

Communication Strategies to Improve Outreach to Latino* Communities

Overview

This document is the result of frequent questions Sherwood Trust staff received about best practices to engage more Latino community members in area activities. These tips reflect what Sherwood Trust staff members have learned from our efforts but are by no means *the* answer. We hope you find some helpful suggestions to shift your communication strategies and make more meaningful connections with area residents. This engagement helps advance our vision that *everyone* in the Walla Walla Valley has a sense of belonging and contributes to a thriving region.

This document provides:

- General concepts to help frame cultural differences and context
- Timing for outreach strategy
- Suggestions on how to make a gathering as inclusive and accessible as possible
- Suggestions on how and where to distribute promotional material
- A list of community partners involved in outreach

*Note: The terms 'Latino' and 'Hispanic' are used interchangeably in our region. The preference for the use of one or the other is often a personal choice.

Culturally appropriate

Marketers are trying to communicate with us in more ways and in more places than ever before; only the messages that are communicated in the way we are accustomed to receiving information will actually make it through the clutter of media. It is therefore important to understand generalized differences between European-descendant and Latino-descendant ways of communication. This context can inform how to diversify your communication strategies and identify some of the changes that can be made to more successfully reach Latino audiences.

High-context and low-context

High-context and low-context are terms coined in the 1970s to describe a culture's style of communication.

In high-context cultures, non-verbal elements are more important than words, there is an emphasis on relationships and interdependence as well as a strong sense of affiliation with family and community. Trust has to be developed before business transactions can begin. Time is not easily scheduled as it might interfere with the needs of people, and learning is embedded in the situation.

In low-context cultures, little is taken for granted and more needs to be verbalized with specifics. Privacy, personal space, and individuality are highly valued, and communication is direct and explicit, sometimes defined as transactional. Time is a commodity and learning is compartmentalized.

Visual marketing material

Visual marketing material can be designed to draw the attention of individuals from high- or low-context cultures. The following descriptions and images were found in the resources listed at the end of the document.

Low-Context Visual Marketing

- More text
- People featured solitary
- No scrolling graphics
- Visually ordered
- Less ambiguity
- Flashy, attention grabbing ads considered annoying

United States McDonalds website structure: The natural center of the page is text (It's a fresh new world with the Premium McWrap), with a smaller accompanying image of the product. There isn't any movement on this version of the landing page.

High-Context Visual Marketing

- Less text
- Emphasis on the situation; social and cultural values
- Heavy use of graphics
- Bright and colorful
- Visually varied and active
- Communication viewed as art

Chinese McDonalds website structure: The natural center of the landing page is a giant image of a product. There's also a video playing on the page, with minimal text (most of which is accompanied by an image)

Examples of focused visual marketing below:



Coca-Cola examples of focused marketing: above is low-context, below is high-context



Ikea examples of focused website marketing: Left is low-context, right is high-context



Low-context has:

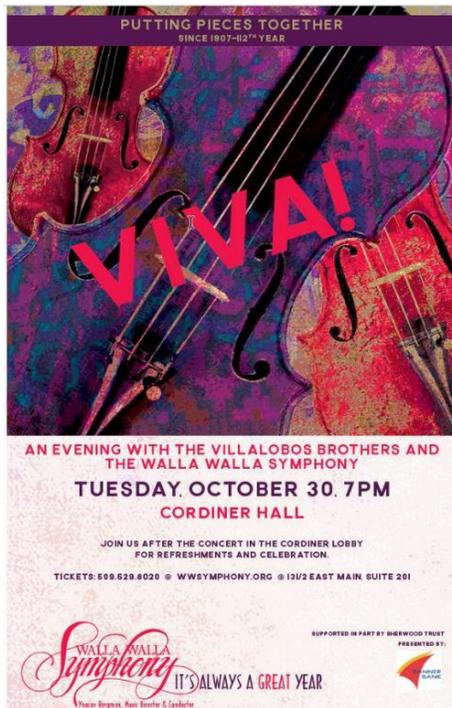
- More copy
- A person featured in solitary activity
- A more sedate tone
- Visually ordered with stacked tables and boxes

High-context has:

- Heavy use of graphics
- Bright and colorful feel
- Visually varied and active presentation
- Animal grouping evoking a group sense



Walla Walla Symphony examples of focused marketing: Left is low-context, right is high-context



A Mix of Cultures

Keep in mind that when we talk about Latinos in the Walla Walla Valley, this includes a wide range of individuals with a variety of backgrounds, including different countries (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, etc.) or languages. It is helpful to recognize that individuals and families have distinct cultures, history, and experiences and the more you get to know individuals in our region the more those unique differences will be apparent.

