NHTSA

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

Hispanic Air Bag Recall Campaign Creative Concept Testing

9.30.2021

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RESEARCH DESIGN

Design

Purpose: To evaluate three online banner ad concepts designed to build awareness among Hispanics around critical air bag recalls and the importance of getting them fixed.

Online Discussion Board

- Conducted in Spanish
- 3 days of activities Aug. 24-26
- 15-20 minutes per day

QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

- Hispanic/Latino(a) ages 18+
- U.S. licensed driver
- Own/operate a vehicle regularly
- Decision-maker for vehicle maintenance

BILINGUAL (n=31)

- Bilingual and fluent in Spanish
- Speaks Spanish at home
- Watches television in Spanish

SPANISH-DOMINANT (n=32)

- Was born abroad
- Fluent in Spanish
- Primarily speaks Spanish at home
- Primarily watches television in Spanish

Objectives

1. Improve NHTSA's ability to deliver effective communications related to air bag recalls to Hispanics
2. Identify strengths and opportunities for improvement associated with each banner ad concept
3. Measure the likelihood to visit the NHTSA.gov website to check for information about air bag recalls on a vehicle after seeing each concept
4. Determine which concept(s) have the greatest potential to motivate Hispanics to act on air bag recalls

Discussion Flow by Days

Day 1

- Warm-up – Safety recall opinions and awareness
- View Concept 1 - Lotería
- Reaction to Concept 1
- Probing done throughout board

Day 2

- View Concept 2 - Alarma
- Reaction to Concept 2
- View Concept 3 – Memorial A
- Reaction to Concept 3
- Concept 3 – A and B comparison and preference
- Probing done throughout board

Day 3

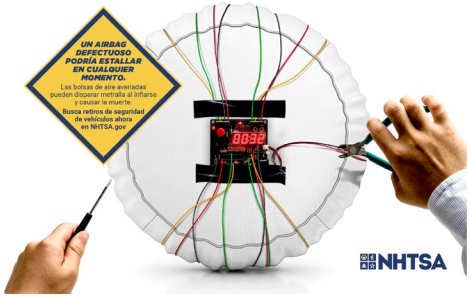
- Warm-up - Opinions of messaging
- Head-to-head concept comparison
- Full commentary
- Probing done throughout board

Concepts Tested

***About the concepts**: These concepts were developed by native Spanish speakers, José Fernández and Laura Orozco. José and Laura integrated various Latino and Hispanic cultural elements at a range of intensity in each concept to determine the audience's preference for a direct call to action with or without meaningful cultural recognition.*

Concept 1 - ***Lotería***

Lotería plays on the imagery of a widely recognizable game of chance across Spanish speaking populations. The imagery follows the same style as the traditional game but uses visuals and brief copy that easily present the call to action.



Concept 2 - ***Alarma***

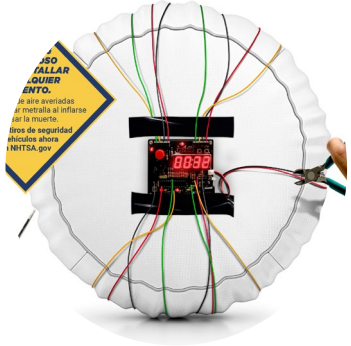
Alarma relies on language alone to connect to Spanish speakers while demonstrating universally-understood urgency through graphic elements.

Concept 3 - ***Memorial***

The imagery in *Memorial* draws on traditions from across Spain and South and Central America of memorializing loved ones with markings at road accident sites and brings the memorial inside of the car – where the faulty airbag deploys. The language used equates one's life with a journey, implying that the car is supposed to take you on a journey, not be the end of it.

*Note: Memorial also included reactions to two versions that featuring a male and a female

Key Takeaways



Alarma has the most potential to break through. It communicates the message of a defective air bag as a “time bomb” and its imagery contributes strongly to the ad being both engaging and creating a sense of urgency. There are aspects of the concept that are polarizing and opportunities to strengthen the message, making it clear that faulty air bags are a time bomb (as opposed to all air bags). Alarma receives the most votes for being the concept MOST likely to drive respondents to visit NHTSA.gov.

