

In york and illinois.
there is also a



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the last decade, the Hispanic/Latino population in the United States grew by 58% to more than 35 million, or 12. 5% of the population. Latino workers comprise the largest labor force of any minority group. While many immigrants from Latin America are highly educated, large numbers of Latino immigrants are filling positions in virtually every industry, most notably in positions requiring unskilled labor. According to the Milken Institute, one million new immigrants are expected annually in the next decade, most of who will come from Latin America.

By 2050, Latinos are expected to represent 25% of the population, or 96 million people. As the fastest-growing ethnic group in the U. S., Latinos represent more than 30% of the workforce in Southern California, and have significant populations in Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois. There is also a marked increase in the immigrant Latino population in many other states, including in the Midwest. According to The Los Angeles Times, the Latino immigrant population in the heartland has nearly doubled in the last decade in some areas, breathing new life into parts of rural America where otherwise the populations are draining. Towns such as Worthington, Minnesota, expanded by 13% with the arrival of nearly 2, 000 Hispanics.

In states such as Iowa and Kansas, immigrant workers are filling positions in meat-processing plants and in other manufacturing and food-processing plants. Because Latinos are a rapidly expanding workforce, there are new challenges for company management in these states. Where there has been little or no existing Hispanic population, there are very few bilingual supervisors and managers as there are in states such as California, Texas and Florida, which have been home to Hispanics for many

generations. Culver's Frozen Custard and Butter Burgers, a Wisconsin based chain of over 200 franchise restaurants in 11 states, mostly in the Midwest, made a point of providing training sessions for Hispanic cross-cultural understanding at their recent convention of more than 1, 000 owners/operators and managers. " Our southwest restaurants know how wonderful the Latino workforce is.

They are dedicated, loyal and extremely hard-working individuals," said Karen Stoll, Culver's Vice President of Administration and the session organizer, " yet, until recently in the Midwest, many Midwesterners little experience with the culture and were hindered by language and culture issues. Through this session, we have pinpointed communication barriers and have developed strategies for improvement." Latino newcomers have a significant impact on the U.

S. economy, both as workers and as consumers. Organizations are recognizing the important role human resources plays in using cultural awareness and sensitivity in communicating with their valued immigrant workforces.

To stay competitive, companies must find ways to improve the performance and efficiency of all of their employees and immigrant workforces create new and unique challenges in this area. The challenges employers face extends beyond language differences. Foreign-born Hispanics, like other immigrant groups, have built-in cultural values, behavior patterns and ways of thinking that affect communication at the workplace. Employers who do

not take the time to increase their awareness of these differences run the risk of miscommunication, decreased productivity and increased turnover.