



## How to Attract and Retain Hispanic Talent

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July 3, 2007

### **Opinion: Diversity in the Workplace is not about '*Inclusion*' but rather '*Integration*'.**

The American Express Credit Card Division, "*Open for Small Business*", struck gold when they recently initiated a marketing campaign designed for Hispanic small business owners. Rather than mail the applications to a list of Hispanic small business owners, they solicited Hispanic consumers directly. Their reasoning was simple. They learned that the distinction between Hispanic consumers and Hispanic small business owners was blurred. It was not uncommon to see employed Hispanics operate a small business or two 'on the side'.

While monthly statements may show that Hispanics use their American Express card at 'high-end' establishments, the likelihood of their using it to float a sizeable purchase of inventory or raw materials is higher. Hispanics tend to view credit as a convenience and an opportunity. American Express understands this distinction and has taken the right steps to capitalize on their growing credit needs.

Similar success strategies for developing alternative ways to attract Hispanic buyers can also be applied to companies searching for Hispanic talent. With an increasing trend to diversify the workplace with employees that look and talk like their buyers, companies that sell to Hispanic consumers are competing aggressively for qualified talent.

With the support from their top leadership, large companies have created a multicultural division within their human resources department to nurture relations with the associations that have access to qualified candidates. To attract the best multicultural talent, coordinators sometimes turn to other Hispanics working in their firm to meet with prospective candidates and encourage them to come on board.

However, after the first week on the job, new Hispanic hires are usually forced into a corporate culture that is not aware of the complexities of integrating a diversified workforce. In fact, some companies unwittingly refer to their multicultural department as the '*Office of Diversity and Inclusion*'. What they may not realize is how potentially insulting the term '*inclusion*' may actually be to a Hispanic. For Hispanics, the term '*inclusion*' (translated into Spanish - '*restriccion or limitacion*') gives the impression that one is considered 'restricted' or 'limited' and may or may not 'belong' on their own terms. Perhaps a more acceptable term should be '*Office of Diversified Talents*'.

Why is it that so many organizations that know how to attract Hispanic talent, fail to retain them after hiring? If companies do not bother to adjust their corporate culture to integrate Hispanic talent in a culturally acceptable manner, then the benefits from integrating diversity into the talent pool will eventually erode. To retain and leverage the value of a diverse workforce, companies should seek to integrate (*not include*) appropriate support systems that can allow Hispanics to maintain their personal identity.

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