Memorial has a strong focus on consequences and is emotionally engaging. However, this concept lacks a strong connection to air bags, which limits its effectiveness in delivering the strategic message. The image of a person makes it relatable and generates empathy, but it does not connect with the cause (faulty air bags) and lacks the urgency that Alarma conveys. Memorial receives the largest number of votes for being LEAST likely to make respondents visit NHTSA.gov to check for information about recalls.

Lotería performs well on comprehension. Participants considered Lotería the easiest to understand. The progression of the story is clear and simple, but the cartoonish style reads as childish and lacks the serious tone needed to match the risks associated with faulty air bags. Lotería receives nearly an equal number of votes for MOST and LEAST effective.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Developing Effective Communications

Barriers to Action

- Lack of information and clear under standing is the biggest barrier to having recalls repaired.
- Hispanics are not always aware of the issue and can be skeptical of mailings being spam or scams.
- It is important to inform and educate them and give the confidence that they have the right information (is credible and explains the issue) and know next steps.
- Convenience issues are also present, but to a lesser extent.

Most Common Barrier

- **Lack of information & understanding**
  - Not aware of the issue
  - Concern of notices in mail being a scam
  - Not understanding the importance or urgency with recalls
  - Confusing recalls as part of routine maintenance
  - Unsure of steps to address
  - Belief that repair will be expensive

- **Convenience**
  - Dealership not offering convenient times
  - Dealership being too far away
  - Unable to take time off work
  - Rely on vehicle/can't be without vehicle for extended time

*"Send **something in the mail explaining what happened**. Also **explaining to us that it has no cost** for us to do this. Because a lot of people think they're going to see an additional cost. We would **feel more confident**, and we can go to repair our vehicle. I also think that Hispanics are **sometimes suspicious** of many things. **But explaining the situation makes us feel better.***
- Rocio A, Spanish-Dominant, 25-34

Overcoming Barriers

1 **Lack of information/ awareness**

2 **Lack of urgency/ failure to prioritize**

- **NHTSA ads can overcome most barriers for Hispanics.** Because most common barriers center around not having information or receiving misinformation, providing clear information about recalls will remedy those barriers. After being exposed to the concepts, most participants report the information would be enough to get them to act on a recall.
- Hispanics want recall ads to **answer their important questions** including:
  - What should I do?
  - Why should I care?
  - What is the cost?

"I believe that ignorance and misinformation would be the only two reasons that would prevent replacement."
- Cesar, Spanish-Dominant, 45-54

"If I know that this is not urgent or that it will not necessarily cause harm to my family or me, and additionally I know that it will take me too long and I will not have options with which to replace my vehicle, I would be very hesitant to go to any process." - Juan Carlos, Bilingual, 35-44

"Not having much information would make me suspicious, one hears many things. Right now, having this information, nothing would prevent me."
- Omar, Spanish-Dominant, 25-34

Building Effective Communications

1

Build awareness + relevance

Giving a reason to care starts the process to empower action.

- Increase awareness through comprehension (“be clear”)
- Optimize connection (“could be you”)
- Lead to motivation (“makes it a priority”)

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Communicate the danger

Hispanics are eager to act with the right information.

- Make the danger relevant or personal (compromises my safety or safety of loved ones)
- Communicate the consequences (link defective air bags to death; recalls repairs with saving lives)

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3

Give a clear call to action

Provide information for them to take the next step.

- Visit NHTSA website to check for recalls
- Call dealer to schedule repair
- Reinforce that repairs are free

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4

Connect with Hispanics

Personalized outreach includes traditional channels and grassroots efforts.

- Mass media educates and gives credibility, while social media allows for personalization and targeting
- Communicating through places like the DMV, Hispanic festivals and out-of-home come across important, especially to the Spanish-Dominant
- All information needs to be in Spanish, especially for the Spanish-Dominant

Differences by Audience

Spanish-Dominant

- Stronger reliance on information being in Spanish (e.g., the NHTSA.gov website being available in Spanish)
- Lower awareness with recalls (e.g., importance, how to act on a recall, etc.) can create greater skepticism
- More issues with misinformation (e.g., the perception that they will need to pay for the repair)
- Slightly stronger dependence and trust with in-person communication (e.g., going to a mechanic or dealership for information in person)