There are people in the Walla Walla Latino community that only speak Spanish, only speak English, or are very comfortable in both English and Spanish. Please keep in mind that regardless if something is being communicated in a language someone understands, the words will not reach them in a meaningful way if they only speak to the head and not the heart.

Pre-Event

With a basic understanding of cultural communication preferences, below are more specific tactics that can be used for hosting an event that strives to have strong Latino participation. Give yourself at least an additional month more than usual to prepare. When planning the timing of your event, also remember that the agricultural calendar greatly affects the availability to attend gatherings for some of the Latino community. It is also a good practice to consider church calendars.

A month and a half before the event:

- Choose places that are already frequented and where community members feel comfortable. For example, if you are working to gather input from the community on a certain initiative, arrange to be invited to a church annex and target that group. In other words, meet them where they live. Go to their safe spaces, locations with positive associations and easy accessibility: churches, community centers, or places where favorable life events are held (like quinceañeras).
- Translate your event flyer into Spanish and be thoughtful in making the flyer high-context
- Gather dates of upcoming community meetings that you can attend and share your invitation. Some are only once a month so you need to put them on your calendar ahead of time. Remember that relationships are fundamental, and that one visit is not enough to build trust. As we have been told several times, if you are not seen consistently it is like not being seen at all.

A month before the event:

- Put together your event materials (PowerPoint, handouts, etc) and have them translated.
- Attend community meetings as scheduled.
 - Introduce yourself and offer a personal invitation to the participants. Make individual greetings as much as possible. Pass out flyers.
 - As you feel comfortable, try to use any Spanish you have. It is very appreciated.
 - Ask the meeting organizer to suggest key community connectors. Introduce yourself to them and ask them for help passing out flyers to other neighbors not present. If you are comfortable doing so, exchange phone numbers.
 - Bring a sign-in sheet to help the community organizers gather names, emails, and cell phone numbers. The success of this will depend on explaining why the information is being collected. If it is important to do so, explain why to the partners/gatekeepers who have a strong working relationship with these individuals and ask them make the request on your behalf.
- Put up flyers in places they will be seen.
- Confirm childcare for your event (with bilingual childcare provider when possible)
- Confirm interpretation for your event
- Request headphones for interpretation. Headphones are available through the Walla Walla Public School; contact Marilyn Melgoza, mmelgoza@wwps.org
- Set up catering for your event. Offering food and beverages at the event if possible makes everyone feel welcome, provides opportunities to socialize, and makes it easier for working families to attend.

One week before the event:

- Call, text, or use a form of social media (both in posts or through direct messages) is the best way to push out a reminder. Also send out email reminders.
- If working with an interpreter:
 - Summarize the purpose of the session for the interpreter.
 - When possible, share the information that will be presented with the interpreter early so they can familiarize themselves with the information and terms.

- Inform the presenter/s that the session is being interpreted. Share the following points for interpretation best practice:
 - Acknowledge the interpreter as a professional in communication. Respect his or her role.
 - Speak more slowly.
 - Speak at an even pace in relatively short segments.
 - Pause every ten seconds so the interpreter can interpret.
 - Ask only one question at a time. Don't 'chain' questions.
 - Do not use jargon or acronyms.
 - Avoid highly idiomatic speech, complicated sentence structure, sentence fragments, and changing your idea in the middle of a sentence.

Day before event

- Send out another email reminder to all of the attendees with emails that you have
- Text a reminder to all of the attendees that you have a phone number for. "Remind" is an app that you can use on your phone or computer to help send mass texts <https://www.remind.com/>.

