

# **Hispanic Woodworker Training Program**

## **An Innovative Approach to Integrating the Hispanic Workforce into the Wood Products Industry**

### **Phase 1: Assessment Results and Recommendations**

*Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association  
in Partnership with the  
Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America, and the  
U.S. Forest Service, Wood Education Resource Center*

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## **Executive summary:**

Between 1990 and 2000 the U.S. Hispanic population expanded by 58% and now account for 12.5% of the U.S. population. For 35.3 million people in the U.S. Spanish is their first language. Hispanics are the biggest 17-and-under minority group in the United States.

In North Carolina, Arkansas and Georgia the percent of population growth over the past ten years has exceeded 300%; in Tennessee, South Carolina, and Alabama over 200%; and in Kentucky and Minnesota over 150%. Most states expect the Hispanic population to double by 2025.

The wood products industry, like many labor-intensive industries, has increasingly turned to hiring Hispanic workers to maintain a competitive edge. The growing Hispanic population in this country has created a workforce that is ideal to the needs of many companies. Most companies that have employed Hispanic workers are pleased with their productivity and hard work; however, with these benefits there are also some challenges. Communication, educational level, and legal issues are typically mentioned as obstacles for optimal worker performance.

To identify these obstacles, current training needs, and optimal delivery methods of information to these workers, an assessment was completed of companies and Hispanic workers in the wood products industry in late 2002 and early 2003. A company survey, developed with the input of industry leaders and experts in survey design, was distributed to members of leading industry associations in the country. Additionally, this group of experts helped develop a focus group protocol that was used in meetings with Hispanic workers to identify training needs from their perspective.

This project did not survey a representative sample. Investigators were not trying to extrapolate information from the assessment to draw conclusions about the entire wood products industry. The analysis does not attempt to infer results to all companies nor all Hispanic workers in the wood products industry. This survey was conducted to determine the needs of companies that belong to a participating association and completed the survey.

### **Company survey results**

More than 1,400 company surveys were distributed and 149 (11%) responded. Of those that responded, 72% completed the survey on the web site, 11% sent the completed survey via e-mail, 9% sent the survey as a fax, and 7% used traditional mail service to return the completed survey.

The survey was statistically analyzed for three separate sub-populations:

- All companies that responded to the survey;
- Respondents in the Hardwood Region (58% of all completed surveys);

- All companies that volunteered to participate in the focus group meetings (almost 30% of all completed surveys).

Additionally, comparisons were made for companies:

- With between one and fifty employees and those with more than fifty employees, to help identify specific needs of large versus small companies;
- With Hispanic workers comprising less than ten percent of their workforce with those that had greater than ten percent Hispanic employees;
- That have been employing Hispanic workers for less than five years with companies with more experience (more than five years).

Researchers discovered few significant differences among the responses in the various comparisons that were tested. This report describes the significant differences that did emerge. Average values were calculated from all responses and these averages were tested for significant differences. All differences identified in the following discussions are significant at the 95% confidence interval for the average response of that question.

Average responses that are identified together and not described as different are not significantly different at the 95% level. For example, when we report “On average, respondents rated the economy, workforce availability, and workforce skills as the most important issues their company faces” there is no statistically significant difference among the average response of these three topics. However, these three may be significantly different than other issues mentioned in this question.

On average, respondents rated the economy, workforce availability, and workforce skills as the most important issues their company faces. Interviews were used significantly more for job placement than other employee evaluation methods. Requiring previous experience was, statistically, the second most common job placement tool. Companies that responded to the survey indicated that, on average, general safety, company orientation, personal protective equipment, and standard company benefits were more frequently included in their training program than were other topics.

On-the-job training and verbal/one-on-one presentation of information were identified as the most common ways companies deliver training. When asked how their training and information programs were evaluated, most responded that they had a “feeling or sense” that they work.

Of all companies that responded to the survey, 68% had Hispanic employees. Most companies indicated that they began hiring Hispanic workers because they were more available and more productive. Companies reported that the primary benefits of employing Hispanic workers were that they are productive, hardworking, cooperative, reliable, and locally available. Communication in English and residency status/legal issues were of the greatest concern for companies completing the survey. There were few statistically significant differences identified by companies on the importance of all other topics of concern with their Hispanic workforce.

A lack of integration into the company was of a greater concern for companies with less than ten percent Hispanic employees than it was for companies with more than ten percent. Providing written material in Spanish, verbal training in Spanish and hosting company “socials” were rated as significantly more effective than were encouraging English classes for workers or Spanish classes for supervisors. The topics of safety, job skills, cross training and English classes were identified as being significantly more useful than other information and training topics.

In general, companies felt there was the need for improved training for all workers. They indicated that training in English communication and immigration and naturalization were the only two topics that should be developed specifically for the Hispanic workforce.

Companies that said they would be interested in participating in the Hispanic focus group meetings more frequently responded that there was the need for specific training for their Hispanic workers than did companies in the Hardwood region.

Companies that responded to the survey significantly identified on-the-job training as the most useful delivery method for training programs. The second most useful delivery methods were written material, local training sessions, and with videotapes. The use of distance learning or video teleconferencing, Internet-based training, and regional training sessions were viewed as the least useful.

On the job training, written material, local training sessions, and videotapes were identified as being the optimal delivery for training for those companies that volunteered to participate in the focus groups.

The vast majority of all companies expect to hire, train, and retain Hispanic workers in the future and would like additional information on training Hispanic workers.

### Focus group results

A total of 11 focus group meetings were held with a total of 67 Hispanic workers in the wood products industry. These meetings were held in Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Approximately ninety percent of the workers were from Mexico, however there were also some from Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Columbia, Guatemala, and Honduras. None of the workers were born in the United States.

Workers reported that they received on-the-job training for almost all aspects of their employment. Communication in English was perceived to be a significant obstacle and issues surrounding legal status were their primary concerns. Orientation and company policies were poorly understood and few workers felt that there were opportunities for advancement within the company. Skilled workers were typically more thoroughly trained and were more inclined to remain with the company even if a better paying job became available. All workers stated that their primary objective for working at the

company was financial and they wanted to either work more hours per week or have an increase in salary.

Participants understood the importance of learning English but described a number of obstacles that prevented them from becoming bilingual. Family obligations and time constraints were a primary reason that many couldn't study English, as was the availability of appropriate courses for individuals with their level of education. Additionally, few perceived that there are rewards, either through advancement or financial, for those who are or have become bilingual.

In general, workers in unskilled positions have short-term plans and expectations for working in the wood products industry and living in the United States. Workers in skilled positions usually are living with family here in the United States and could be described as seeking the "American Dream"— an improved future for themselves and their families.

Improved training is needed throughout the industry. Companies in the wood products industry and many of the focus group participants mentioned the need for more formalized, standardized or frequent training programs. The need for more materials in Spanish and improved communication was also mentioned by many of the companies and focus group participants.

Basic company orientation is usually only provided at the beginning of employment, when Hispanic workers are typically inundated with information. Because of the communication difficulties during this time, workers focus on the information required for their position and retain little of general company policies and worker rights and responsibilities.

#### Discussion on training and information needs

A company training program template should be developed to assist in the implementation of a well-designed and thorough training program for all workers. This should include topics that are typically only covered at the beginning of employment and areas such as safety training that should be reinforced regularly. A structured planning guide, training content, support, and evaluation material, should be provided both in English and Spanish.