"If I don't find out that my car has a recall. If I don't find out that the repair is free. If I don't know where to take my car."
- Juan, Spanish-Dominant, 35-44

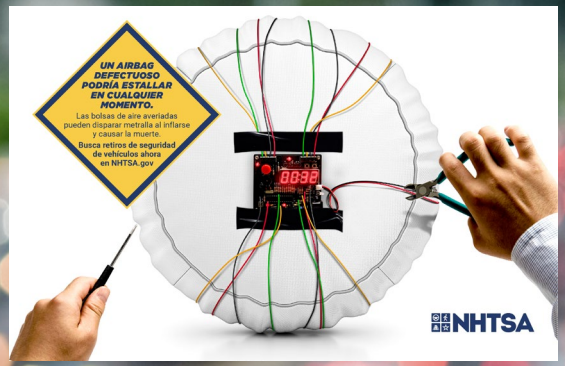
Bilingual

- Stronger awareness with recalls (e.g., importance, how to act on a recall, etc.)
- More personal experience with recalls, especially with recent incidences
- Busy lives can become a stronger barrier to address a recall
- Less dependent on Spanish
- Slightly stronger dependence on getting information quickly and conveniently online

"I need my vehicle to take my kids to school and go to work. I may not be able to do those things if my car is there for more than a day."
- Gilberto, Bilingual, 45-54

DETAILED FINDINGS

Concept by Concept Analysis



Lotería

01
RECALL ALERT
EL RETIRO
02
TU AIRBAG
03
EL DESASTRE
No te juegues la vida por una bolsa de aire defectuosa.
Las bolsas de aire averiadas pueden causar la muerte.
Busca retiros de seguridad de vehículos ahora en NHTSA.gov
NHTSA

Lotería

Main Message

- Recalls are not a game
- Driving a vehicle with a recall is dangerous

Likes

- The Lotería game helps make it engaging and relevant
- Story sequence is concise
- Message is clear, simple and easy to understand
- Headline (“No te juegues la vida”) resonates and connects with the story

Dislikes

- Text is too small
- Images can come across as cartoony and not realistic
- Tone does not align with the seriousness of the topic (i.e., recalls)
- Card 01 needs to convey urgency better

*“I like the connection of the phrase "**no juegues la vida"** with the lotería game. The lotería game is something that almost everyone knows so it is a **good concept to capture attention**.”*
– Frida, Bilingual, 18-24

*“The main message is the **importance of these recalls**, since we must be very aware of when these safety recalls are made and **not take it lightly**, since it can even lead to our death.”*
– Charles, Spanish-Dominant, 45-54

*“The message is that a **recall of your vehicle's air bags is serious** and can cause serious injury or death, if ignored.”*
– Michael, Bilingual, 55+

