



Broadcasting and Cable's  
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Q & A

## Robert Rose, CEO, Aim Tell-A-Vision Group

Robert Rose's company produces and widely syndicates English-language programming aimed at U.S.-born Latinos. Rose argues that young and English-dominant Hispanics are grossly undercounted by Nielsen Media Research's ratings service. Earlier this month he launched, for a second time, his "Change the Sample" campaign. The campaign is designed to pressure Nielsen into including place of birth as criteria for inclusion in its National People Meter sample. *Hispanic Television Update* recently interviewed Rose and discussed his complaint and Nielsen's response. An edited transcript follows:

**Q: This is the second time you launch a campaign against Nielsen. What makes you think it is going to work this time?**

**A:** This sprung from events we were doing all summer long to promote our shows. Basically, what we found was that viewers were much more sophisticated about the issue than we had anticipated. They knew what Nielsen ratings were. They knew that they were underrepresented on television. In short order they were able to connect the dots and wanted to do something about it. We said let's create a campaign that is for the consumers and will get them involved. This is who it really impacts most. This gives them a way they can actually change television themselves. I think it gives it more of a grassroots feel. It probably hits Nielsen where they hurt. It is just another round of ammunition that we are going to throw at Nielsen until we convince them.

**Q: What is your basic complaint against Nielsen?**

**A:** It all goes back to methodology. If the sample is wrong, then the results are wrong. Nielsen keeps saying 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' They're the only ones, maybe them and Univision, that believe it isn't broken. Nielsen knows it is broken but they don't want to fix it. What we are saying is look at the *Ugly Betty* numbers. *Ugly Betty* did about a 3.6 Hispanic rating when it premiered. It did an 11 in the general market when it premiered. This is a show that was a hit in Latin America, a hit on Telemundo recently, [has] a mostly Latino cast, [with] a huge Hispanic marketing effort and it is underperforming the general market. That's ridiculous. It doesn't make sense. *The George Lopez Show*, Nielsen reports, has twice as many African-American viewers as Hispanic viewers.

At some point, common sense has to kick in. Anybody looking at that has to say that is either wrong or all Latinos watch Spanish-language television. Well, research says that all Latinos most definitely do not watch Spanish-language television. As a matter of fact, U.S.-born Latinos don't watch it at all. Our complaint with Nielsen is their methodology. They don't give any credence to the importance of [place of birth]. If they don't account for the proper number of U.S.-born Latinos in their sample, then the results are going to be flawed.

**Q: What would you have them do?**

**A:** Basically, it is very simple and very easy to fix. They need to match Census data in every market based upon U.S.-born and foreign born Latinos. They need to match that in their sample. If they don't, then they are not getting a true picture of Hispanic viewing patterns. I believe if they matched it you would see Univision's ratings plummet and ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox's ratings rise.

**Q: Nielsen's reaction to date?**

**A:** They've had various reactions throughout our campaign. When we first launched, they said it would be an invasion of privacy. They then said there is no research that ties nativity to television viewing. Most recently, their latest comment is that they have a 2003 study that said that television viewing is tied in to language spoken. My question is first of all can I see it and second where was this study all along. Why haven't you brought it up until now?

If you ask a child the same question three different times and you get three different answers, then you know that they are lying. All three answers can't be correct. Nielsen doesn't have any intention of telling the truth.

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