

# the hungry mind

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## Understanding the Hispanic Consumer

By Sylvia Melendez-Klinger, MS, RD, LD, NCSF

During the early '80s, my Hispanic family made special trips to a neighborhood "bodega" or ethnic supermarket to find authentic plantains, mole, tomatillos, special seasonings or real Hispanic rice. Nowadays, these foods are readily available because of the growing Hispanic population and new marketing programs that promote Latin foods.

Ethnic food sales are expected to increase about 50 percent by 2010, growing from \$50 billion to over \$75 billion. Immigration is one of the keys to this extraordinary growth. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts, for example, that more than 40 percent of the U.S. population growth in the next 20 years will be Hispanic, fueling the expansion of Latin food offerings. There are other important factors driving this Latin cuisine expansion as well:

- Entrepreneurial foodservice establishments are introducing Americans to ethnic dishes
- Americans are traveling abroad in greater numbers, experiencing exotic cuisines and flavors they wish to enjoy at home
- Many ethnic cuisines are seen as

having superior health benefits because of a lower fat content, high incidence of key nutrients, and reliance on whole foods

- The Internet offers convenient access to exotic foods
- Media are exposing consumers to new Hispanic foods and cooking techniques through cooking shows, upscale periodicals and cookbooks, medical journal reports and travelogues

### Overview of Hispanics

The Hispanic person is by definition (U.S. Census Bureau) a person living in the United States who speaks Spanish as their primary language. The Office of Management and Budget further defines Hispanics as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race."

Hispanic population growth continues to create significant marketing opportunities as it is predicted that by the year 2020, the U.S. will have the second largest Hispanic population in the world, second only to Mexico. Studies show that, as a group, Hispanics are brand-loyal, and they respond extremely well to product education,

particularly when presented in Spanish. As with other ethnic groups, it is the immigrants who create the initial demand for foods from their home country.

Twenty-two Spanish speaking countries are represented in the Hispanic group. More than 60 percent of the U.S. Hispanics are Mexican descendants; therefore, our primary focus will be on this group's foods. Two primary factors influence marketing to this group: 1) specific product "staples," at competitive prices; and 2) supporting various cultural celebrations such as Lent, Cinco de Mayo, Spanish Independence Day (Sept. 16) and Los Posadas (Christmas).

### Demographics

- While 2000 Census criteria changed from 1990 Census criteria, Hispanics account for 12.5 percent of the U.S. population and are projected to grow to 17.6 percent by 2025.
- 70 percent of the Hispanic population is foreign born, and 47 percent of the Hispanic population has lived in the U.S. 10 years or less.
- According to the 2000 Census, Mexicans represent 66.1 percent of the

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## Our Appetite for Filling Foods

By Margo Kraus, MS, RD

"I love Chinese food but I'm hungry again two hours later." "I'm a meat-and-potatoes guy; otherwise, it's not a meal." "That's a portion? It looks like an appetizer!"

Americans are opinionated about which foods they find satisfying. But in this era of over-consumption, dashboard dining and nutrition confusion, have we lost touch with what foods are truly satiating? Scientists have been examining this issue for years, but lately some of the research has yielded interesting insights about feeling "full" with fewer calories. Foods that help us say "I've had enough" can play a valuable role in weight management in our society, where two out of three adults are overweight.

For example, an Australian research team served 240-calorie portions of 38 different

foods to people and asked them to rate the foods based on the degree of fullness they provided. The result was a ratings scale the researchers called the "satiety index."<sup>1</sup>

Which foods rose to the top? Fruits and vegetables ranked high in satiety index (SI) with potatoes garnering the highest score. This was followed by fish, oatmeal, oranges, apples, wheat pasta, steak and baked beans<sup>1</sup>. Many foods high in SI tended to be healthful — rich in water or fiber content and relatively low in fat.

Dr. Barbara Rolls, a Penn State University researcher and author of *The Volumetrics Weight-Control Plan*, also has shown that fullness is not only related to how



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# Bestow Networking

By Andrea Sittig-Rolf

Networking for leads can be an excellent way to find new business, if you learn to tap its full power. Discovering the true potential of networking means doing more than going to an event, giving out business cards to everyone we meet, and hoping that the exchange will turn into some business. One good way to make networking more effective is to start by GIVING a lead first. I like to call this approach *bestow networking*.

Begin the conversation by focusing on the other person. Ask questions about their business. What makes a good lead for them? Be specific. Consider questions you'd pose in your ideal client profile and ask the same of those you might be able to help find leads.

What industry are they targeting? What size companies are they looking to work with? What is the title of the person they usually deal with?

As you're gathering this information, think of the people you know in your database of contacts who fit their ideal client profile. You'll be amazed to see what happens after you've given a qualified lead or contact. Chances are, you'll walk away with a few good leads, too. Be sure you're specific in telling the other person what makes a good lead for you.