Prior to this Hispanic workforce project the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) conducted an effort looking into the safety training needs of the wood industry. This effort examined training needs, delivery modes, and the potential for collaborative efforts. Numerous leading wood products associations were involved in identifying the needs for this issue and efforts are being developed to address the specifics of the wood products industry. This continuing effort will meet the needs of the industry to provide more structured, formal and frequent training of all workers in safety and general job skills.

Efforts should be undertaken to locate and/or develop programs to train Hispanic workers in survival English for the wood products workplace. The objective is not to gain full English proficiency, but to allow supervisors and workers to communicate on a basic, functional level. Similar resources should be developed for Spanish survival/basic communication for English-speaking supervisors and co-workers.

Regularly scheduled training programs should include time for reinforcing the employees' understanding of company policies, regulations, and the production cycle. These training sessions should include tours of the plant with specific presentations on new machines and methodologies being implemented in the company. This training should be for all employees and not restricted to only those involved in the task.

Company management should make concerted efforts to fully explain company decisions or changes in policy that directly affect workers. A quality and reinforced company orientation would make it easier for workers to understand these changes in company procedures.

When possible, workers should have direct access to a member of upper management, perhaps by appointment or during a regularly scheduled time.

Training in teamwork, cultural diversity, and quality control at the company level - for all workers and supervisors - would help open these channels of communication and ultimately increase production efficiency and product quality.

Immigration issues are a serious concern among the Hispanic population and to a lesser extent the company management. Many other industries are struggling with this issue and there has yet to be a well-defined solution. At a minimum, companies must comply with legal requirements; however, beyond the basic I-9 form, immigration procedures and requirements are complex. Information regarding this process should be compiled "in a nutshell" and made available in a user-friendly format to company management and Hispanic workers. A word of caution: there is no band-aid solution to this issue. It is a complex and time-consuming process.

### Recommendations and future efforts

Based on the result of this assessment and the continuing efforts of WERC in structured safety training and delivery, the focus of this project will be in the development of resources to help managers and supervisors better integrate and optimize the productivity of the Hispanic workforce. This will be accomplished through the development of a number of resources which, when implemented, will provide a better understanding of the workplace for the Hispanic workers and a greater ability for the manager to fully integrate the Spanish speaking employees into the production environment.

Specifically, a supervisors guide for managing all employees and the Hispanic workforce will be developed. This guide will be user friendly – in a nutshell information directly applicable to the wood products industry and it will include a description and discussion

of the importance, concepts, activities, and resources of the following: company orientation methodologies, employee handbook template, team building and quality control concepts, and cultural diversity training. Additionally, a Hispanic worker employment guide will be written which will include the following topics: generalities vs. stereotyping, geographical variability and implications on management, cultural influences, educational systems in Latin America, communication – overcoming the barriers and Immigration – explain the difficulties Hispanics face and potential solutions.

A manual to assist the Hispanic worker in adapting and understanding the American culture and work place will be developed with the following topics: Legal issues, communication/education, work environment, culture and communities, and an English/Spanish audio resource of common terms in the wood products industry workplace.

These products will be developed with the input of several individuals including experts in Human Resources management, Hispanic culture and training, wood products/manufacturing, and information technology. Once the final products are developed they will be integrated into an electronic template for delivery to WERC, participating associations and their members in the wood products industry.

Many wood products companies already rely on the Hispanic workforce, and it is highly likely that this trend will continue in the future. The productivity and efficiency of these workers is directly related to the quality of training efforts. Expectations that Hispanic workers will quickly become proficient in English should be modest. If companies desire optimum performance from their employees, supervisors should be assured that the workers fully understand their positions and the work environment. Developing training materials and efforts specifically for this audience is the logical solution.

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## **Introduction:**

Increasingly, the wood products industry has turned to the Hispanic population for workers. The growing Hispanic workforce reflects the nationwide trend, in which many industries rely upon Hispanic workers to maintain their competitive edge. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. Hispanic population expanded by 58% and now accounts for 12.5% of the U.S. population. For 35.3 million people in the U.S., Spanish is their first language (Population Division, U. S. Census Bureau, 2001).

In North Carolina, Arkansas and Georgia the percent of population growth over the past ten years has exceeded 300%; in Tennessee, South Carolina, and Alabama over 200%; and in Kentucky and Minnesota over 150%. Most states expect the Hispanic population to double by 2025. (Census 2000.)

There are a number of challenges to integrating this workforce into the wood products industry. The goal of this project is to establish broad partnerships with woodworking industry associations, forest products manufacturers, and others to develop training approaches for Hispanic workers for the long-term benefit of both the wood products industry and the Hispanic workforce. For the purpose of this project we broadly defined “Hispanic” as a person of Latin American descent who speaks Spanish as his/her primary language.

The specific objectives of this project are to:

- Conduct a rigorous assessment of Hispanic workforce development needs and programs in the wood products industry and in other industries;
- Develop, pilot-test, and evaluate training program(s) for Hispanic workers in the wood products industry;
- Provide turn-key training program(s) to the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC), including mechanisms and processes for working with associations to deliver this training to their member companies.

This document describes the activities and provides the results of the assessment phase of this project. The assessment was designed to answer three broad questions:

- 1) What knowledge, skills, and behaviors does the Hispanic worker need from the perspective of the industry?
- 2) What training needs are specific to Hispanics from the Hispanic worker’s perspective?
- 3) What is the most effective mechanism and format for delivering training to the Hispanic workforce in the wood products industry?

Industry leaders and individuals involved in Hispanic training and education were contacted and invited to participate in the development of the assessment tools needed to answer the above questions. These Assessment Team members include:

Mark Barford, Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc. (NC)  
Ricardo Berrum, Hardwood Artisans (VA)

Dave Case, D. J. Case & Associates (IN)  
Francisco Espinosa, Ohio State University Extension (OH)  
Burt Gonzales, Rural Opportunities, Inc. (OH)  
Candelario Guzman, Rural Opportunities, Inc. (OH)  
Ken Hutton, Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America (PA)  
Steve Lawser, Wood Components Manufacturers Association (GA)  
Tim Longwell, D. J. Case & Associates (IN)  
Ray Moistner, Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association (IN)  
Mike Patton, Kewaunee Scientific Corporation (NC)  
Al Steele, U.S. Forest Service (WV)  
Robert Stout, RLS Commercial Interiors, Inc. (NC)  
Dick Titus, Kitchen Cabinet Manufactures Association (VA)

This Assessment Team met in North Carolina in October 2002 to develop initial drafts of two assessment tools: 1) a comprehensive survey designed to assess the current conditions and needs of the wood product industry, and 2) a focus group protocol to gain perspective from the Hispanic workers on existing training, needs, and optimal delivery methods.

Drafts of the assessment tools were distributed to Assessment Team members for comment and were refined accordingly. Additionally, three survey design experts, from both the private sector (Al Kniola, Midwest Marketing Research) and academia (Dr. Shorna R. Broussard, Purdue University and Dr. Angela G. Mertig, Michigan State University), reviewed the survey and changes were made based on their recommendations.

## **Wood Products Company Assessment**

The company assessment survey was sent to participating associations for distribution to their members. The survey consisted of three sections. The first section dealt with current situation, training, and needs of the company's entire work force. The second section addressed the current situation, training and needs of the Hispanic workforce. The final section gathered information on the company itself.