Lotería

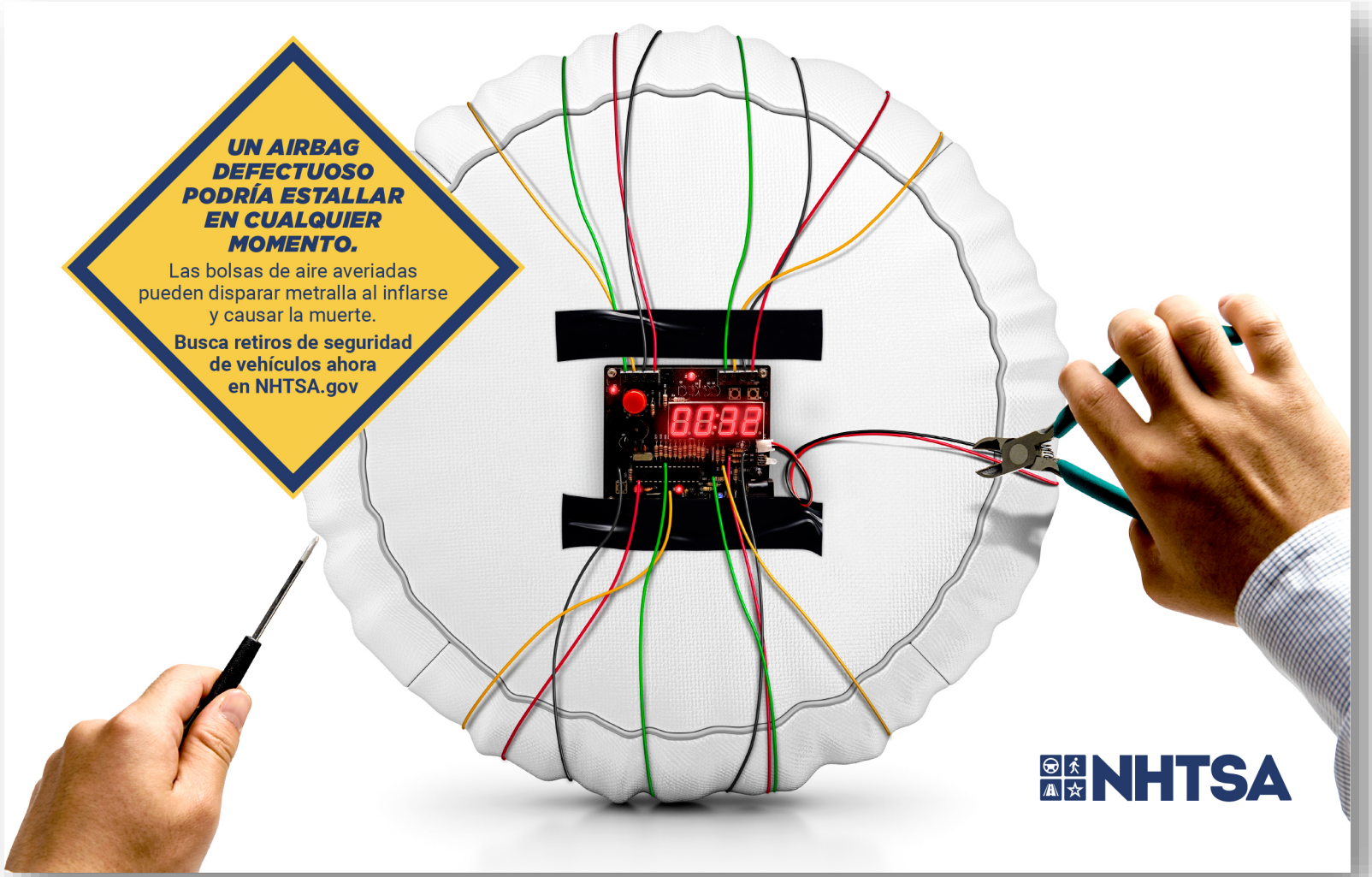
*"I like the image of the cards which is like the lotería game, and it catches my attention immediately. And it's something short that **I can read very quickly and understand it perfectly.**" – Erika, Bilingual, 25-34*

*"**Manages to capture my attention**; first the letter where RECALL ALERT is notified and with the image of the broken air bag, these images say a lot to me." - Jessica, Spanish-Dominant, 25-34*

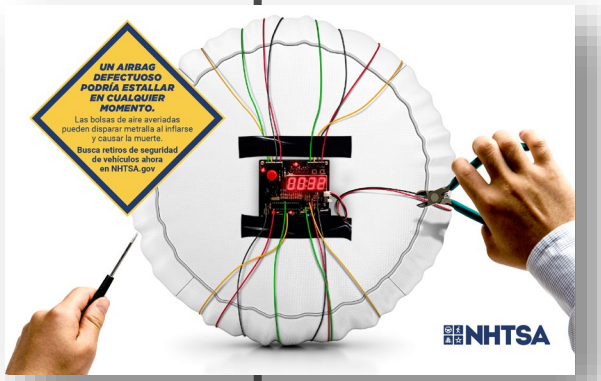
Enhancement Opportunities

- Consider moving the headline to the top, introducing the story earlier
- Increase the size of the text in the light blue bar
- Create greater urgency with card 01 – consider making the card in red and the envelope white
- Consider using a different background color to grab attention and convey danger
- Include a more detailed call to action
- Clarify that repairs are free

Alarema


UN AIRBAG DEFECTUOSO PODRÍA ESTALLAR EN CUALQUIER MOMENTO.
Las bolsas de aire averiadas pueden disparar metralla al inflarse y causar la muerte.
Busca retiros de seguridad de vehículos ahora en NHTSA.gov
NHTSA

