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## HISPANIC EMPLOYEES



Maria Anaya assists Tom Jurasinski, a manager at Kujawa Enterprises, Inc. (KEI), with some documents needing to be explained to employee Abel Chairez. Anaya understands the cultural issues that could inhibit effective communication between KEI management and the company's native Spanish-speaking workers.

*continued from page 60*

decided the work wasn't as "daring" as climbing trees. One day, while scaling a 50-ft. palm tree, a weave of dead fronds came loose, pinning him to the safety belt that held him to the tree. His friends, who watched him being asphyxiated, told the media the reason he liked climbing trees was to show everyone how "brave" he was.

► **Pleasing the boss.** Many Hispanic workers have a strong desire to please the boss, which can be good and bad. "They will go above and beyond what they need to do. They are always afraid of not having a job. If there's a massive branch that needs to be cut, they'll cut it down no matter what it takes — even if it's not safe," Anaya says.

► **Lack of direct eye contact.** Direct eye contact with a person "in authority" is considered disrespectful in many Hispanic cultures. One problem this can cause is if a supervisor is leading a training session, without direct eye contact he might not be able to tell whether the trainees understood what he said.

► **Fear of institutions.** This might include a fear of doctors, police, emer-

gency rescue personnel and the government in general. In the case of workers from Mexico, Anaya says, because government "is threatening to them there, they come here having that same fear. They assume that our government will be exactly the same."

### Family first

One major issue within Hispanic cultures that you can use to your advantage in communicating with your workers is a strong emphasis on "family." Whenever possible, frame messages to your Hispanic workers in terms of family.

For example, if you are trying to get them to wear their safety glasses, instead of saying: "Wear your safety glasses so you don't lose an eye," instead say: "Wear your safety glasses so you will be able to see your children grow up." Or, instead of saying: "If you don't use fall protection equipment, you could fall out of that tree and die," say: "If you fall out of that tree and break your back, who will provide for your family in the future?"

Also, instead of telling them: "We don't want you to get injured," say: "We

want you go home uninjured to your family every night."

Finally, take a few minutes to ask your Hispanic workers how their spouses or children are doing when you greet them at the start of the workday. Even if you only know a little Spanish, make the effort to use a few Spanish words when you ask this — and be sure to greet them by name.

### 5 management tips:

► **Understand your role.** Your Hispanic workers are likely to nod their heads "yes" indicating they understand — even when they don't. This is part of the strong desire to please the boss. One way to work around this is to carefully watch their facial expressions. Then have them either repeat back to you or demonstrate to you what they just learned.

► **Work hard to build trust.** Regularly praise your workers for jobs well done. Recognize them in front of their peers. "We try to build trust with them first. Communication gets better with trust," Anaya says. "We welcome them,

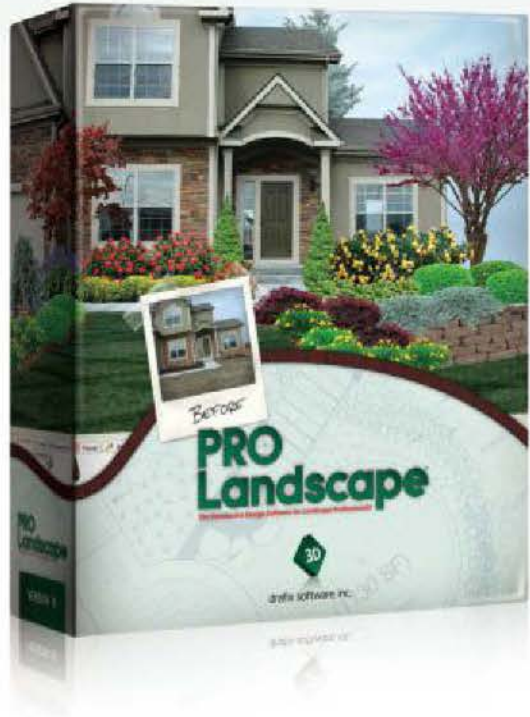
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## HISPANIC EMPLOYEES

*continued from page 62*

try to get to know them, and make them feel like they are part of our company right away.”