Associations sent the surveys to their members either electronically via e-mail or through the traditional mail services. The initial contact in the company was asked to forward the survey to all independently managed operations within their organization and to have the individual in that operation that is most experienced with Hispanic workers complete the survey. If the survey was sent electronically, that individual had three options for completing the survey:

- 1) They could access and respond to the survey via the Internet at <http://www.hispanicwood.com/survey/> or;
- 2) Open the attached word file containing the survey, complete it on their computer, save it, then e-mail the file as an attachment directly to [tim@djcase.com](mailto:tim@djcase.com) or;

- 3) The attached word file of the survey could be printed, completed, and mailed or faxed to D. J. Case & Associates.

If the survey was sent through traditional mail service the respondent could access the survey web page or complete the survey and fax or mail it to D. J. Case & Associates.

The surveys were distributed throughout the wood products industry from sawmill through final. Logging and forestry operations were not included. This was not a representative sample. Investigators were not trying to extrapolate the information attained in the assessment to the entire wood products industry. The analysis does not attempt to infer results to all companies nor all Hispanic workers in the wood products industry. This survey was conducted to determine the needs of companies that belong to a participating association and completed the survey.

The project focused specifically on those companies that belong to a participating association for two reasons. First, these companies are often innovators looking for progressive solutions to emerging problems and opportunities and thus likely to take advantage of resources identified. Secondly, the proposed delivery mechanism is to distribute the final products of the project through the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) to the participating associations, and then on to the individual companies for use. Once these innovators have obtained and utilized the information from their respective association, non-association affiliated companies are more likely to become interested in the products.

## **Results**

More than 1,400 surveys were distributed and 149 (11%) responded. Of those that responded, 72% completed the survey on the web site, 11% sent the completed survey via e-mail, 9% sent the survey as a fax, and 7% used traditional mail service to return the completed survey. The complete results are located in Appendix A.

Fifty-eight percent of the surveys completed were from companies in the Hardwood Region of the United States, and of those respondents, 59% had Hispanic workers. Nationwide, almost 30% of the companies that responded to the survey volunteered to have their workers participate in the focus group meetings.

The survey was statistically analyzed for three separate sub-populations:

- All companies that responded to the survey;
- Respondents in the Hardwood Region (58% of all completed surveys);
- All companies that volunteered to participate in the focus group meetings (almost 30% of all completed surveys).

Additionally, comparisons were made for companies:

- With between one and fifty employees and those with more than fifty employees, to help identify specific needs of large versus small companies;

- With Hispanic workers comprising less than ten percent of their workforce with those that had greater than ten percent Hispanic employees;
- That have been employing Hispanic workers for less than five years with companies with more experience (more than five years).

Researchers discovered few significant differences among the responses in the various comparisons that were tested. This report describes the significant differences that did emerge. Average values were calculated from all responses and these averages were tested for significant differences. All differences identified in the following discussions are significant at the 95% confidence interval for the average response of that question.

Average responses that are identified together and not described as “different” are not significantly different at the 95% level. For example, when we report “On average, respondents rated the economy, workforce availability, and workforce skills as the most important issues their company faces” there is no statistically significant difference among the average response of these three topics. However, these three may be significantly different than other issues mentioned in this question.

### **Section 1: Current situation, training, and needs of the company’s entire work force.**

#### Issues and obstacles

Companies were asked to rate the importance of the issues and obstacles that they are currently facing (Question 1, page 42). Specific issues included the economy, international competition, domestic competition, raw material availability, workforce availability, workforce skills, and others (fill in the blank). Respondents rated these issues as *very important*, *somewhat important*, *of little importance*, or as *not at all important* (Table 1).

Table 1: Common issues and obstacles facing companies in the wood products industry.

	<b><u>Very important</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat important</u></b>	<b><u>Of little importance</u></b>	<b><u>Not at all important</u></b>
Economy <sup>a</sup>	77%	21%	1%	1%
Workforce availability <sup>a, b</sup>	66%	32%	1%	1%
Workforce skills <sup>a, b</sup>	64%	32%	3%	1%
Domestic Competition <sup>b</sup>	58%	33%	6%	1%
Raw material availability <sup>c</sup>	40%	46%	13%	2%
International Competition <sup>d</sup>	18%	28%	32%	21%
Other <sup>z</sup>	4%	0%	0%	0%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

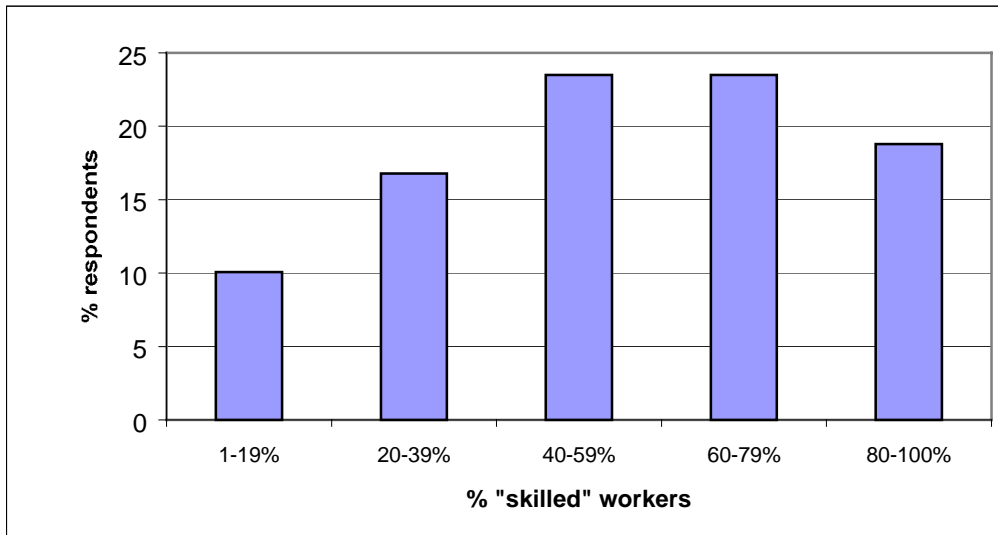
<sup>z</sup> cannot be statistically compared to all other topics in this table.

Respondents rated the economy, workforce availability, and workforce skills as the most important issues. Although international competition was the least important concern for respondents, those companies with more than fifty employees were more concerned with international competition than were smaller companies. Raw material availability was the second least important issue of all issues listed.

### Skilled workforce

Companies were asked to identify the percentage of skilled workers in their plants (Question 2, page 43). The question did not define “skilled” but allowed the individual to determine what constituted a skilled position. Respondents could select among ranges in ten percent increments (Figure 1). Additionally, companies were asked whether these skilled workers were locally *very available*, *somewhat available*, *seldom available*, or *not available* (Question 3, page 43).