Alarma



Main Message

- Air bags are like “ticking time bombs”
- Clear focus on air bag
- Effectively communicates the danger

Likes

- Engaging imagery
- Clearly links message to air bag
- Creates urgency in acting
- Compelling language such as “defective air bag” and “cause death”

Dislikes

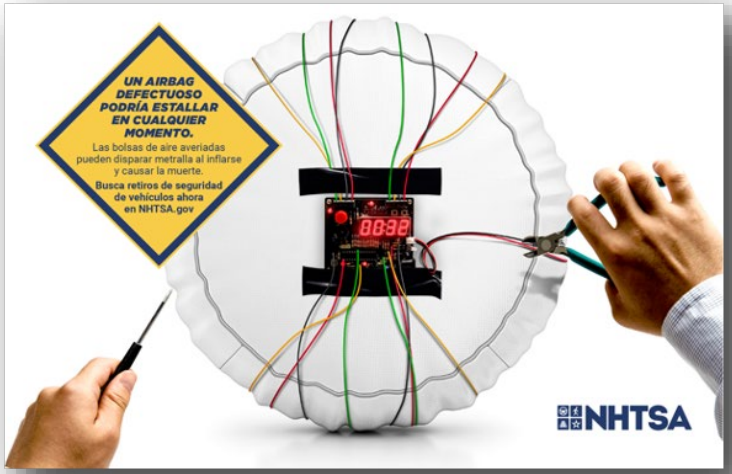
- Text is too small
- Needs stronger connection to faulty air bags (and not air bags in general)
- Some text like “shrapnel” (“metralla”) is not consistently understood
- Ad has shock value, but the tone can be too aggressive for some
- Comparison to a time bomb can come across as a bit dramatic

“The image of the time bomb is shocking. I like the information provided, but I would make a change. (look for vehicle safety recalls now in NHTSA.gov) should be in large letters as the commercial's primary focus not inside the yellow box.”
– Luis, Spanish-Dominant, 45-54

“I feel like you're missing information. That it lacks motivation to take the customer to the site to have their air bag checked. Should be more forceful.” – Cesar C, Bilingual, 45-54

“It tells me that the problem they want to notify me of is like a ticking time bomb. It sounds a lot like an emergency to me. What I'm not sure about is whether or not this is aggressive for some people.”
– Juan Carlos, Spanish-Dominant, 35-44

Alarma



*"The image of the bomb **captures a lot of attention and motivates you** to see the rest of the content in yellow, but there should be some big word about vehicle recall." – Dario, Spanish-Dominant, 25-34*

*"No. It's not clear. It doesn't tell you: YOU, go and change your air bags. It says, it's very dangerous to have damaged air bags. It **does not enforce the repair of air bags**. In the end, that's what we want." – Maria, Spanish-Dominant, 45-54*

*"The **image itself is understood very well but the words used in the concept are not universal** that is to say that any Hispanic can understand them for example the word 'averida' and 'metralla' confuse me." – Gustavo, Bilingual, 18-24*

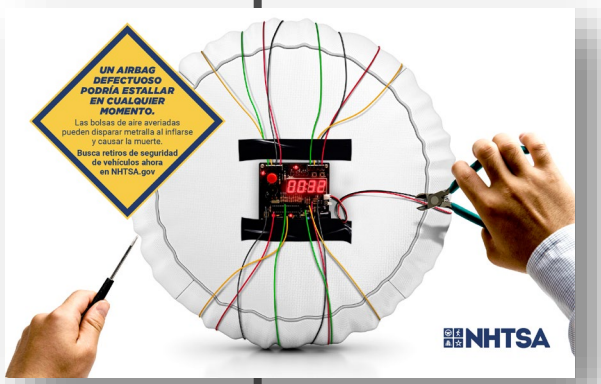
Enhancement Opportunities

- Consider making the text bigger, especially the headline
- Emphasize "defective" to avoid the impression that ALL air bags are "ticking time bombs"
- Avoid words like "shrapnel" that may not be easily understood in Spanish
- Look for ways to highlight the benefits of NHTSA.gov, increasing their desire to visit the site
- Consider adding "it's free" to further mitigate the cost barrier