› **Respect your workers’ cultures.** Celebrate holidays such as Cinco de Mayo (the Fifth of May — a holiday celebrated in Mexico that commemorates the 1862 victory by Mexican forces

over French soldiers). Have your native Mexican workers bring in food to share from their culture.

› **Train your workers on the importance of emergency personnel.** Help them so they are not afraid to seek assistance from firefighters, police or emergency medical technicians (EMTs) when needed. In one instance in Wisconsin,

two Hispanic workers drowned after a canoe capsized on a golf course pond. Although EMTs arrived several minutes after receiving the call, co-workers initially sent them to the wrong side of the pond. Investigators believed that part of the problem was the Hispanic co-workers’ fears of talking with uniformed officers and rescue personnel.

› **Have a bilingual supervisor accompany ill or injured workers to the doctor.**

This is important so the supervisor can help translate English into Spanish and so the supervisor can tell the doctor about your company’s light-duty program. However, it is also important to help allay your Hispanic workers’ fears. **LM**

MULHERN, a Belleville, WI-based freelance writer, can be reached at [bamu100@aol.com](mailto:bamu100@aol.com).

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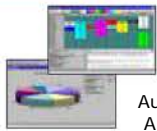
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## Do you have multiple personalities?

In 2004, archaeologists digging in Israel unearthed the earliest evidence to date of the controlled use of fire — charred wood and seeds — at a site dating back 790,000 years. At least one academic believes this pivotal use of fire originated in part thanks to the proliferation of multiple personalities.

“I believe fire was discovered by a group of extroverts, cavemen sitting in a group, loudly banging rocks together,” said Dr. Brian Little, a psychology professor, during his keynote speech at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego Feb. 10. “After the extroverts discovered fire, however, I believe it was the introverts who, one by one, quietly kept the fire going.”

Little, a Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, kicked off his address with a 10-question personality quiz. Green Industry professionals were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest score, for each question.

To give you an overall sense of the pop quiz (and Little’s wit), one question was, “Are you a fast-paced person? ... If you’re still thinking about this one, go ahead and give yourself a low score.”

I scored a 64 out of 100. Go figure, I’m an extrovert. I scored well under 100 because sometimes I flex beyond my biological wiring, according to Little.

Based on certain cultural settings and projects I’m committed to, I exhibit introverted tendencies sometimes.

“This is just a baseline quiz — don’t tell people your scores,” Little said in a surprisingly serious tone.

“*Uh-oh, too late,*” I thought to myself.

Then after a five-second pause, Little chuckled and said, “Just kidding. We all know the extroverts immediately shared their scores with the introverts seated beside them, while the introverts haven’t even disclosed their scores to themselves.”

### Find the right mix

When hiring and developing people and forming internal teams, remember: You can’t always judge a book by its cover. Little, who has delivered more than 700 keynote speeches, is a self-admitted closet introvert.

A few introvert-versus-extrovert generalities, according to the psych professor, include:

▶ Introverts are marathoners; extroverts are sprinters: “An extrovert might say, ‘I’m the fastest brain surgeon in the country. What more do you want?’ And the extrovert might not think for a minute that his rushing might be the problem,” Little said.

▶ “When extroverts say, ‘I need a cup of coffee,’ they aren’t kidding. A little caffeine really helps extroverts kick it into gear,” Little said. “On the other hand, coffee can hinder the performance of introverts, particularly if they’re tackling quantitative, timed tasks.”