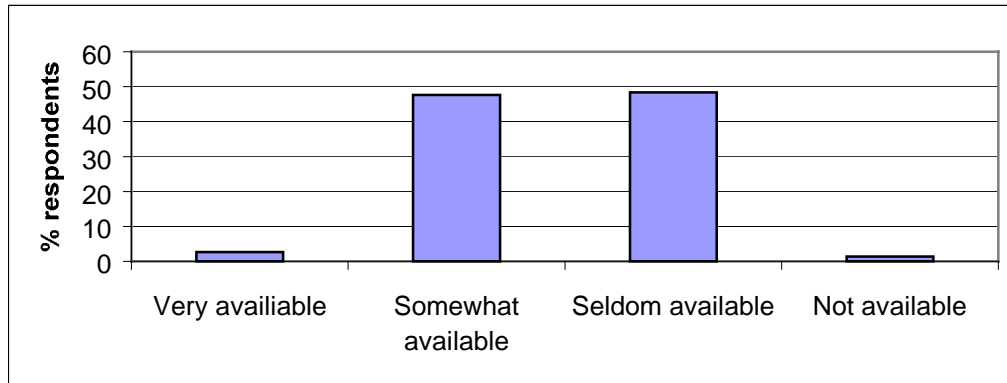
Figure 1: Percent of total workforce classified as “skilled”.



There was high variability in the amount of skilled labor that respondents required in their operations. The highest ranked category was 60 – 79 %, and it was selected by 15% of respondents. The remainder of responses was spread throughout the data.

When asked about the local availability of these “skilled” workers, 48% responded that they were somewhat available and 48% replied that they were seldom locally available (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Local availability of “skilled” workers.

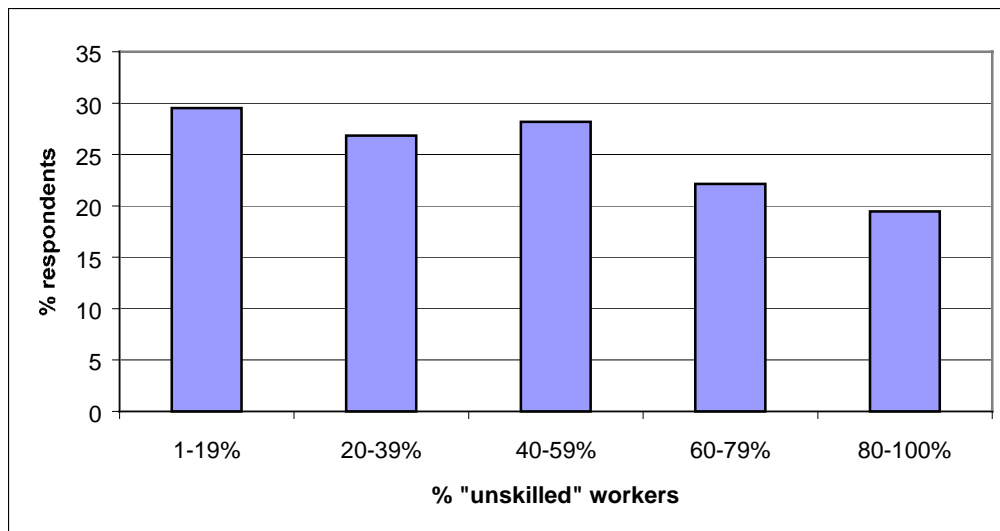


Companies with fewer than fifty workers reported that they employed a greater percentage of skilled workers than companies with more than fifty workers; however, they did not differ in the local availability of the skilled workforce.

### Unskilled workforce

Companies were asked to identify the percent of unskilled workers in their plant (Figure 3) (Question 4, page 43). The question did not define “unskilled” and the options for responding remained the same as for skilled workers. Companies were asked whether these skilled workers were locally *very available*, *somewhat available*, *seldom available*, or *not available* (Question 5, page 43).

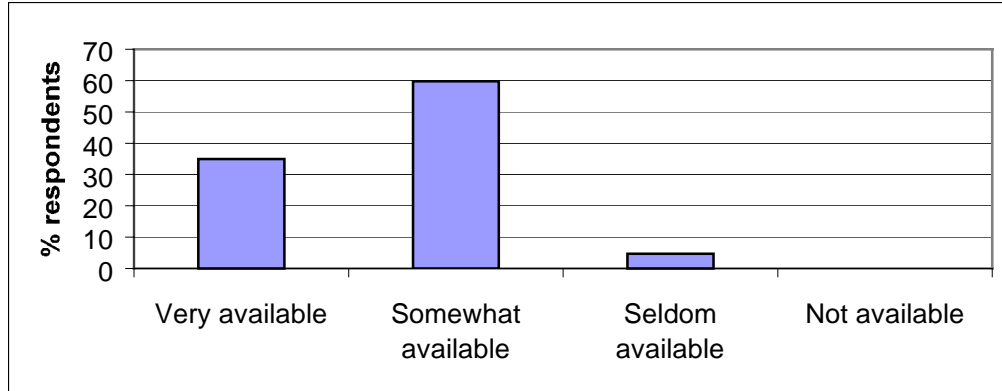
Figure 3: Percent of total workforce classified as “unskilled”.



Just as for the skilled workforce, the percentage of unskilled workers that respondents required in their operation was highly variable.

In contrast to the local availability of skilled labor, 35% of the respondents said that unskilled labor was very available and 60% replied that they were somewhat available locally (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Local availability of “unskilled” workers.



Companies with more than fifty workers had more unskilled workers than did small companies, although they responded that the availability of these workers was the same.

### Workforce concerns

Companies were asked about specific concerns regarding their current workforce (Table 2). Respondents rated workforce availability, absenteeism, substance abuse, violence, tardiness, productivity, or other (specify) as *very much a problem*, *somewhat of a problem*, *a little bit of a problem*, or *not at all a problem* (Question 6, page 44).

Table 2: Specific concerns regarding the current workforce.

	<b>Very much a problem</b>	<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	<b>A little bit of a problem</b>	<b>Not a problem at all</b>
Availability <sup>a</sup>	34%	46%	18%	1%
Absenteeism <sup>b</sup>	21%	26%	40%	12%
Tardiness <sup>b</sup>	15%	23%	46%	14%
Productivity <sup>b</sup>	11%	40%	39%	9%
Substance abuse <sup>c</sup>	5%	15%	47%	32%
Violence <sup>d</sup>	1%	2%	26%	70%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	5%	1%	1%	1%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.



On average, companies that responded to the survey identified workforce availability as their greatest concern. There was no significant difference among absenteeism, productivity, and tardiness as a concern. Substance abuse and violence were statistically the least of the concerns for the companies.

Companies with less than ten percent Hispanic workers were significantly more concerned with substance abuse than were companies with greater than ten percent Hispanic employees. Companies with more than fifty workers were more concerned about absenteeism, tardiness, violence, and substance abuse than were smaller companies.

### Job placement evaluations

Companies were asked about the evaluation procedures used for job placement (Table 3). Options included previous experience required, interview, physical test, written questions, education/degree required, no evaluation used, or other (specify). Individuals completing the survey indicated if these were used for evaluation *always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never* (Question 7, page 44).

Table 3: Evaluation procedures used for job placement.

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
Interview <sup>a</sup>	81%	13%	5%	1%	0%
Previous experience required <sup>b</sup>	42%	31%	19%	7%	0%
Written questions <sup>c</sup>	15%	7%	12%	37%	30%
Physical test <sup>c</sup>	13%	3%	13%	36%	34%
Education/Degree required <sup>c</sup>	2%	7%	31%	32%	27%
No evaluation used <sup>d</sup>	3%	1%	9%	14%	66%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	4%	1%	0%	0%	2%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.