While I have many stories I could share as examples of the effectiveness of this strategy, I'll share just one. Several years ago I met with a local research company that was a prospect

for my Blitz Experience™ sales training program. When I arrived and met my contact for the first time, the first words out of his mouth were, "I only have about ten minutes." After building rapport for a few minutes, I began asking questions about his business, mostly relating to their prospecting efforts to determine whether or not there was truly an opportunity for the Blitz Experience™.

The best question I asked was, "What makes a good lead for you?" After listening intently and taking a few notes, I realized I had several ideal contacts for him that I was able to share on the spot. By offering a couple of good leads for him, he immediately dropped his guard and

suddenly found another hour and a half to spend with me! Not only did he give me some great ideas for a new keynote program I was putting together, he also offered me several great leads!

The bottom line is that when we help other people and don't expect anything in return, often we do. It may not be right away. It may not be ever. Many times at some point that person we helped will remember and want to help us when we have a need.

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## Food and Beverage By Jennifer Schleman, Chair, PRSA Food and Beverage Section



### The Benefits of Belonging

As we say goodbye to hot, summer weather and begin to settle into our fall routines, I wanted to take a few minutes to reflect on the benefits of membership, not of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in general, but for the Food and Beverage Section specifically.

This is my second year as an active member of the Food and Beverage Section.

I was first exposed to the Section during the 2004 PRSA International Conference in New York City, where I was a speaker for the Section-sponsored Professional Development Workshop. I had been a member of PRSA for a number of years, but I'd been looking for a way to better maximize my experience with the Society.

I was impressed at the vast network of public relations and communications professionals with whom I had contact at the Conference. We all had the common bond of working with food and beverage related companies or groups, but we could share the unique experiences of working with a specific company, for a nonprofit organization or as an agency-based counselor with the other members of the Section.

Another great benefit of membership is what you're reading right now, *The Hungry Mind* newsletter. This collaborative publication between the PRSA Food and Beverage Section and the International Association of Culinary Professionals Marketing Communicators Section is a valuable resource for general food and beverage information as well as tips for best practices and new technologies.

Finally, the professional development opportunities are of great benefit to Food and Beverage Section members. The Section sponsors one to two teleseminars each year. Our next one, on October 17, will feature food and beverage journalists giving their insight on trends in the industry as well as tips on working with journalists.

The PRSA 2006 International Conference, Nov. 11-14 in Salt Lake City, will give members another chance to meet and learn from colleagues in our field. Please join me on Monday, Nov. 13 at 11 a.m. as we host a Section-wide meeting and mixer. I look forward to meeting and taking advantage of these Section benefits with you in Salt Lake City!



# 2006 PRSA International Conference

Professional development and networking opportunities await Food and Beverage Section members at the 2006 Public Relations Society of America International Conference this fall in Salt Lake City. The annual Conference, themed “Benchmarking Your Public Relations Strategies With The Best,” is planned for Nov. 11 through 14.

Food and beverage public relations practitioners will have an opportunity Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 14 to be updated on health and wellness trends. “Marketing in the Age of Wellness” will outline the changing demands of consumers. Linda Eatherton, executive vice president and director of the global food and nutrition practice at Ketchum, will highlight ways to address consumers’ ever-changing and conflicting needs. Workshop attendees will learn how to develop programming that combines taste and nutrition expectations.

The workshop begins at 2:30 p.m.

and is included in Conference registration fees. It is sponsored by the Food and Beverage Section.

Members will join with Travel and Tourism Section members for Monday evening’s networking event. Registering members will tour Olympic Park, including a simulated run down an Olympic ski slope and a visit to the top of the Nordic Ski Jump. After the tour, dinner will be at the Park City steakhouse, Grub Steak.

The price of registration for the networking dinner is \$70 per person.

An exciting closing night concert is planned with the internationally acclaimed Mormon Tabernacle Choir, performing a rare private show for Conference attendees. Other new features at the 2006 Conference include an interactive learning lab, courtesy of Northwestern University. The lab, called New Audience Center, allows you to step into the future and explore multi-sensory systems, devices and software, showcasing the latest technologies. Explore the culture and history of the Beehive State through “tour guides” presenting early-morning coffee and conversation gatherings. And don’t miss the fireside chats hosted by industry leaders.

Registration materials have been sent to members. Online registrations can be made at <http://prsa.org/confreg/register-2006.cfm>. Register by Sept. 29 and save \$100.



## Chairman’s Column by Linda Funk, Chair, Marketing Communicators Section, IACP



### Letter from the IACP Chair

I hope this issue of *The Hungry Mind* finds you ready for fall after a great summer! Every year I say the same thing...How can summer be coming to an end? It seems like it was just Memorial Day and now Labor Day has come and gone!