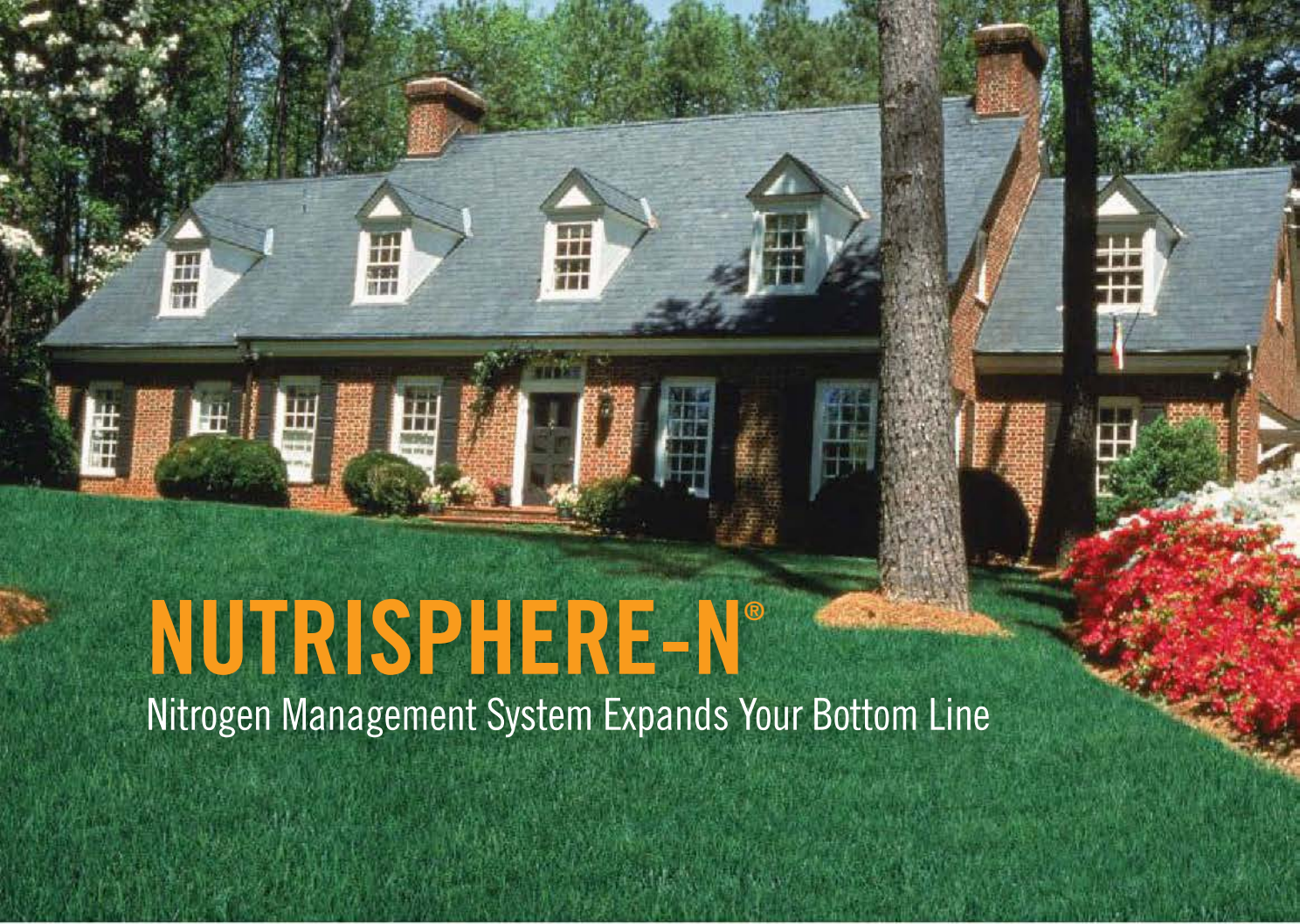
▶ Extroverts learn better in engaging, humorous, hands-on, group settings. Introverts, meanwhile, find those types of environments stifling, and prefer more traditional, classroom-type training. “You can almost hear the introverts whispering to themselves in kindergarten, ‘I can sit as still as a statue ... na-na, na-na, na-na ... And I’m gonna be an accountant,’” Little said.

“We desperately need both introverts and extroverts within our organizations,” Little said. “It’s a matter of survival, not just success. Mankind would be extinct without such diverse personalities. The key is getting everyone to accept their inherent personality differences, and then taking full advantage of your organization’s multiple personalities.”

**“We desperately need both introverts and extroverts within our organizations. It’s a matter of survival, not just success. Mankind would be extinct without such diverse personalities.”** — DR. BRIAN LITTLE







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