that is as complex as it has ever been. The results speak for themselves. At the end of the three-part campaign, a record number of visits to the Kia Spanish language website grew faster than the Hispanic market did, and had the highest vehicle sales to Hispanics ever, even in the face of the Covid pandemic. We did all this while raising the bar of Hispanic advertising.

## **Definition of your challenge:**

For many years Kia was viewed as a manufacturer of affordable cars. One customer said, "Kia was an inexpensive car, something that came with limited options". Kia's cars were not particularly stylish and there were concerns about quality. Without abandoning its roots of being affordable, Kia was evolving to craftsmanship, dedication, and continuous improvement. Yet some customers still thought of Kia as a value for money carmaker.

As the vehicles evolved our challenge was to create compelling communications that reflect the new Kia. We wanted to portray a brand that was coming of age. To achieve this a three-part campaign was developed with three insignia vehicles: Telluride, Seltos, and Sorento. Our target, the New Generation Latino (NGL), was coming of age too. They're modern and bicultural under 45yo, independent, adventurous and tech savvy. They're interested in other cultures and love celebrating Latino holidays, keeping up with Latin music and eating traditional food. They often feel misrepresented, undervalued, and underappreciated.

Objectives for our three-part campaign.

- a) Grow visits to [kia.com/espanol](http://kia.com/espanol) by 10%
- b) Maintain 2019 sales numbers despite COVID.
- c) Maintain 2019 Market Share despite COVID.

## **The Key Insight & Strategy:**

We discovered that Kia and the NGL have something in common. For many years, Kia has been evolving its proposition from an affordable carmaker to true craftsmanship in automaking. It has made more attractive, better performing cars and has made cutting edge technology available for a broader consumer base. Despite this, some people still view Kia as a value for money proposition.

Something similar happens to Hispanics. Although there are countless examples of how Hispanics are a key part of the fabric of American society, Hispanics still take a backseat in many roles while others take the credit. As a famous chef once said, "your favorite French chef is probably Latino".

No matter how much work Kia and Hispanics put in, they're both undervalued and underappreciated. They may even be delivering better products than others who leverage yesterday's success. When that happens, they believe it's best to let the work do the talking. That was precisely the inspiration for our three-part campaign. We wanted to tell stories about undervalued and underappreciated people who behind the scenes are the true heroes behind the Culinary Industry, Hollywood Productions and even daily weather reports.

## Execution:

Despite putting in the work to make great vehicles, Kia rarely got the credit it deserved. Like Hispanics, the automaker was undervalued and underappreciated. Both don't give it everything for the credit or the fame but for something bigger than themselves. The first part of the campaign told a true story about a Chef who gets all the credit for his dishes. Instead of praising him, Kia praises all the hands that make his food possible. Hispanics are the backbone of the restaurant industry anonymously and, like Kia, prefer to let their work do the talking. The second part told the story about being behind the spotlight. While Latinos are underrepresented in Hollywood, we're in the middle of it, doing the risky stunts behind the celebrities that get the credit. Latinos, and Kia, don't work to get the credit, they work because they can.

When Hispanics get the attention it's for the wrong reasons. The third part of our campaign was about Latino weather girls being more than just a pretty face. We looked for the brains in the storm chaser behind her. While other brands are concerned with the spotlight, we were concerned about the power behind it.



## Results:

a) Grow visits to [kia.com/espanol](http://kia.com/espanol) by 10%

Result: Traffic reached 1MM by EOY, growing 29.9% YOY

b) Maintain 2019 sales numbers despite COVID.

### Results:

- At the end of 2020, Kia's sales in the HM had grown 27% (Dec '19 vs '20). Auto sales in HM had only grown 22%. Kia outperformed the HM industry 20%.
- At the end of the campaign, Kia's sales in the HM more than doubled, growing 101%. (Mar '20 vs '21) outperforming the HM. In that same period, Seltos grew 175% and is parity to Sorrento and the Telluride in terms of sales.

- Kia achieved record volume of sales in America.

c) Maintain 2019 volume share despite COVID.

Results:

At the end of 2020, Kia's share grew 20bp, growing faster than the category, being one of the few brands that grew the year.

d) Other results worth mentioning:

L12M, the average Kia airing on SLTV outperformed industry average airing on SLTV by 37%.

**Industry Impact:**

With Kia, at Inspire we want to steer clear of the typical Hispanic story. We believe that we need to deeply understand Hispanics to truly connect with them. We know Hispanics skew younger, like soccer and have tight knit families. Putting a teenager playing soccer with Abuela is not the best way to deeply connect with your audience.

At Inspire we're not speaking to Hispanics; we're speaking to everyone about Hispanics. We believe that Hispanic traits, like work ethic, resilience, and optimism, should inspire everyone in America. This three-part campaign is an acknowledgement that Hispanics are very complex, and our portrayal of them should be much deeper than is regularly done. We want a more comprehensive Hispanic advertising landscape that can portray Hispanics as multidimensional and not just a collection of colorful gimmicks.