Interviews were used significantly more for job placement than any other tool. Requiring previous experience was, statistically, the second most common job placement tool. Written questions, Physical tests, and Educational or degree requirements were not significantly different from each other. No evaluation used was the most infrequent response, indicating that most companies use some form of job placement tool.

Companies with fewer than fifty workers required previous experience significantly more often than did larger companies. Similarly, companies with fewer than ten percent

Hispanic employees used educational or degree requirements more often than did companies with larger Hispanic workforces.

### Training topics

Companies were asked how often various topics were included in their training and information programs for all of their employees (Table 4). These topics included company orientation, general safety, personal protective equipment, lockout/tagout, machine guarding, handling chemicals, standard company benefits, insurance plans, retirement programs, and other (specify). Companies were asked if these topics were *always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never* included in current training/information programs (Question 8, page 45).

Table 4: frequency of various topics in training and information programs for all employees.

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
General safety <sup>a</sup>	77%	19%	3%	0%	1%
Company orientation <sup>a, b</sup>	75%	11%	9%	3%	1%
Personal Protective Equipment <sup>a, b</sup>	74%	18%	6%	0%	1%
Standard company benefits <sup>a, b, c</sup>	72%	13%	8%	3%	3%
Insurance plans <sup>b, c, d</sup>	69%	13%	9%	2%	5%
Machine guarding <sup>b, c, d</sup>	62%	21%	13%	3%	1%
Lockout/ tagout <sup>c, d, e</sup>	58%	15%	13%	7%	4%
Handling chemicals <sup>d, e</sup>	54%	16%	16%	11%	2%
Retirement programs <sup>e</sup>	54%	13%	7%	7%	17%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	6%	0%	0%	0%	1%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.

Overall, respondents indicated that general safety, company orientation, personal protective equipment, and standard company benefits were more frequently included in their training program than other topics. Information on lockout/tagout, handling chemicals and retirement programs were the topics least frequently covered in training.

Companies with more than fifty workers included the topics of general safety, lockout/tagout, company benefit programs, insurance, and retirement plans significantly more often than did companies with fewer workers.

## Training delivery

Companies were asked how training information is delivered to their workers (Table 5). Companies indicated that training was delivered verbally/one-on-one, on-the-job training, workshops, pamphlets/ brochures, videotapes/audiotapes, meetings, and other (specify) either *always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never* (Question 9, page 46).

Table 5: Frequency of information delivery method.

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
On the job training <sup>a</sup>	50%	41%	9%	0%	0%
Verbally/One on one <sup>a</sup>	45%	38%	14%	2%	0%
Meetings <sup>b</sup>	17%	50%	28%	3%	2%
Videocassettes or Audiocassettes <sup>c</sup>	11%	13%	28%	22%	25%
Pamphlets/ brochures <sup>c</sup>	11%	11%	32%	30%	15%
Workshops <sup>c</sup>	2%	11%	39%	28%	18%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.

On average, companies responding to the survey indicated that they used on-the-job training and verbal/one-on-one presentation of information most frequently. These were not statistically different from each other. Meetings were the second most common delivery mechanism. Workshops, pamphlets/brochures and video/audiocassettes were used least frequently by respondents to provide workers with information.

However, companies with more than fifty workers used video/audiocassettes more often than smaller companies, and companies with less than ten percent Hispanic workers used both video/audiocassettes and meetings more often to deliver training than companies with more than ten percent of their employees being Hispanic.

## Training frequency

Companies were asked how often they delivered training on company orientation, general safety, personal protective equipment, lockout/tagout, machine guarding, handling chemicals, standard company benefits, insurance plans, retirement programs, and other (specify) (Table 6). Respondents selected either *only at the beginning of employment*, *periodically/as needed*, *regularly scheduled*, or *never* (Question 10, page 46).

Table 6: Frequency of training programs for various topics.

	<b><u>Only at the beginning of employment</u></b>	<b><u>Periodically, as needed</u></b>	<b><u>Regularly scheduled</u></b>	<b><u>Never</u></b>
Company orientation	81%	17%	1%	1%
Standard company benefits	27%	57%	12%	3%
Insurance plans	17%	62%	13%	6%
Retirement programs	11%	56%	13%	19%
Machine guarding	4%	63%	32%	0%
Handling chemicals	4%	59%	30%	5%
Personal Protective Equipment	3%	64%	32%	1%
Lockout/ tagout	3%	52%	33%	8%
General safety	2%	53%	44%	0%
Other (specify)	1%	1%	2%	3%

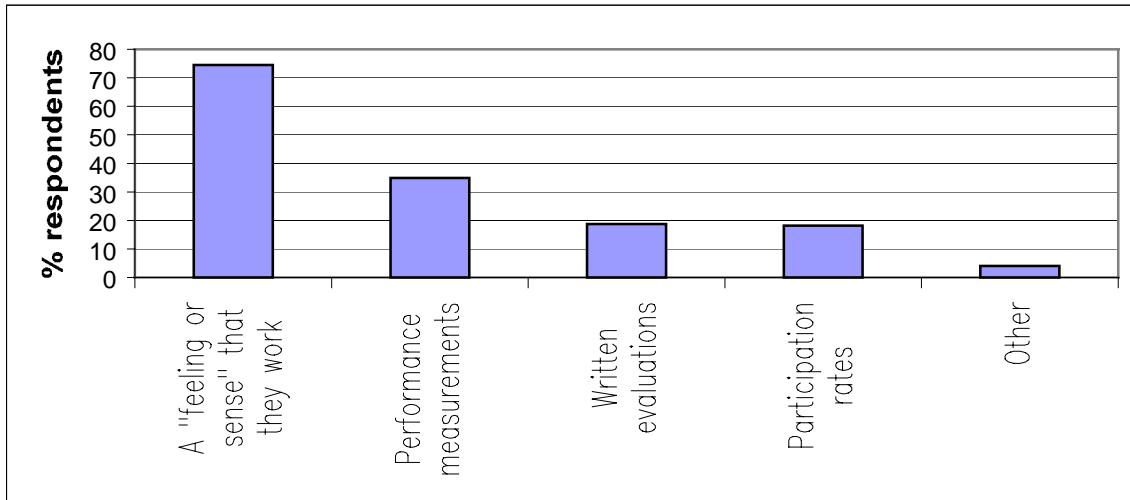
Due to lack of a continuous scale of responses, no statistical comparison can be made between topics.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents provided company orientation only at the beginning of employment. Most (17%) of the remainder offered it periodically, as needed. Approximately one-third of the companies have regularly scheduled meetings regarding personal protective equipment, lockout/tagout, machine guarding, and handling chemicals. Nearly half (44%) have regularly scheduled training on general safety. A majority of the companies hold meetings periodically, as needed, for all subjects except company orientation.

## Training evaluation

Companies were asked how these training/information programs are evaluated (Figure 5). Did companies have a “feeling or sense” that they work, did they use written evaluations, performance measurements, participation rates, or other (specify) (Question 11, page 47)

Figure 5: Training/ information program evaluation.



Most (75%) respondents do not have quantitative evaluations of their training and information programs but reported that they had a “feeling or sense” that they work. Roughly a third reported using performance measurements. Written evaluations and Participation rates were the least common form of training program evaluation. Other methods of evaluation that were reported include changes in law/OSHA, etc, combination written and sense, feedback, and not evaluated.

