



... connecting you to the Latino Community

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A TASTE OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Business owners continue to search for emerging markets and adjust their own business practices with the hopes of attracting these markets. We need not go far to find the largest emerging market in the United States. The Hispanic/Latino population continues to increase not only in number but in purchasing power. Businesses that have prepared and made themselves available to the Hispanic/Latino market are already reaping the benefits of their efforts.

It is with these thoughts that I offer you the following paragraphs with the hopes they will assist you with your endeavor.

Trust and Confidence: I believe we all recognize the importance of gaining our customers' trust and confidence. Obtaining that obviously opens doors to repeat business, future referrals and more. It has been my experience that learning about another culture and then implementing that knowledge, to any degree, has vastly improved my opportunities to be accepted within that culture.

Those of us who have either traveled to other countries where English was not spoken or found ourselves in situations where our standard methods of communication were not applicable can relate to the feelings of confusion, frustration, and anxiety. The monolingual Spanish speaking community faces similar experiences on a frequent basis. Therefore, learning the most basic of phrases can greatly enhance your ability to gain the trust and confidence of a monolingual Spanish speaking customer.

Eye Contact: It's been said that if an individual does not make eye contact with you, or actually maintains eye contact while he or she is speaking to you, the person may be indicating deceit or lack of trust. This is not the case within the Hispanic/Latino culture. It's understood that initial eye contact is necessary, but after such contact, the one in authority or control of the conversation, will maintain eye contact. The other will look away. This allows individuals to acknowledge authority or control without losing face, which is very important. Consequently, the aversion of eye contact should not be considered an automatic indicator of an individual being evasive.

¿Alguien habla Ingles? (ahl-gee-ehn ah-blah eehn-glehs) This phrase translates to "Does someone speak English"? This is an important phrase to learn. When you as the business owner or employee do not have access to an interpreter, it allows the monolingual Spanish speaking customer the opportunity to select someone they trust instead of finding a passerby. Be mindful that choosing to use a passerby for an immediate fix may not give you the same result that you would gain by using a professional or someone they trust.

In closing I'd like to share this with you. A wise man and mentor once told me, "The biggest misconception about communication is that it ever took place."

