



Martin Downs CC in Stuart celebrates the diversity of its multicultural staff by displaying the national flags representing their countries of origin over the entrance to the crew operations room in the maintenance facility. From left: Haiti, Canada, United States, Guatemala and Mexico.

Understanding Our Newest Employees...

The Hispanic Workforce

Editors Note: We all know that the Hispanic workforce is already playing a big role in golf course maintenance in Florida. Superintendents are taking Spanish classes and workers are taking English classes. But how well do we understand the work ethic, culture and dynamics of this ever-expanding source of labor? If managing a non-English-speaking workforce is new to you, this article may give you some insights on improving communications and performance in your operation.

BY STEVE VALDEZ

The Hispanic population in the United States is growing every year, and Hispanic labor is beginning to play a big role in the American workforce.

More and more businesses are hiring non-English-speaking Hispanics, but there are still many employers who are afraid to hire them because of the communication gap.

There are some interesting facts that need to be taken into account in determining if hiring Hispanics is the right step for your business.

As many employers have found, Hispanics consistently have great work ethics. The majority of Hispanics who come to the United States from Mexico and places in Central and South America like

El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are here to try to make a better life for themselves and their families. They are not necessarily planning to live here forever.

They want to come to the U.S. to work hard and earn good money to send back to their families.

As we all know, the U.S. dollar is worth from seven to twelve times more in their countries. An Hispanic working

here and sending \$1,000 U.S. to Mexico is sending 7,000–12,000 pesos to their families.

Depending on the exchange rate. This kind of money goes a long way in Latin American countries.

These Hispanics generally come from small towns and farm areas where jobs are scarce, the economy is bad, and farming isn't profitable.

Most Hispanics coming to work here

Secret to Successful Supervising

I will always be grateful to Dominic Ferro my former boss, co-worker and friend at Boca Grove for sharing his secret to successful supervising with me. It was, "Keep the workers happy!" Sounds pretty simple doesn't it?

All jobs, no matter what the pay scale, can become routine and boring if we don't keep the workers involved in a meaningful way. We are responsible for seeing that stagnation and boredom don't set in. With monetary constraints at many courses, supervisors must substitute pride in a job well done and recognition for the effort when extra dollars aren't always available in the paycheck.

Happy workers do better work more efficiently, which is exactly what supervisors are supposed to achieve. When employees work this way, the boss looks good and whole operation benefits. We work as a team.

A happy, positive workplace has a snowball effect which makes the power to achieve goals almost effortless. It is much more effective than a manipulating or fearful atmosphere, which makes a crew member wonder if this is really a good way to make a buck.

Thanks again, Dominic for showing me a better way to work with people.

JEFFREY J. ROTH

Senior Spray Tech
Polo Trace G. & T.C.

in the U.S. will stay here anywhere from eight months to two years. Some go through hardships getting to the U.S. Therefore, they will stay long enough to make the trip worthwhile. Others will come and go every year, working in seasonal jobs from spring to fall and then go back home for the winter.

During their stay in the U.S., they will take advantage of the time and work from dawn to sundown seven days per week to make as much money as they can within that time period.

Some of these Hispanics possess skills such brick laying, carpentry plumbing, electrical and equipment operator, which can be extremely useful in the golf course industry.

Although I was born and raised in the United States, as were my parents and grandparents, I grew up speaking both English and Spanish. I have worked with non-English-speaking Hispanics for many years.

For the last seven years, I have had the opportunity and privilege to work with, manage, interpret and train Hispanics at premier golf courses in Tennessee. With a background in counseling and minor in psychology, I found myself focusing on getting to know them and better understand their situations so that I could improve working relationships. Through this process, I learned a great deal about non-English-speaking Hispanics and developed a great respect for their work ethics.

Many businesses that have not hired non-English speaking Hispanics, but would like to hire them, are apprehensive to do so because of the obvious potential communication gaps.

There are ways to bridge those gaps and make it possible for a smooth flow of business.

First, videotapes in Spanish on operating and servicing their equipment are available from your equipment re-

tailers. You can also obtain Spanish-translated videotapes explaining golf course maintenance by contacting the GCSAA. Also, there are consultants now available that can give hands-on training on equipment operation, golf course maintenance methods, and interpreting, along with seminars on working with a multicultural workforce.

The American workforce is going through a change and we in the golf course and lawn care industries need to appreciate and take advantage of the resources available to us.

If you employ non-English speaking Hispanics or would like to employ them and have any questions, please send your questions to me in care of this magazine or telephone me.

Steve Valdez is owner/instructor, Carpe Diem Consulting Services, Nashville, Tenn. He may be reached at 615-330-0193.



1-800-432-2214

1-561-746-0667

Distributors for Howard Fertilizers

**QUALITY FERTILIZERS & CHEMICALS
FOR THE TURF INDUSTRY**

**300 N. Old Dixie Hwy., #108
Jupiter, FL 33458**



Special Membership Offer!

**For more
information
contact the
GCSAA
Service Center
at 1-800-472-7878**

To celebrate GCSAA's 75th Anniversary we are offering a special membership dues rebate program beginning **January 1, 2001** and continuing through **March 1, 2002**. During this time, superintendents and assistant superintendents joining GCSAA for the **first time** can do so for just **\$75***!

In addition to this amazing rebate, you will receive **FREE REGISTRATION** to the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show of your choice!

**All of this
for just \$75**

* Offer limited to superintendents and assistant superintendents joining GCSAA for the first time or those superintendents and assistant superintendents whose memberships have lapsed for at least two years.