## Training improvements

Companies were asked an open-ended question about what, if any, improvements need to be made to their training/information programs. All written comments are located on page 47 in Appendix A with the complete survey results for all respondents.

Forty-two percent of the companies that returned the survey responded to this open-ended question. Of those that responded, 36% mentioned the need for more formalized training programs. The need for a greater frequency of training activities was mentioned by 16%, and the need for more materials in Spanish or improved communication was mentioned by 13%.

## **Section 2: Current situation, training and needs of the Hispanic workforce.**

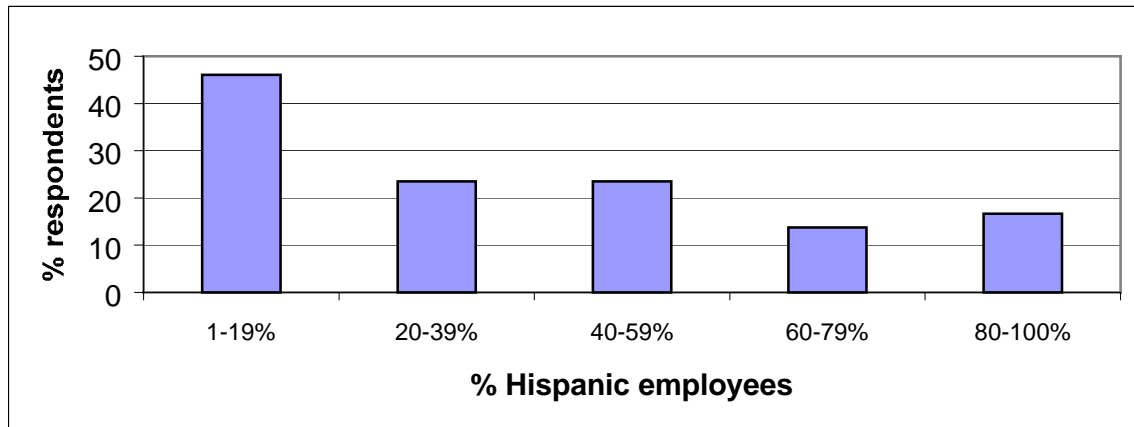
Only those companies that currently have or have ever had Hispanic employees answered the following questions. We broadly defined “Hispanic” as a person of Latin American

descent who speaks Spanish as his/her primary language. Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents completed these questions specifically addressing the Hispanic workforce.

### Percent Hispanic workforce

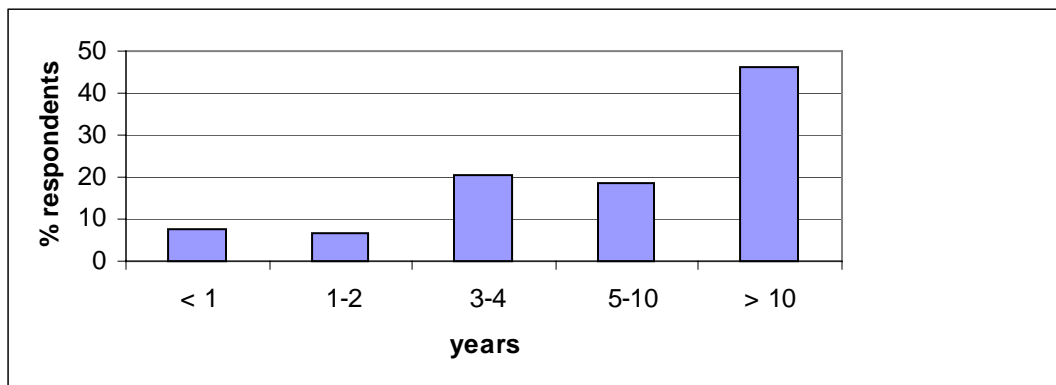
We asked companies to identify the percent of Hispanic workers currently at their operation (Figure 6) (Question 13, page 49). Respondents could select among ranges in ten percent increments. Additionally, companies were asked for how long they have been employing Hispanics (Figure 7) (Question 14, page 50).

Figure 6: Percent Hispanic workforce.



There was a high variation among companies as to the percent of current workforce made up of Hispanics, but the most common was 1-19% (46% of respondents gave this response). The next highest were 20-39% (24%) and 40-59% (24%). Almost sixteen percent of the respondents had between eighty and one hundred percent Hispanic workers.

Figure 7: Number of years with Hispanic employees.



Forty-six percent of these companies reported that they have been employing Hispanic workers for more than ten years, 19% for five to ten years, 21% for three to four years and 15% for less than two years.

Companies that had been employing Hispanic workers for more than five years had a statistically greater percentage of Hispanic workers than companies with less than five years experience with Hispanics.

Reasons for hiring Hispanics

Companies were asked if they *strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree* that they began hiring Hispanic workers because they could not find enough local labor, local labor became less reliable, Hispanic workers were more available, Hispanic workers were more productive, Hispanic labor was more economical, other companies were using Hispanic labor so they decided to try, or other (specify) (Table 7) (Question 15, page 50).

Table 7: Reasons to begin hiring Hispanic workers.

	<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b>
Hispanic workers were more available <sup>a</sup>	33%	40%	17%	6%
Hispanic workers were more productive <sup>a, b</sup>	20%	36%	34%	4%
Local labor became less reliable <sup>b</sup>	25%	25%	30%	13%
I could not find enough local labor <sup>b</sup>	22%	31%	25%	17%
Hispanic labor was more economical <sup>c</sup>	4%	26%	42%	20%
Other companies were using Hispanic labor so I decided to try <sup>c</sup>	3%	15%	37%	34%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	14%	3%	0%	1%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.

On average, most companies indicated that they began hiring Hispanic workers because they were more available and more productive. These responses were not statistically different from each other. Secondly, companies reported that they could not find enough local labor and/or that local labor became less reliable. The least significant reasons for hiring Hispanic workers was because they were more economical and because other companies were doing it. The “other” category included comments that workers are hired based upon qualifications and not race, and hiring Hispanics because the company is located in a largely Hispanic community.

More companies with greater than ten percent Hispanic workers indicated that they began hiring Hispanic employees because they were more available than did companies with less than ten percent Hispanic workers. Additionally, more companies with less than five years experience with Hispanic workers began hiring them because other companies did and so they decided to try than companies with more than five years of experience employing Hispanics.

Benefits of Hispanic workers

Companies were asked if they *strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree* that primary benefits of employing Hispanic workers were that they are locally available, they are productive, they are cooperative, they are hardworking, they are reliable, they are economical or other (specify) (Table 8) (Question 16, page 51).

Table 8: Primary benefits of hiring Hispanic workers.

	<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b>
They are hardworking <sup>a</sup>	34%	53%	3%	1%
They are productive <sup>a</sup>	31%	56%	3%	1%
They are reliable <sup>a</sup>	29%	48%	12%	1%
They are locally available <sup>a</sup>	28%	50%	9%	2%
They are cooperative <sup>a</sup>	26%	60%	4%	1%
They are economical <sup>b</sup>	9%	39%	30%	10%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	3%	2%	0%	1%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.

Most companies said primary benefits of employing Hispanic workers were that they are productive, hardworking, cooperative, reliable, and locally available. There were no statistical differences among these responses. Significantly fewer companies felt that a primary benefit of employing Hispanic workers is that they are economical.