Day of Gathering

Welcoming

To help welcome participants, have a greeter, name tags, and a sheet to gather names and contact information by the door.

When possible, have presenters introduce themselves in English and Spanish. This helps set the tone at the beginning that questions can be asked, understood, and responded to. Any effort to use Spanish is very appreciated.

If an interpreter's services are being used, inform everyone that interpretation of questions or comments is available. Inform the audience that when they are speaking, it is helpful to pause every ten seconds when speaking to give the interpreter an opportunity to interpret.

Take the opportunity at the beginning of your event to network for the first 15 minutes. Encourage participants to introduce themselves to each other to make everyone feel at home. In order for the presentation to be taken to heart, it is important to build trust among participants by connecting to the organizers and each other. It also gives people a chance to come in easily if they arrive late, as high-context cultures are not as strict with time.

Questions and Comments

It is difficult for many people to speak in front of a crowd. It can be even more difficult to speak in public using a non-native language. To help overcome missed opportunities for rich exchange, experiment with different ways to capture questions and comments. Provide time that individuals can work by themselves or in small groups. Try leaving note cards on the tables so people can write their questions down and have the presenter or an assistant collect them throughout the workshop, explaining the purpose of the note cards at the beginning.

Another excellent way to capture questions is by providing informal time after the workshop or event for individuals to come up and ask questions. Having a familiar face present will also make it more comfortable for people to come up and engage.

Distributing Information

Building relationships and trust is very important for the Latino community to feel welcome to attend an event you are sponsoring or believe would be important to them. **You can't rely on someone else to build those relationships for you.** Imagine it like having someone else make friends for you. To help in this relationship building process, partner with others in the community who are active and have established relationships with your target audiences. Look for opportunities to attend cross-cultural events to say hello and meet new people.

Translation

Google Translate works well, literally, but often misses context and doesn't get the real message across. If you have available resources, consider having it professionally translated, or "trans-created." This investment shows that you are respectful of your audience and their time. Be conscious of who your translator is and consider who your audience is. People will translate with higher or lower levels of formality. Does the translation speak to your audience?

Technology

Face to face is the best way to spread a message to Latino populations. Cell phones are the next best technology communication with a phone call being the preferred method followed by text messaging. Facebook and Facebook Messenger are becoming successful tools for communication as all ages are joining groups, mostly accessed through smartphones when they have access to one. Email is used less frequently, but it's still a good idea to still send email messages.

Media Outlets

- La Voz - newspaper
- Union-Bulletin
- Univision - TV Channel
- Radio
 - Bustos Media
 - Cherry Creek Radio
- Facebook pages, connect with:
 - Somos Latinos Walla Walla
 - BRN BMAC (Commitment to Community's Blue Ridge Neighborhood page)
 - Edith Carrie (Commitment to Community's Edith & Carrie Neighborhood page)

Post flyers at

- All Mexican restaurants
- Andy's
- Blue Mountain Action Council
- College Place City Hall bulletin board
- Helpline
- Post Offices
- Preschool programs
- SonBridge Community Center
- SOS Clinic
- Super 1 Foods
- Valle Lindo/ Inspire Development Center
- Walla Walla Community College (WWCC)
- Walla Walla Housing Authority
- Walla Walla Library
- Work Source

Attend and present at meetings/gatherings:

- Commitment to Community meetings
- Garrison Middle School Night School
- Walla Walla Latino Alliance
- Parent meetings at Inspire Development Center

Relationship building is the key to successful deepening of connections with our Latino neighbors. That said, there are also members of our community that are willing and able to partner with you to act as bridges, connecting communities and conversations.