Fall is a great time of the year to get back to routines and professional endeavors. I encourage all of you to look for areas of interest to give back your expertise or just to get to know a few more fabulous professionals. There are still lots of opportunities to become involved in the Marketing Communicators Section. The committees are off and running but all would welcome your involvement. Take a look at the networking article and see how getting involved offers you many opportunities both personally and professionally.

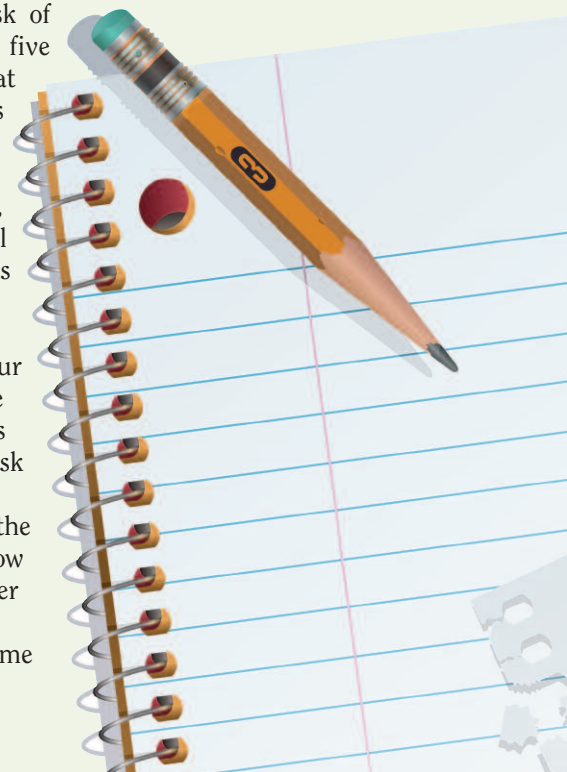
I also think fall is a great time to take inventory of your health. In the September 2006 *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, there was a straightforward article explaining Syndrome X (also called metabolic syndrome). It predicts your overall risk for heart diseases and diabetes with five interlinked and easily identifiable danger signs.

If three of these danger signs are out of whack, start thinking about how you can proactively change the numbers. Certainly there are medications for some of these issues but

your first approach should be to change your lifestyle...eat better food, eat less of it, and increase your physical activity. The sobering bottom line is that if you have three of the five risk factors, your chance of suffering from heart disease in the next 20 years is at least double that of someone without the condition. Your risk of diabetes is three to five times greater. And what is really frightening is that these risk factors are starting to show up earlier in children, setting them up for full blown Syndrome X as young adults.

This fall, be proactive with your health and your loved ones’ health. Make positive lifestyle changes so you can reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Take a look at the satiety article and see how it can play a role in better health.

Enjoy this beautiful time of the year.



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For more information about membership, please contact IACP at 1-800-928-IACP or [www.iacp.com](http://www.iacp.com) and PRSA at 1-800-WER PRSA or [www.prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org).

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**Best Promotion Practices**

- Use global Spanish to avoid regional language differences. Best sources for global Spanish are experienced people and some dictionaries
- Whenever possible provide bilingual nutrition fact labels
- When providing recipes, develop a diverse variety of dishes from Hispanic countries in addition to Mexico.

Consider Puerto Rican dishes such as arroz con gandules, pastels and tembleque. Also, Cuban specialties such as ropa vieja, Cuban ham sandwiches and picadillo. In addition, try including Colombian or Guatemala popusas or other popular favorites

- Continuous promotion and merchandising of Hispanic food items with competitive pricing is imperative

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those high on the satiety index

- Use low-fat liquids to increase the volume of casseroles, soups and stews
- Choose high-fiber foods, such as cooked beans and whole grains
- Offer salads and vegetable-rich soups or those thickened with potatoes before the main meal

**Sources:**

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**Consumer and Health Trends**

Mexican food purchases are less influenced by general social and health trends than they are by the shopper's own cultural identity and assimilation into U.S. population. The Mexican family average size is highest at 4.0 persons.

Hispanic household income has increased 48 percent since 1990, and Hispanics tend to spend 20 percent more per week than the average consumer. Important priorities to Hispanics are reasonable prices on brands they recognize, followed by quality meat and produce. Natural food consumers seek Mexican specialty items because many are fresh, whole foods with a predominance of vegetables, legumes and spices (replacing salt).

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much we eat, but *what's in* the foods we choose. People are more satisfied with fewer calories when:

- They eat foods with a high water and fiber content for calorie-free bulk<sup>2</sup>
- Salad or soup is consumed as a first course<sup>3,5</sup>
- Portions look large through the incorporation of air or water<sup>3,4</sup>

Thus, eating fresh fruits and vegetables, beans, low-fat dairy products and lean meats helps us to know when to say "when." Whole grains, especially cooked whole grains, fit the fullness bill as well. The bonus is that all these foods offer valuable nutrients at a low-calorie cost.

So if you want to "up" the fullness factor of your next nutrition or recipe project, try these strategies:

- Include fresh produce items, especially