Hispanic workforce concerns

Respondents were asked if they were *very concerned, somewhat concerned, slightly concerned, or not at all concerned* with communication in English, basic educational level, safety, knowledge of the industry, integration into the company, integration into the community, participation in benefit programs, documentation or legal issues, leave for one to two months a year and reappear, problems with turnover, training, advancement, cross training, and other (specify) (Table 9) (Question 17, page 52).



Table 9: Primary concerns of having Hispanic employees.

	<b>Very concerned</b>	<b>Somewhat Concerned</b>	<b>Slightly concerned</b>	<b>Not at all concerned</b>
Communication in English <sup>a</sup>	40%	40%	10%	6%
Documentation or legal issues <sup>a, b</sup>	39%	22%	23%	14%
Basic educational level <sup>b, c</sup>	18%	35%	29%	14%
Training <sup>b, c, d, e, f</sup>	19%	31%	31%	15%
Safety <sup>c, d</sup>	15%	36%	25%	21%
Knowledge of the industry <sup>c, d, e</sup>	8%	33%	30%	25%
Leave for 1-2 months a year and reappear <sup>c, d, e, f</sup>	16%	25%	23%	32%
Advancement <sup>c, d, e, f</sup>	14%	25%	35%	23%
Cross training <sup>c, d, e, f</sup>	13%	24%	35%	25%
Integration into the company <sup>d, e, f</sup>	10%	26%	32%	27%
Problems with turnover <sup>e, f</sup>	10%	17%	39%	31%
Participation in benefit programs <sup>e, f</sup>	6%	21%	29%	38%
Integration into the community <sup>f</sup>	4%	18%	39%	35%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	0%	0%	1%	0%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> cannot be statistically compared to all other topics in this table.

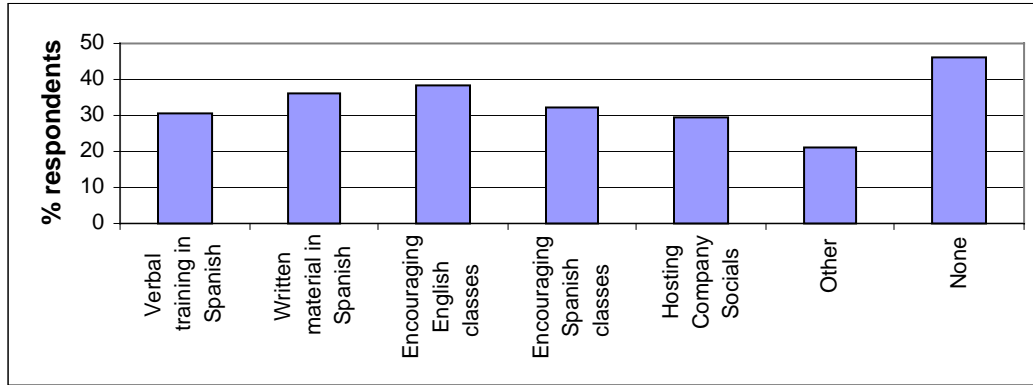
Communication in English and documentation or legal issues were, on average, the greatest concern for companies completing the survey. There were few statistically significant differences identified by companies on the importance of all other topics.

Integration into the company was of a greater concern for companies with less than ten percent Hispanic employees than it was for companies with more than ten percent Hispanic employees.

### Integration activities for Hispanic workers

Companies were asked if they had provided verbal training programs in Spanish, written material in Spanish, encouraged English classes, encouraged Spanish classes for supervisors, hosted company “socials”, or other (specify) activities to integrate Hispanic workers into their company (Figure 8) (Question 18, page 52).

Figure 8: Activities to integrate Hispanic employees.



There were no significant differences between the various types of activities that companies offered to integrate the Hispanic workforce into their company. That is, none was used more often than the others (statistically). Forty six percent of the companies did no specific activities to integrate the Hispanic workforce into their company.

More companies with greater than ten percent Hispanic employees provided verbal training in Spanish than did companies with fewer than ten percent Hispanic workers. More companies with greater than fifty employees provided written material in Spanish, encouraged English classes for workers, encouraged Spanish classes for supervisors, and hosted company “socials” than did companies with fewer than fifty employees.

Integration effort effectiveness

Companies were asked if providing verbal training programs in Spanish, written material in Spanish, encouraged English classes, encouraged Spanish classes for supervisors, hosted company “socials or other (specify) activities was *very effective, effective, somewhat effective, not effective, or not applicable* (Table 10) (Question 19, page 53).

Table 10: Effectiveness of integration efforts.

	<b><u>Very Effective</u></b>	<b><u>Effective</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat Effective</u></b>	<b><u>Not Effective</u></b>	<b><u>Not Applicable</u></b>
Providing written material is Spanish <sup>a</sup>	8%	24%	6%	1%	38%
Providing verbal training in Spanish <sup>a</sup>	5%	20%	7%	2%	43%
Hosting company “socials” <sup>a</sup>	3%	12%	4%	3%	52%
Encouraging English classes <sup>b</sup>	0%	9%	31%	13%	29%
Encouraging Spanish classes for supervisors <sup>b</sup>	0%	5%	17%	7%	47%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	1%	2%	1%	0%	8%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> is not significantly different from all other topics in this table.

Only responses from those companies that implement integration activities were analyzed, and they indicated that providing written material in Spanish, verbal training in Spanish, and hosting company “socials” were significantly more effective than were either encouraging English classes for workers or Spanish classes for supervisors.

Usefulness of Hispanic training packages

Respondents rated various training/information packages as *very useful, somewhat useful, slightly useful, or not at all useful* if their Association provided them (Table 11). These packages included information on safety, job skills, cross training, community resources, English classes, Spanish classes, immigration and naturalization service, general educational development, benefit programs, life insurance, retirement packages, and other (specify) (Question 20, page 54).

Table 11: Usefulness of Hispanic training packages if provided by their Association.

	<b><u>Very useful</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat Useful</u></b>	<b><u>Slightly useful</u></b>	<b><u>Not at all useful</u></b>
Safety <sup>a</sup>	52%	24%	14%	4%
Job skills <sup>a</sup>	43%	29%	17%	4%
English classes <sup>a</sup>	40%	25%	17%	8%
Cross training <sup>a</sup>	36%	30%	19%	6%
Immigration and Naturalization Service <sup>b</sup>	26%	19%	26%	21%
General Educational Development (GED) <sup>b</sup>	21%	27%	25%	18%
Benefit programs <sup>b</sup>	21%	29%	25%	16%
Life insurance <sup>b</sup>	20%	22%	31%	20%
Spanish classes <sup>b</sup>	18%	24%	26%	17%
Community resources <sup>b</sup>	17%	36%	27%	11%
Retirement packages <sup>b</sup>	16%	24%	27%	24%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	0%	0%	0%	3%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> cannot be statistically compared to all other topics in this table.

On average, the topics of safety, job skills, cross training and English classes were identified as being significantly more useful than the other topics. Companies with more than ten percent Hispanic employees felt that safety training would be more useful than companies with less than ten percent Hispanic workers.

