



RFP BEST PRACTICES WHEN SELECTING A HISPANIC SEGMENT AGENCY

Why a Hispanic Agency is Essential

Hispanic consumers are growth consumers. Yet many brands approach the Hispanic market only after selecting a general market agency, or they reuse general market RFPs that fail to account for cultural nuance. Just as effective Hispanic marketing isn't a translation of English campaigns, an RFP for a Hispanic agency must be purpose-built.

Launching an RFP specifically for a Hispanic marketing partner shows an organization's commitment to cultural relevance, audience and market share growth. It enables deeper strategic alignment, greater ideation, and better performance with the country's second-largest ethnic group. It is also crucial to understand that there are many nuances and differences within the Hispanic market.

Before any outreach begins, clients should align internally. That includes clarifying the business challenges, defining the Hispanic marketing scope of work, identifying who will be involved in the process, and setting shared expectations. A well-run Hispanic segment RFP starts with a well-prepared client. When internal clarity is lacking, even the best process can fall short.

Here are some best practices and recommended guidelines for organizations seeking Hispanic agency partners with cultural expertise:

Before Issuing an RFI/RFP

RFIs can be helpful when clients are genuinely exploring a new category or unfamiliar landscape. But they should not be used as a proxy for internal clarity. If the scope, criteria, and desired partnership model are already well defined, it is often more efficient and respectful to move straight to a focused RFP.

Define Your Intent

Clarify why you are pursuing a Hispanic agency partner:

- Role: Are you looking for a strategic partner or an agency for project-based work?
- Type: Do you need a creative agency, media agency, PR/media relations firm, influencer/social media agency, or an integrated agency solution?

- Relationship: Are you seeking a Hispanic agency of record (HAOR), or will this be a campaign- or project-specific engagement? Understand that hiring on a project-specific basis often does not allow an agency to truly understand your business or to assign a permanent dedicated team.
- Budget: Do you have a budget allocated to your planned Hispanic segment activities?
- Desired Business impact: how performance will be measured

Be open about your internal marketing structure. If you don't yet have a Hispanic Segment Manager or multicultural marketing team, that's OK - make it clear that your agency partner will be empowered as a subject-matter expert.

Creating a Strong and Specific RFP

Agencies do their best work when they have access and support throughout the process. Clients should be prepared to answer questions promptly, meet for working sessions or tissue reviews, and provide clarity on priorities as needed. It's not just about delivering a brief; it's about being present and engaged all the way through.

To attract the right Hispanic agency partners and set the foundation for success:

- Provide a well-structured and segment-specific RFP—do not repurpose general market templates.
- Include information about your current agency roster and how the Hispanic agency will fit in and engage with the other agencies.
- Ask agencies how they gather, analyze and apply consumer insights. Ask agencies how they approach emerging media, platforms and technologies.
- Give at least 3 weeks for RFI responses and 4 weeks for RFP responses to allow for thoughtful, strategic submissions. If budgets are small, go straight to an RFP.
- Be transparent about your current situation:
 - Is there a current Hispanic agency in place? Are they participating in the review? Will the Hispanic agency be the only agency?
 - Has there been a leadership change or shift in marketing strategy?
 - Are there specific business drivers (e.g., underperformance, new markets, budget shifts, new audiences) behind this RFP?
- Clarify category conflicts upfront and how they will be evaluated and mitigated (e.g., firewalls).
- Schedule at least one in-person or video meeting to test chemistry and collaboration potential. Make this a strategic discussion about one or two key issues the brand is facing – share these questions in advance. Goal is to see how the agency thinks and approaches

developing a solution. This will prevent generic answers and too many platitudes. Make it clear that you want at least the core of the actual team who will work on your account to attend this meeting.

- Unless you have a large Hispanic budget, do not request spec creative work.

Choosing the Right Agency Pool

Ensure your invited agencies have demonstrated Hispanic cultural expertise:

- Look for affiliation with the Hispanic Marketing Council (HMC), HPRA, and other reputable industry organizations.
- Consider agency ownership: Are they minority-owned or independent? Are they part of a holding company?
- Evaluate segment-specific category experience, size, and geography. Do they specialize in Hispanic segment marketing?
- How would the agency scale efforts in 1-3 years?

Invite 4-6 agencies based on your research. Cull your list of participating agencies based on some relevant criteria (category experience, agency size, agency location, etc.)

Inviting too many agencies can dilute engagement. A curated list of qualified, culturally fluent firms improves your process and outcomes.

Budgeting Considerations

A well-structured scope of work matched with an appropriate budget is critical. You **MUST** provide at least a tight range of your budget. Otherwise, you are wasting everyone's time – it is not helpful to receive a proposal for \$1.2 million if your budget is only \$200k. Making agencies guess your budget is unhelpful. You are looking for the most value for your budget versus the lowest cost.

This includes:

- A clearly defined and consistent scope of work (e.g., campaign development, media planning, production, in-language adaptation, community engagement).
- Creation of in-language assets if they don't currently exist (e.g., Spanish-language website, call center, social media).
- Transparent payment terms (timelines, penalties, procurement policies).
- Budget/KPI alignment—the deliverables expected must reflect the investment available.

If your process involves procurement, ensure they are briefed on the cultural and creative considerations unique to this segment.

After Selecting Your Hispanic Agency Partner

Set the tone for long-term success with strong onboarding and collaboration protocols:

- Share organizational structure, approval processes, and reporting timelines.
- Empower your agency to represent the brand publicly and promote partnership.
- Clarify exclusivity agreements—be specific (e.g., “beer” vs. “alcoholic beverages”) and proportionate to the engagement (typically only applicable for HAOR relationships).
- Include legal considerations such as indemnification and inactivity clauses, if relevant.
- Introduce the new agency to your agency roster and share the rules of engagement between agencies.
- Train the new agency on any project management applications used and make sure they have needed access.

Conclusion

The Hispanic market is a growth imperative, not a checkbox. Engaging a Hispanic marketing agency through a thoughtful, transparent, and well-resourced RFP process positions your brand for relevance, resonance, and results. The HMC encourages all organizations to pursue this opportunity boldly—and we’re here to support your journey.

About HMC

Founded in 1996 as the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies, the Hispanic Marketing Council is the national trade organization of all marketing, communications, and media firms with trusted Hispanic expertise. For more information, visit www.hispanicmarketingcouncil.org and follow the HMC on Facebook, Instagram, and X at @hmchispanic.

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