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Sometimes research leaves us with more questions than answers, but at Zebra Strategies our goal is always to figure it out together.

GOING BEYOND THE STRIPES

Examples of what Zebra Strategies deals with in the jungle...

A large beverage manufacturer hired us to test some rudimentary ad concepts with an African-American audience. Although the ad agency presented itself as multicultural, our initial feelings were that their campaign concepts may have subtly played into cultural and racial stereotypes. Our hunch was correct—respondents reacted to the ads by calling them “coonery”, a term the client did not understand but that we were familiar with from our extensive urban research. We immediately recommended the client scrap that ad campaign.

Confused, a client called us to complain that he did not understand why non-whites were invited to a Hispanic research project. We explained that Hispanic is not a race, but an ethnicity and that there are Black, White and even Asian Hispanics. We went on to explain the gradations and transgression his comment may cause in certain environments.

A client asked us to conduct research with a South-Asian target audience. As we began the research, our client started to question why some of the chosen respondents did not have “Indian-sounding” names. We explained that those respondents might have come from a non-Eastern religious background, thus explaining why some of the names may not have reflected the preconceived notion of a “South-Asian” name.

We worked with a client who was targeting low-income, blue-collar workers for a text-messaging campaign. We thought this concept might not be salient for an audience—given their economic circumstances—whose mobile devices are sometimes transient. We were correct in hypothesizing that the added costs of texting in many data plans dissuaded low-income individuals from participating; and we also uncovered the fact that many in the target segment had literacy challenges—or even struggled with complete illiteracy. Sometimes the most important factors are ones that go unstated

