

Understanding the Mexican Workforce Culture



Presented by:
Havaca Johnson

Mexico: A Global Perspective

- Importance Mexican Perspective
- Mexican Cultural Comparisons
- Mexican Management Comparisons



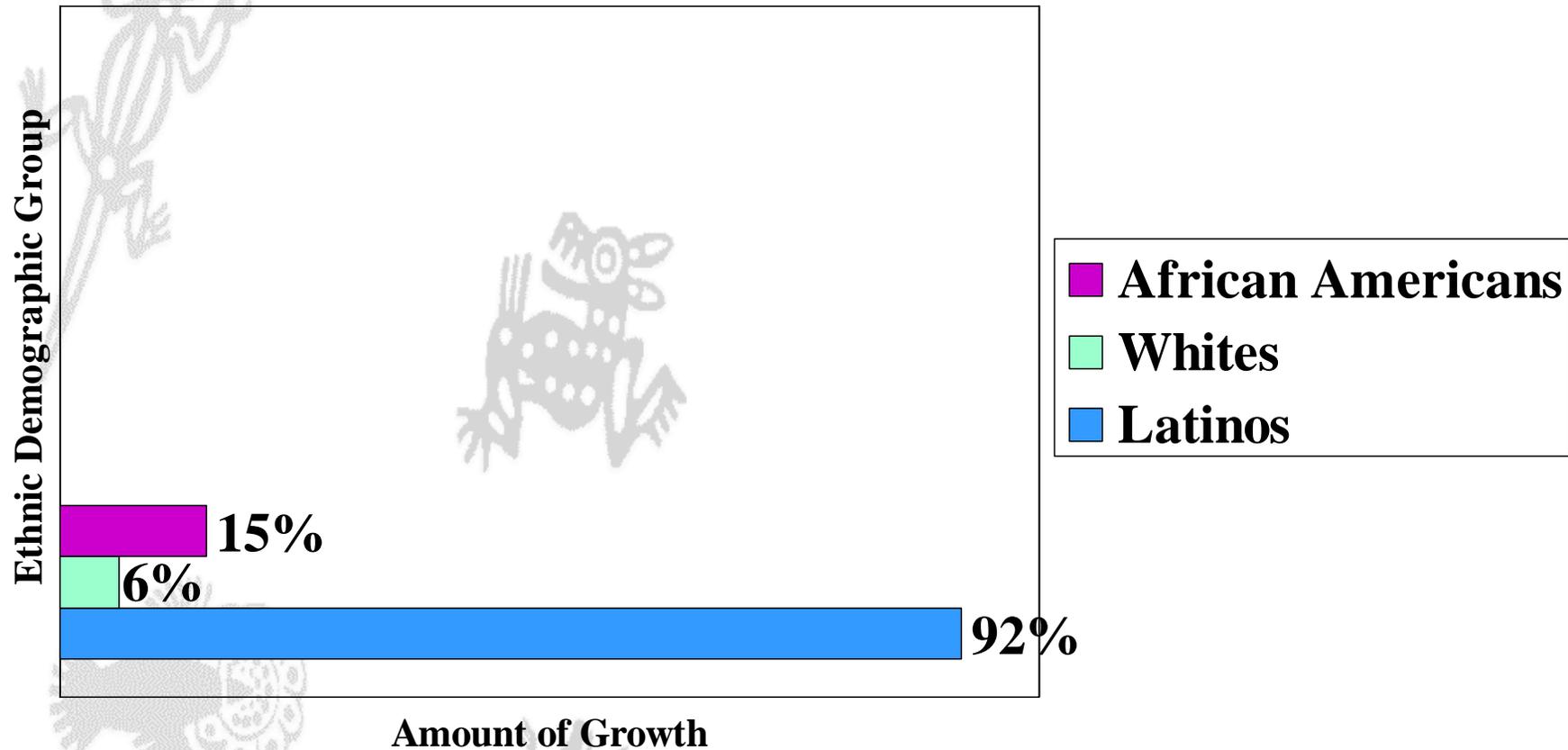
ACTIVITY

- Imagine that you in an interview. You must answer questions, but can not use the letter “n” in any of your replies...
- If you are called upon and do not wish to participate, just say “pass”.