Memorial

Su viaje no debería acabar aqui.
Las bolsas de aire defectuosas pueden causar la muerte, pero una reparación puede prevenirlo.
Busca recalls de seguridad de vehículos ahora en NHTSA.gov. Es gratis.
NHTSA

Memorial



Main Message

- Defective air bags can lead to death
- Consequence is clear from the visual but can overshadow the main message (i.e., recalls)

Likes

- Image is personal and relatable, especially female version
- Consequence of loss/death evokes an emotional response
- Reinforces a prevention message and creating urgency

Dislikes

- Text is necessary to get the full story and is too small
- Does not consistently connect to faulty air bag
- Building the concept around death can come across as morbid or extreme and the message can come across as too aggressive and turn people off

"Everything captures my attention and how dangerous an air bag can be, even to [cause] death."
- Ariana, Spanish-Dominant, 45-54

"The only thing I don't like is that it reminds me more of an anti-drunk driving concept than an air bag ad."
- Michael, Bilingual, 55

"I could hardly see the main message the letters are very small, but the message is the same that people are very much at risk to have a defective air bag."
- Sylvestre, Spanish-Dominant, 35-44

Memorial

*"I like this message although it is quite strong **captures my attention** absolutely as it makes me reflect on how close we can be to death, if we do not take the appropriate measures and thus **avoid a tragedy**." - Charles, Spanish Dominant, 45-54*

*"I like everything because it puts us to reflect on the great tragedy that can happen, if we do not **take into account the defective air bags**." - Jose, Bilingual, 45-54*

*"The truth is that I **dislike this concept**. I do not think it necessary to make references to death. I understand the **sense of urgency**, but it affects me personally to use facts like this in any type, whatever, of advertising." - Juan Carlos, Bilingual, 55*

Enhancement Opportunities

- Consider ways to make the recall message stronger, including enlarging the font and having stronger visual contrast of text vs. the image (i.e., having a solid yellow background)
- Look for a way to build a visual to defective air bags
- Consider building in stronger visual contrast to offset the dark tones
- Move "It's free" to earlier in the statement so it is connected to the repair

Respondents were asked the same series of questions for *Memorial:*

- Main message
- Clarity
- Likes/Dislikes
- Areas of improvement
- Likelihood to visit NHTSA.gov

Respondents were then shown an alternate image and asked:

- How does the new image impact how you react to the concept?
- Which image do you prefer and why?

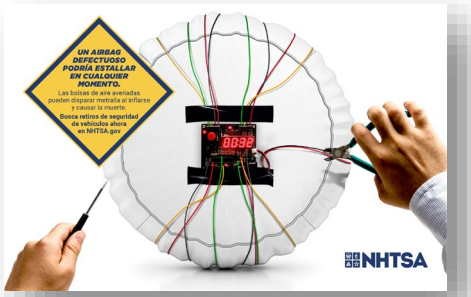
Image Preference

Overall, most indicate that both visuals can be effective, but when forced to choose, respondents tend to favor the image with the female. The image with the female is more effective at quickly capturing attention and conveys a stronger sense of sadness. Some see her as younger and representing innocence.

*Qualitative Caveat, small sample: N=62

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Call to Action

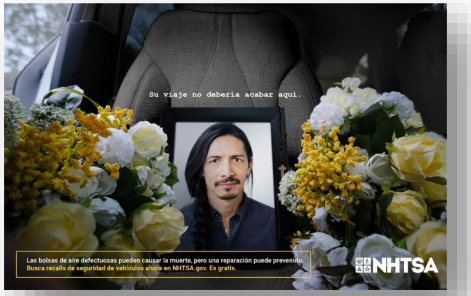


Strong – Quick response

- Urgency leads most to want to visit NHTSA.gov to check for recalls *immediately* and address a recall *quickly*
- A few would go to a mechanic/dealer to check for recalls or would be more attentive to any recall notices
- Some who find the ad less engaging (e.g., disconnect between the image and text, issues with small text, dislike the tone, etc.) would not take any action

Strong response (but lacks urgency)

