



Case Study:

Lincoln

Year: 2022



EST. 1922

100 years

This case study was prepared for the client Lincoln for the product Lincoln “The Power of the Sanctuary” for Hispanic families that found sanctuary when they could feel secure in themselves. It was developed and designed by Zubi. In the Best Hispanic Cultural Insight category, it won gold.

Executive Summary:

Lincoln was a luxury brand that had been largely absent from the Hispanic market, only adapting general market sales event ads to Spanish. With a renewed desire to enter the Hispanic fray in a meaningful way and an established general market campaign built around revitalization from stress—known as “The Power of Sanctuary”—we needed to uncover human insights and motivations for our unique, bicultural Hispanic target called *Cultural Progressives*. We engaged in ethnographic research and learned some powerful things about these affluent Hispanic luxury vehicle buyers and their views on stress and seeking sanctuary from it. We discovered that their experiences have already taught them to cope with stress that might be paralyzing for others and that for them sanctuary isn’t as much physical as it is mental. The best sanctuary was found within. This insight drove the creation of our integrated multimedia campaign. This is ultimately a story about how a general market brand platform could have Hispanic legs beyond what anyone could have predicted. While it’s still in its early days, we have several indications that Lincoln’s new Hispanic brand campaign is moving the needle for sales and brand equity.

Definition of your challenge:

In 2021, the Lincoln luxury division of the Ford Motor Company agreed to develop *original brand advertising* addressing the U.S. Hispanic market for the first time in several years. Previously, Lincoln had only been communicating to affluent Hispanics about sales events, and that work was always adapted directly from general market creativity. For this assignment, we had the opportunity to analyze Lincoln’s new overall brand positioning, study the target audience of affluent Latino luxury vehicle buyers, a proprietary psychographic segment known as *Hispanic Cultural Progressives*, and find the most relevant and actionable strategic path for bringing that positioning to them for the first time. While unit sales and Hispanic penetration (percent of brand sales that go to Hispanics) are always a top goal, we also routinely monitor brand metrics.

The Key Insight & Strategy:

In 2020, the Lincoln Division launched a new general market brand campaign. Underpinned by the need for stress relief among Lincoln’s *Cultural Progressive* target and the revitalizing features of Lincoln vehicles, the campaign was intended to communicate “The Power of Sanctuary” that the Lincoln brand provides. We needed to determine if the motivators for *Hispanic Cultural Progressives* were the same, and if not, what the correct way was for a brand that was billing itself as the source of sanctuary. We looked at the typical syndicated research sources, but it was in our qualitative ethnographic approach that we struck proverbial gold.

We found that many of the motivations and attitudes regarding stress and sanctuary were different among affluent Hispanics when compared to their non-Hispanic counterparts. While these Hispanics experience stress, and outside observers may view their lives as stressful, *Hispanic Cultural Progressives* see stress as a ‘cost of doing business rather than something that limits them. This can-do attitude was born from many of them being the children of immigrants and coming from humble beginnings. Their experiences in rising through the socioeconomic ranks have battle-hardened them in a positive way and made stress less of an enemy than merely a fact of life.

We were in need of a unique tension that the Lincoln brand could resolve for *Hispanic Cultural Progressives*. Importantly, we also discovered a key insight that given their bicultural identity and the sometimes-contradicting values imposed upon them from the two competing cultures, our target audience found sanctuary when they could feel secure in themselves. This idea of finding sanctuary by embracing the confidence to be oneself was uniquely compelling for Lincoln since it’s more of a niche brand and Hispanics tend to flock to larger brands with a lot of social proof. The upside was that we could position Lincoln as a brand for self-aware Hispanics who are discerning and secure in their values and interests, confidently choosing a road less traveled. We proposed that Lincoln celebrate these consumers and this secure-in-oneseif mindset by bringing a new facet to the concept of “The Power of Sanctuary”.