Industries in the US with a high percentage of Mexican immigrants in the workforce

- Manufacturing – Animal Slaughter – 26.8%
- Manufacturing – Fruit and Vegetable -- 22.3%
- Service – Car Washes – 28%
- Agriculture – Crops – 22.9%
- Agriculture – All other (except animals) – 10.9%
- Professional – Landscaping – 22.6%

Percentage of Population Growth in Missouri between 1990-2000



Source: www.oseda.missouri.edu,
Office of Social and Economic Data

Analysis

Projections for US labor force growth between 2000-2010

- Asian labor force 44%
- Hispanic labor force 36 %
- Black labor force 21 %
- White labor force 9%

Cultural Comparisons

Aspect	Mexico	USA
Family	Family is the first priority. Children are celebrated and sheltered. Wife often fulfills domestic role. Mobility is limited.	Family is usually second to work. Children are often more independent. Wife often fulfills dual roles. Mobility quite common.
Religion	90% of the population is Roman Catholic. Fatalistic outlook. "As God wills."	Mixed religions. "Master of own life" outlook.
Education	Memorization. Emphasis on theoretical. Rigid, broad curriculum.	Analytical approach. Emphasis on the practical. Narrow, in-depth specialization.
Nationalism	Proud of ancient history and traditions. Reluctant to settle outside Mexico.	Proud of "American way of life." More diverse population.

Etiquette	"Old world" formality. Etiquette and manners seen as measure of social class.	Formality often sacrificed for efficiency. "Let's get to the point" approach.
Personal Appearance	Dress and grooming are status symbols.	Appearance is secondary to performance.
Status	Title and position more important than money in eyes of society.	Money is main status measure and is reward for achievement.

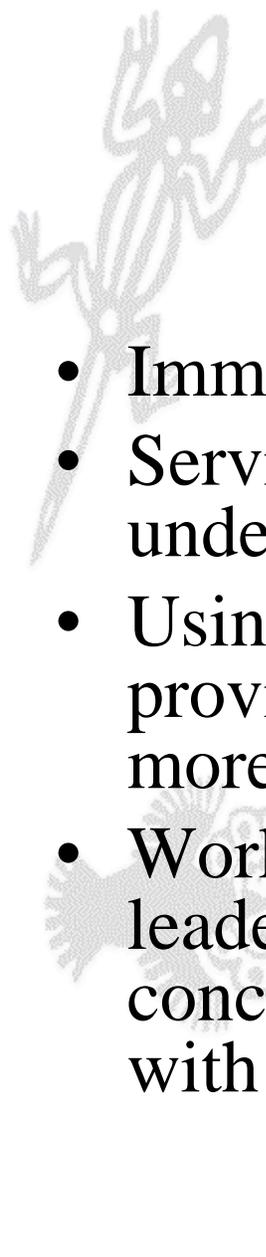


Management Comparisons

Aspect	Mexico	USA
Work/Leisure	Leisure considered essential for full life. Works to live.	Leisure seen as reward for hard work. Lives to work.
Direction/Delegation	Traditional manager is autocratic. Younger managers starting to accept and delegate responsibility. Subordinates used to being assigned tasks, not authority.	Managers delegate responsibility and authority. Executive seeks responsibility and accepts accountability.
Theory vs. Practice	Basically theoretical mind. Practical implementation often difficult.	Basically pragmatic mind. Action-oriented problem-solving approach.
Control	Still not fully accepted. Sensitive to being "checked upon." Sensitive to giving and receiving critical feed-back.	Universally accepted and practiced. Critical feed-back expected and discussed.

Loyalty	Mostly loyal to superior (person rather than organization). Beginnings of self-loyalty.	Mainly self-loyalty. Performance motivated by ambition.
Staffing	Family and friends are preferred due to trustworthiness. Promotions based on loyalty to superior.	Relatives usually barred - No nepotism here! Promotion based on performance.
Competition	Avoids personal competition; favors harmony at work.	Proves self in competitive situations.
Training & Development	Training highly theoretical.	Training concrete, specific.
Time	Relative concept. Deadlines flexible. "Mañana" can mean "not today." What is happening now is more important than the future.	Literal imperative. Deadlines and commitments are firm. What is happening now is only important if it contributes towards the future.
Planning	Mostly short term because of uncertain environment and sense of "now."	Mostly long-term in predicted environment.





Next Steps

- Immigrants continue to enter the US workforce
- Service providers to immigrant clients must better understand and consider immigrant cultures
- Using this matrix of cultural competence, we can provide immigrants with better understanding and more effective services
- Workforce Development Boards need to take a leadership role as the catalyst to bring all concerned partners into an arena that would deal with basic cultural difference

Ideas for Serving the Immigrant Workforce

- English for Limited English Speakers
- Immigrant Youth Internship Programs in Career Centers
- Cultural Competence Assessment for Local Employers
- Bi-lingual Training Courses
- Avenues for Communication between Immigrants and Established communities

Resources

- Cultural Comparisons Matrix available:
http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_culxcomp.html
- Cambio de Colores, by Sylvia Lazos available:
<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/commdm/dm7615.pdf>
- Mexican Immigrant Workers and the U.S. Economy,
Available: <http://www.aif.org/pubed/focus/0902.htm>
- Havaca Johnson: wdbhj@iland.net

Thank you