- Most report they would visit the NHTSA.gov website to be proactive with recalls
- Some would use the information to be proactive when they receive a recall notice (call the dealership)
- Others report the ad makes them want to stay informed about recalls and tell others



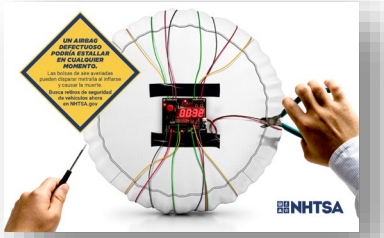
Weak response

- Strong emotional connection and urgency drives some to want to seek more information on NHTSA.gov
- Ad does not connect strongly with the cause (faulty air bags), leading many to report they would not take any action with this ad

Conclusions + Recommendations

All concepts show potential to drive traffic to NHTSA's website and each concept has certain elements that resonate with Hispanics.

Lotería performs well on comprehension ("more detailed, clearer and simpler"), addressing awareness, relevance with the problem (ruptured air bag) and motivating action in showing the consequence.



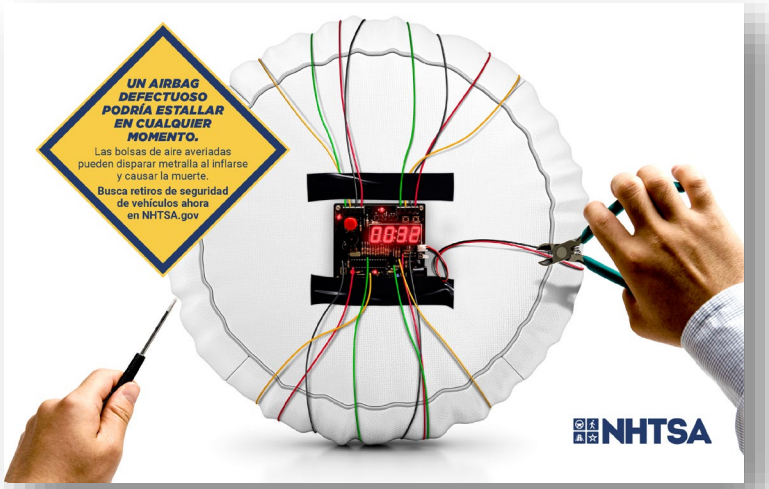
Alarma has engaging imagery and creates an urgency to act ("air bags are bombs that can explode").

Memorial connects on relevance ("it could be me") and bringing to life the consequence ("faulty air bags are certain death").

Recommendations for *Lotería*

- Increase the text size
- Move "Don't play with your life" to the top and bold the font
- Consider changing the blue background color to red or orange to convey danger
- First image needs to better convey urgency; consider changing the notice to red and keep envelope white
- Have a more detailed call to action/promotion of benefits of visiting NHTSA.gov
- Clarify that repairs are free

Recommendations for *Alarma*



- Increase the text size
- Emphasize “defective” to avoid the impression that ALL air bags are “ticking time bombs”
- Find a more commonly understood translation for “shrapnel”
- Have a more detailed call to action/promotion of benefits of visiting NHTSA.gov
- Clarify that repairs are free

Recommendations for *Alarma*

- Increase the text size
- Changing the text box to a solid, yellow color to get the message to better stand out
- Make a visual connection with the defective air bag to better align image and message
- Strengthen the contrast of colors within the image- strong presence of dark tones overpower the image for some
- Switch to the photo with the female
- Consider moving “It’s free” to earlier in the statement so it is connected more explicitly to the repair

APPENDIX

Demographics

		TOTAL
Gender	Male	48%
	Female	52%
Age	18-24	11%
	25-34	16%
	35-54	65%
	55+	8%
Ethnicity	Hispanic	100%
	Bilingual	51%
	Spanish-Dominant	49%
Education	HS or less	30%
	Vocational/some college	43%
	Bachelor's	24%
	Post Bachelor's	3%
Household Income	Less than $50K	38%
	$50K - $99 K	57%
	$100K+	5%

		TOTAL
4 Point Region	West	13%
	Midwest	21%
	South	62%
	Northeast	5%
Children <18 In household	Yes, children < 18 in HH	67%
	No children < 18 in HH	33%