

►► **JAMES R. HUERTA:
MAKING RESEARCH PAY**

Believe it or not, James Huerta—now CEO of his own business—started his impressive career path in the mining industry. “I was part of an MBA program with a company called AMAX, and I was with them for 12 years,” he recalls. “It really is a company where I learned the most leadership skills and mentoring skills.”

Huerta uses those skills to maximum benefit as CEO of ResearchPAYS, a strategic business consulting firm he started that specializes in market research on multicultural and Hispanic markets. How it works: ResearchPAYS is hired by a client who wants to understand the multicultural market—whether it’s Hispanic-American, African-American, or Asian-American—and ResearchPAYS delves into the market to create a “snapshot” of that particular market: who they are, what they buy, and the best way to reach them. ResearchPAYS consultants then train their clients to get better performance and customer relationships out of that market.

The multicultural market ResearchPAYS targets is an up-and-coming market with major potential. “The multicultural market, particularly the Hispanic market because of the growth statistics, has become a diamond in the rough,” says Huerta. “It is not as rich as the Asian-American group, but it is certainly a much larger group, developing a great amount of spend-

ing power and influence. So to learn about that marketplace becomes very important for any company that is trying to move their products and services into that market.”

But the Hispanic market is also a tough nut to crack. “I think clients come to us because they have spent a lot of money in advertising and product or service branding, and when they measure their ROI, they realize that they have spent a lot of money and didn’t come anywhere near where they thought their market penetration numbers should be,” Huerta explains. This is partly because although Hispanics speak a common language, they’re made up of 32 different cultures—and outreach methods that work for one won’t necessarily work for another. Says Huerta, “There has been a litany of mistakes that companies have made,

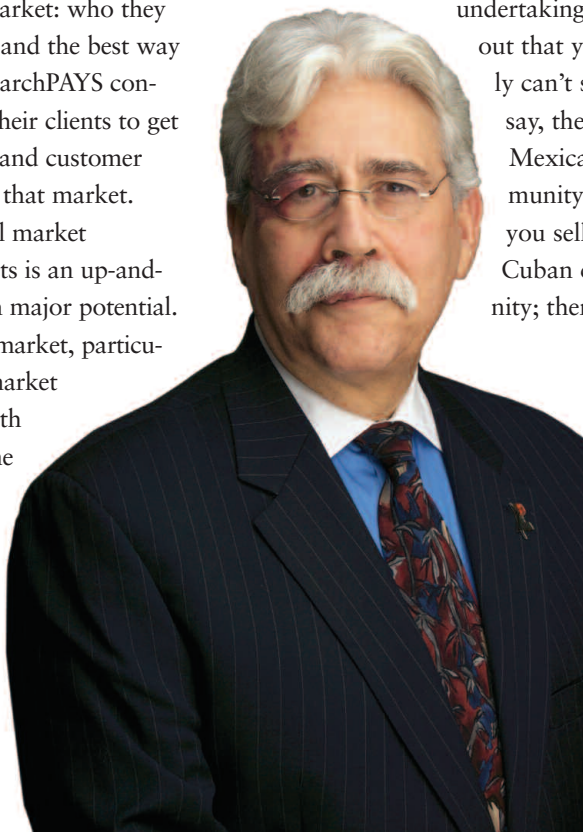
and it’s a very expensive undertaking to find out that you really can’t sell to, say, the Mexican community like you sell to the Cuban community; there are

huge differences.”

Huerta’s expertise in this area has garnered some impressive clients, including American Express, State Farm, and Wachovia. Hospitals and nonprofit groups also use ResearchPAYS’ services.

Huerta is also the president of the New York chapter of the National Society of Hispanic MBAs. He was convinced by a friend to look into the group—and was impressed with their philosophy. “They talk about mentoring. They talk about leadership. They talk about helping Hispanic youth from high school right through to their graduate degree,” he says. “Before I knew it, within weeks, I was on the New York board as the VP of operations—and in 2006, they said they wanted me to be the head of our chapter in New York.” He’s been president since 2007.

When asked what advice he would give to other young Hispanic MBAs, Huerta tells them to live their dreams. “Go after it,” he says. “Find what makes you happy. Find the areas that optimize your talents. Find mentors. There are a lot of people out there who are willing to mentor young people—you just have to go out there and grab it.”



James (Jim) Huerta

NSHMBA CHAPTER: New York

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: “Over 25 years of senior level management leadership experience with a stellar achievement record in the media, finance, Intellectual Property and currently in the multicultural strategic marketing consulting sectors.”