

**From:** MMRNews (Multicultural Marketing News) [mailto:MMRNews@multicultural.com]  
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**Subject:** The Census is Coming! And you'd better be ready! by Michael Halberstam, Interviewing Service of America

**The Census is Coming! And you'd better be ready! Multicultural Market Research**  
*by Michael Halberstam, President, Interviewing Service of America*



*Interviewing Service of America is the sponsor of the **Multicultural Market** section of our 2009/2010 Source Book of Multicultural Experts. The Source Book is now available!*

The face of the United States has changed forever. There's no more evidence of this than the election of Barack Obama as our 44th President. In just a few years, with the release of the 2010 Census we will again see record population levels of ethnic groups and a huge increase in buying power among Asians, Hispanics and other ethnicities.

Is the Market Research industry keeping pace with these dramatic changes in our country? Yes, to some degree. ISA has seen at least 100% growth in the number of multicultural studies it has conducted in each of the past four years. Even with the current recession holding sway over so much of the financial health of the nation the percentage of in-language projects continues to increase. Why? Simply put, the sheer weight of numbers. There is simply no arguing that we as a nation, are now, and with increasing speed, becoming more multicultural. The data from the 2010 Census will emphatically demonstrate this.

It is our opinion that, even with the current, over-whelming evidence staring it in the face, many companies may still be lagging behind in addressing this expanding, profitable market. Part of the reason may be a lack of experience and/or knowledge about how to conduct multicultural research. While that lack of experience was once true, the knowledge base exists today within many highly-experienced organizations.

ISA has been conducting multicultural studies since 1983 and in 2009 will conduct close to five hundred mono or multilingual studies using the telephone, Internet, IVR, focus groups, in person and other methodologies.

What are some of the real keys or "nuts and bolts" for conducting multicultural studies? The major key is that most ethnic groups have a great preference for taking surveys in

their native language. Additionally, we find greater cooperation using all methodologies among many of the ethnic groups versus the general population.

For example, almost 60% of the Hispanic population is either Spanish dominant or bilingual. For some Asian languages, the levels can be 70%-75%. To get quality information for either quantitative or qualitative studies, it is mandatory to have "in language" capabilities.

Some of the other "nuts and bolts" of multicultural research mirror some basic market research concepts: Clarify what you want to find out and from whom; Budget; timing; ethnic groups you want to survey; geography and sampling; and the data collection methodology.

Timing differs from traditional English surveys. As previously mentioned, in-language surveys take an average of fifteen to twenty percent longer to administer. Set up time is also longer as you need to allow for ample time for translations, multiple language programming, pre-testing and monitoring. Sampling is also very important for multicultural research and there are trade-offs between targeted RDD (random digit dialing), surname sample or a hybrid sample.

The data collection process is also key, as all in-language data collectors need to be proficient in the language and the dialect of the targeted group. Briefings to discuss cultural obstacles to the research and catching translation problems are very important.

The data collection methodology should also be closely examined. Groups like younger or non-aculturated Hispanics are better reached via a face to face or perhaps using mobile device methodology than via the telephone because of sampling and "cell phone" only issues. It is also very difficult to currently conduct on-line research among multicultural groups. The panel resources are just not sufficient at this point for multicultural on-line research. Traditional telephone studies, possibly incorporating a cell phone segment and face to face methodologies may provide you with better sampling and be more cost efficient.

To summarize, each year more marketers are embracing these markets and multicultural market research will continue to grow at an increasing rate. The initial results of the 2010 census won't be released for around two years but the time to get started is NOW. Embrace the cultural change in the US and you can benefit from it as well!

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