Execution:

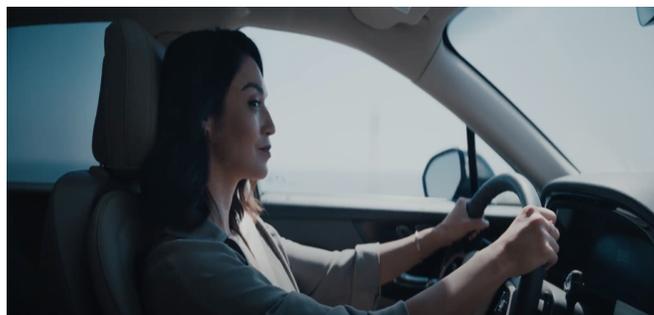
Armed with our key insight, we distilled this new way of looking into our unique proposition for the U.S. Hispanic market:

Sanctuary is knowing who you are. Be yourself in the range of contemporary Lincoln Vehicles.

The integrated, multimedia campaign featured video (TV and digital; two examples submitted with this entry), audio, out-of-home (two examples submitted with the entry), an influencer-led ambassador program and a first-of-its-kind [podcast novela](#) (podvela) in English and Spanish, all centered around the idea that sanctuary is found within oneself, and that Lincoln is the brand for Hispanics with that sense of self-assured calm that we found so compelling in our research.

In the video assets, two protagonists, Mateo and Lola, tell authentic Hispanic stories about the issue of language, each from a different perspective. Mateo is an immigrant who struggled to learn English and speaks it with an accent. He tells us how his embarrassment turned to pride as he achieved his version of the American dream. On the other hand, Lola is a US-born Latina who speaks “poquito español”, yet she’s proud of her heritage explaining that, “Hernandez or Hernández, no importa como lo mires, soy Latina.”

Our out-of-home executions featured stunning photography of the Lincoln Aviator (large luxury SUV) and the Lincoln Corsair (small luxury SUV) combined with headlines that speak to our strategy, such as, “Para los que saben bien quiénes son,”and “El Mejor Santuario está dentro de ti.”



Results:

Initial indications of the campaign's success are promising. From a sales standpoint, Lincoln's Hispanic unit volume in 2021 increased modestly, but compared to a more than 10% decline in unit sales for the total market, a modest increase outperforms the total market. Lincoln's Hispanic penetration (the percentage of sales attributed to Hispanics) went up from 7.7% in 2020 to 8.6% in 2021. While this appears to be only a modest increase, it should be noted that Lincoln's Hispanic communications had been limited to adapted sales event ads for several years prior to the new campaign. Also, these gains occurred during a year that Lincoln's vehicle availability, and that of all automobile manufacturers, was greatly affected by supply chain issues, including a global shortage of semiconductors.

Our influencer (brand ambassador) program had a brand lift study component built into it and the campaign achieved a 3.9% ad recall lift, a 6.0% lift in familiarity for Lincoln Corsair, 8.5% lift in versatile as a brand attribute, an 8.9% lift in luxurious as a brand attribute, and a 3.4% lift in stylish as a brand attribute. All of these increases exceeded the 2.0% benchmark at a 90% statistical significance.

The Lincoln-sponsored podvela with Lincoln vehicles integrated in storylines, *The Princess of South Beach*, was downloaded more than 1.6 million times to date and was rated "one of the best new podcasts of 2021" by Spotify. Ratings for the podvela were high, with an average of 4.6 stars out of five, with more ratings than 95% of all podcasts on Apple. The associated brand lift study found that Hispanics exposed to the podvela were more familiar with Lincoln (26% increase), more likely to report that the brand shows they understand diversity (9% increase), and more likely to report that Lincoln understands their culture (21% increase).

From a brand tracker perspective, we have not yet received results from Lincoln's study, which is only reported biannually, with the next report scheduled during Q2 2022.

Industry Impact:

Many luxury brands avoid dedicated Hispanic marketing campaigns, wrongly believing that affluent Hispanics align to general market proclivities and will respond to the same messages as non-Hispanics. Our research revealed that there's an opportunity to find uniquely relevant angles and that affluent Hispanics are very much shaped by their upbringings, often struggling as the children of immigrants. This struggle gains them an appreciation for what they have achieved and allows them to have a more sanguine view about the stressors in their lives. They are comfortable in their own skin as they have faced and overcome adversity. The luxurious rewards they allow themselves, like purchasing or leasing a premium vehicle, are both outward and inward signals that they are on an upward trajectory. We believe this work shows that there's no substitute for getting up-close and personal with Hispanic consumers. In this case, one-on-one interviews with an ethnographic component yielded many eye-opening insights, including what ultimately became our guiding principle, that for affluent Hispanics sanctuary is knowing who you are.