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# Abogados NOW's Founder On Reaching Spanish Speakers



By Kevin Penton | Mar 16, 2022, 4:14 PM EDT · Listen to article



Hugo Gomez believes many law firms and attorneys are missing out on a significant untapped market in the U.S.: individuals who primarily speak Spanish.



Hugo Gomez

As the founder of the marketing consulting firm Abogados NOW, Gomez and his team regularly assist attorneys and law firms who want to expand their marketing presence to reach the nation's Spanish speakers, who he says have many of the same legal needs as individuals who primarily speak English, but with fewer people trying to reach them.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

## With attorneys increasingly promoting themselves and their work on social media, what are some of the potential pitfalls you encounter?

When we work with an attorney and survey their online presence, we'll oftentimes see a sombrero with a Corona beer posted on Instagram for Cinco de Mayo. It can appear tone deaf for many, many consumers, especially Spanish-speaking consumers. So what we try to do is tell attorneys that before they post anything online, run it through several filters. Run it through the filter of whether it really reflects who you are, and run it through the filter of other people who might have perspective on your post. Not just these cultural posts like Black History Month or St. Patrick's Day, but every post in general. We always have to educate attorneys on thinking twice on what they might want to post, not because it may be offensive, but because it could paint the firm in a poor light if they don't think twice about it.

## If firms or attorneys wish to promote themselves in Spanish online, can they simply rely on an application such as Google Translate?

Generally speaking, we always say marketing in Spanish is not a translation exercise. It almost never is. What it really is is a building of a new communication model. That's because Spanish speakers are not a monolith. I even use the term Spanish speaker instead of Latino, Latinx or Hispanic because it's so much more diverse than that. We tend to tell attorneys that in order to market effectively online in Spanish, it's not just translating your content, it's actually understanding the core values of this particular market.

Because different communities came into the country in different fashions, some have more rights than others. So given that how you enter the country generally paints your value sets, attorneys have to really understand that it's not just that your firm can speak Spanish, it's that your firm knows their stories.

We tell people not to use translation tools. More often than not, they're wrong. And they miss cultural nuance. So that's the real value that we bring to the table to a firm, especially one that's eager to grow. We can promote how they've already been successful in the community back to the community in the right way, rather than suggesting that they speak Spanish.

## The commercial where the main attorney speaks in broken Spanish at the end, is that a good idea or not?

We always tell attorneys that if you don't speak Spanish fluently, don't try to pander to the community. The data that we have supports the notion that generally speaking, Spanish speakers who only speak Spanish really put the value of a bilingual staff at a higher importance than whether an attorney personally speaks the language. What Spanish speakers really want is access to someone who can speak Spanish. That can be a paralegal, a case manager, you name it.

We absolutely do not recommend attorneys to try to speak Spanish if they really don't know how to. It's very transparent, and consumers in all immigration and acculturation levels are way more sophisticated.

## When it comes to the Spanish-speaking market, immigration law may be what comes to mind first. But for those who primarily speak Spanish in this country, what are some other areas for which individuals may be looking for legal assistance?

Spanish speakers are living the same lives that virtually everyone else is, documented or undocumented. Sure, they might have immigration issues, but they might also have criminal defense issues, they might have real estate issues, they might have injury issues at their workplace or because of a car accident, or they might need to declare bankruptcy.

It's an inherent bias: the legal community for years has generally assumed that this is a market that's not connected and that doesn't represent a demand for services. The success of my company proves that thesis wrong: Our services used to only be in metro areas with high density populations of Spanish speakers. Now we're in nearly half the states in the country, and we've barely scratched the surface of the Spanish-speaking market.

## To reach Spanish speakers, do you recommend that firms focus more on traditional media such as television, radio or print, or should they look more at beefing up their presence online and on social media?

Spanish speakers are on their phones all the time, just like everyone else, making life decisions. TV, radio and print will always be there, but increasingly so, in age groups across the board, Spanish-dominant or fully bilingual, this is a market that's thriving online. Attorneys that are capturing that attention online, especially on mobile, are really winning the day. I would venture even saying that if you see a competing attorney who seems to be growing wildly fast, it's more than likely because of their digital strategy going bilingual.

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.



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