Contacts to help make connections:

Catholic Charities	Tim Meliah	Executive Director. Has naturalization classes	tmeliah@ccspokane.org
BMAC's Commitment to Community (C2C)	Andrew Rodriguez	Director	andrewr@bmacww.org
C2C	Amanda Perez	Blue Ridge Neighborhood Coord.	amandatp@bmacww.org
C2C	Delia Gutierrez	Washington Park Neighborhood Coord.	deliag@bmacww.org
C2C	Ursula Volwiler	Edith and Carrie Neighborhood Coord.	ursulav@bmacww.org
Foro Latino email list serve	Cynthia Selde	Administrator	Cynthia.selde@gmail.com
Inspire Development Center/ Valle Lindo	Yolanda Esquivel	Executive Director	Yolanda.esquivel@inspire-centers.org
Salvation Army	Demetrio and Magda Villarreal	Captains	Demetrio.villarreal@usw.Salvationarmy.org
St. Patrick's Catholic Church	Sonia Muro	Receptionist	stpatrick@wwcatholic.com
Trilogy Recovery	Luis Rosales	Executive Director	Luis.trilogy@gmail.com
WWCC	John Hibbitts	WWCC Hispanic Caucus spokesperson	John.hibbitts@wwcc.edu
WWCC	Maria Remington	WWCC ABE/GED Instructor	Maria.remington@wwcc.edu
WWCC	Melissa Rodriguez	WWCC Hispanic Caucus spokesperson	Melissa.rodriquez@wwcc.edu
Walla Walla Latino Alliance	Daniel Garcia	Manager of email list	wwlacontact@gmail.com
Walla Walla Public Schools (WWPS)	Cresensia Gutierrez-Duran	Blue Ridge Parent Involvement Coordinator for ECEAP/ Head Start	cduran@wwps.org
WWPS	Mark Higgins	Director of Communications and Community Relations	mhiggins@wwps.org
WWPS	Marilyn Melgoza	Latino Outreach Coordinator	mmelgoza@wwps.org
WWPS	Victor Vergara	Director of Bilingual Programs and Latino Outreach	Vvergara@wwps.org
Wa-Hi and College Place Latino Clubs	Bill and Diana Erickson	Co-Advisors	wteric@charter.net
YWCA	Celia Guardado	Director of Client Services	cguardado@ywcaww.org
YWCA	Lorena Ault	Bilingual Bicultural Legal Advocate	lault@ywcaww.org

Other possible organizations to work with are Walla Walla Housing Authority, Work Source, and the Women, Infant, and Children Program.

Summary

Many thanks to everyone who is listed in this document! They gave permission to be listed as a resource, and many of them reviewed the document and added insightful comments and additions.

While many things are mentioned here to provide a big picture view, you don't have to do everything. Just start somewhere. Pick one or two things that seem attainable and work with that. Like all projects and relationships, change takes time. This document was meant to offer a general idea of how we can increase our connections with our Latino neighbors.

Sherwood Trust offers grants to local nonprofits for a variety of capacity building needs, including improving outreach to the Latino Community. Whether you're seeking to add new communications or outreach staff, translate your website, or provide food or translation at your events, there may be a Sherwood Trust grant that can help meet your needs. Please visit our website to learn more about our grant opportunities www.sherwoodtrust.org, or contact our staff to discuss your ideas.

Do you have suggestions for other local resources or tips on how we can improve this document or our outreach strategies? We'd love to hear from you. Please contact Lydia Caudill: lydia@sherwoodtrust.org or call us at 509-529-2791.

We look forward to our continued work together to build stronger relationships and a thriving region for everyone in the Walla Walla Valley.

Resources

1. Cross-Cultural Communication: High and low context
<https://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/high-and-low-context/>
2. Cultural Boundaries in Internet Marketing: High-context and low-context marketing strategies
<http://www.activemarketing.com/blog/strategy/context-marketing/>
3. High vs. Low Context Cultures <http://www.activemarketing.com/blog/strategy/context-marketing/>
4. High-context and Low-context Cultures: Applying Intercultural Communication to Website Translation
<https://www.business2community.com/digital-marketing/high-context-low-context-cultures-applying-intercultural-communication-website-translation-01253516>
5. Reaching and Engaging with Hispanic Communities: A Research-Informed Communication Guide for Nonprofits, Policymakers, and Funders https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/083381_299dca2d1aa54925ad59d1362b33b962.pdf

The interpreter/trans-creator that Sherwood Trust has used is Ynez Arenas-Embarcadero of Profesionales Bilingues, ynez@profesionalesbilingues.com.