Hispanics as Pet Market Consumers in the United States

Description: The past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of Hispanic pet owners in the United States. Between 2007 and 2016 the number of Latinos with pets in their homes skyrocketed from 11.4 million to 20.4 million as the pet ownership rate among Hispanics grew from 40% to 55%.

Pet ownership has become a marker of increasing acculturation within the Latino population. The vast majority of the 20.3 million Latino pet owners in the United States are either U.S.-born or are bilingual or English-dominant foreign-born Latinos. As acculturated Hispanics continue to make up a larger and larger share of the rapidly expanding Hispanic population in the United States, the number of Hispanic pet owners will continue to grow exponentially. The author projects that between 2016 and 2021 Latinos will account for half of the growth in the pet owner population.

As Latinos continue to enlarge their share of the pet owner population, marketers of pet care products will find that Hispanic pet owners are indispensable to achieving market growth in the years ahead. This new report provides marketers with in-depth insights they can use to reach out to this crucial segment of pet owners.

“Hispanics as Pet Market Consumers” takes a close look at how the profile of Latino pet owners differs from that of other pet owners. For example, 43% of Hispanic pet owners are under the age of 35, compared to just 30% of non-Hispanic pet owners. Hispanics are more likely to own dogs and are less likely to own cats. They also are more likely to own pets such as birds, fish or reptiles.

Scope of the Report

This report analyzes Hispanic pet owners in the United States. Hispanics as Pet Market Consumers uses the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” interchangeably. According to survey research compiled by Washington, D.C.-based Pew Hispanic Research Center, 51% of those self-identifying as “Hispanic” or “Latino” have no preference for either term. Those expressing a preference choose Hispanic over Latino by 33% to 14%. However, neither term fully captures how Hispanics see themselves. A majority (51%) of respondents to the Pew survey said they most often use their family’s country of origin to identify themselves (for example, “Mexican” or “Dominican”).

The report highlights trends in the growth of the population of Hispanic pet owners, provides a demographic profile and highlights the consumer behavior of Hispanic pet owners, including their pet expenditure patterns, retail channels favored for pet product purchases, shopping behavior and pet product preferences. It also includes an assessment of marketing approaches that work with Latino pet owners.

Methodology

Consumer data in this report come from two primary sources. The first source consists of National Pet Owner Surveys conducted in February, April and July 2016. These surveys reflect a panel of 2,000 U.S. adults (age 18+) that is balanced to the national population on the primary demographic measures of gender, age bracket, race/ethnicity, geographic region, marital status, presence or absence of children in the household and household income.

Another source of consumer data in this report is the Simmons National Hispanic Consumer Study (NHCS) for Spring 2016, which was fielded between April 2015 and May 2016. Simmons NHCS includes demographic and media usage questions specifically targeting Hispanic consumers. For trend analysis the report uses as a baseline the Spring 2007 Simmons National Consumer Study (NCS), which was the first Simmons NCS to include detailed questions on pet ownership. On an ongoing basis, Simmons conducts booklet-based surveys of a large and random sample of consumers (approximately 25,000 for each 12-month survey compilation) who in aggregate represent a statistically accurate cross-section of the U.S. population.

U.S. Government sources include data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The CES tracks expenditures of “consumer units,” which are equivalent to Census Bureau “households.” This report uses the term “households” for the sake of consistency. The report compares consumer expenditure patterns in the three most recent Consumer Expenditure Surveys, which were the
first to include a breakdown of pet expenditures within the broader consumer expenditure “entertainment” category.

The primary Census Bureau source used in this report is the American Community Survey (ACS) because it includes detailed demographic data for major national segments within the Hispanic population. Data from ACS date back to 2005. The latest available ACS data cover 2015. Census Bureau population estimates and projections as well as data from the Current Population Survey are also used where appropriate.
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