### Other Hispanic training needs

An open-ended question allowed respondents to identify other specific, training programs needed for their Hispanic workforce. Responses included: chainsaw safety and maintenance, lean manufacturing concepts, specifications in Spanish, team effort, quality control, materials resource planning, the current NHLA Rule Book in Spanish lacks the full amount of information found in the English version, video tapes in Spanish on woodworking safety, Spanish-speaking training consultants, and in-house English training on job terminology (Question 21, page 54).

Appropriate audiences for Hispanic worker training

Companies were asked which of the four listed audiences would be most appropriate for training programs for Hispanic workers on the topics of safety, job skills, cross training, community resources, English classes, Spanish classes, immigration and naturalization service, general educational development, benefit programs, life insurance, retirement packages, and other (specify) (Table 12). Audiences included all managers or administrators, all supervisors, all workers, and only Hispanic workers (Question 22, page 55).

Table 12: Appropriate audience for training programs for Hispanic workers.

	<b>All Managers or Administrators</b>	<b>All Supervisors</b>	<b>All Workers</b>	<b>Only Hispanic Workers</b>
Safety	14% <sup>b</sup>	24% <sup>b</sup>	62% <sup>a</sup>	20% <sup>b</sup>
Job skills	8% <sup>c</sup>	24% <sup>b</sup>	59% <sup>a</sup>	19% <sup>b,c</sup>
Cross training	6% <sup>c</sup>	2% <sup>b</sup>	59% <sup>a</sup>	17% <sup>b,c</sup>
Community resources	14% <sup>b</sup>	12% <sup>b</sup>	39% <sup>a</sup>	31% <sup>a</sup>
English classes	3% <sup>c</sup>	4% <sup>b,c</sup>	14% <sup>b</sup>	67% <sup>a</sup>
Spanish classes	17% <sup>b,c</sup>	41% <sup>a</sup>	24% <sup>a,b</sup>	8% <sup>c</sup>
Immigration and Naturalization Service	22% <sup>b</sup>	5% <sup>c</sup>	7% <sup>c</sup>	53% <sup>a</sup>
General Educational Development (GED)	6% <sup>c</sup>	5% <sup>c</sup>	46% <sup>a</sup>	25% <sup>b</sup>
Benefit programs	14% <sup>b</sup>	13% <sup>b</sup>	53% <sup>a</sup>	22% <sup>b</sup>
Vacation days	9% <sup>b</sup>	15% <sup>b</sup>	53% <sup>a</sup>	23% <sup>b</sup>
Health plan	13% <sup>b</sup>	13% <sup>b</sup>	53% <sup>a</sup>	22% <sup>b</sup>
Life insurance	13% <sup>b</sup>	14% <sup>b</sup>	52% <sup>a</sup>	21% <sup>b</sup>
Retirement packages	14% <sup>b</sup>	14% <sup>b</sup>	49% <sup>a</sup>	20% <sup>b</sup>

Audiences for the individual topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other audiences for this topic with the same letter.

Statistically, all workers was the most frequently listed response for the topics of safety, job skills, cross training, general educational development, benefit programs, vacation days, health plans, life insurance, and retirement packages. The Hispanic workforce was the most frequently listed audience for English classes and Immigration and Naturalization Service information and it was the second most appropriate audience for general educational development. All workers and Hispanic workers were the most

frequently listed audiences for community resource information. All managers or administrators was the second most frequently listed audience for information on the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

More companies with over five years experience with Hispanic employees significantly felt that all workers was the appropriate audience for cross training than companies with less than five years employing Hispanic workers. Significantly more companies with less than ten percent Hispanic employees felt that Hispanic workers was the appropriate audience for information on retirement programs than did companies with more than ten percent Hispanic workers.

Significantly more companies with greater than fifty employees identified all supervisors as the appropriate audience for information on safety, job skills, cross training, and Spanish classes than did companies with fewer than fifty employees. Similarly, significantly more companies with more than fifty employees identified Hispanic workers as the appropriate audience for information on safety, job skills, cross training, community resources, English classes, general educational development, vacation days, health plans, life insurance, and retirement than did smaller companies.

More companies that volunteered to participate in the focus group meetings felt that Hispanic workers were the appropriate audience for English classes and information on Immigration and Naturalization Service than did all respondents or respondents from only the Hardwood Region of the United States.

#### Optimal delivery method for Hispanic worker training

Companies were asked if training delivery via distance learning /video teleconferencing, written material, regional training meetings, local training sessions, on-the-job training, Spanish-speaking training consultant, videotapes, training at a local community/ technical college, Internet-based training or other (specify) would be *very useful*, *somewhat useful*, *slightly useful*, or *not at all useful* for their company (Table 13) (Question 23, page 56). Additionally, an open-ended question allowed companies to identify other ways to best deliver training to their Hispanic workforce (Question 24, page 56).

Table 13: Usefulness of delivery methods for training.

	<b><u>Very useful</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat Useful</u></b>	<b><u>Slightly useful</u></b>	<b><u>Not at all useful</u></b>
On the job training <sup>a</sup>	60%	25%	5%	1%
Videotapes <sup>b</sup>	47%	22%	14%	11%
Written material <sup>b</sup>	40%	38%	11%	5%
Local training sessions <sup>b</sup>	33%	41%	15%	4%
Spanish speaking training consultant <sup>b, c</sup>	30%	26%	25%	11%
Training at a community/ technical college <sup>c</sup>	18%	31%	23%	21%
Internet based training <sup>d</sup>	5%	17%	37%	33%
Regional training meetings <sup>d</sup>	4%	22%	29%	38%
Distance learning - video teleconferencing <sup>d</sup>	4%	14%	29%	46%
Other (specify) <sup>z</sup>	0%	0%	0%	1%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

<sup>z</sup> cannot be statistically compared to all other topics in this table.

On average, companies identified on-the-job training as the most useful delivery method for training programs. Next in line were written material, local training sessions, and videotapes. There was no significant difference among these three. The use of distance learning or video teleconferencing, Internet-based training, and regional training sessions were the least useful, and these were not significantly different from each other.

Companies with more than fifty employees were more likely to list distance learning/video teleconferencing, written material, regional training sessions, on-the-job training, Spanish-speaking training consultant, videotapes, and Internet-based training as more useful than companies with less than fifty employees.

Some companies listed additional ways training could be delivered to their Hispanic workforce: A bi-lingual supervisor or employee, combine a social event with short training sessions, a listing of trained Hispanic applicants for positions that could in turn train employees, on-the-job, Spanish-speaking consultant, videotapes et al, as listed above are excellent, on-site training best suits our needs, the trainee must be bilingual. one additional comment was, “I don't see a need to separate the training we are currently doing for our entire workforce with training for our Hispanic employees.”

### Future expectations for Hispanic workers

Companies were asked if they *would do, would consider, or would not consider* recruiting Hispanic workers, hiring Hispanic workers, training Hispanic workers, and retaining Hispanic workers (Table 14) (Question 25, page 57). They were also asked if they would like additional information on training Hispanic workers (Question 26, page 57).

Table 14: Future expectations for Hispanic employees.

	<b><u>Will do</u></b>	<b><u>Will consider</u></b>	<b><u>Will not Consider</u></b>
Retaining Hispanic Workers <sup>a</sup>	84%	10%	2%
Hiring Hispanic Workers <sup>a</sup>	83%	12%	2%
Training Hispanic Workers <sup>a, b</sup>	79%	14%	3%
Recruiting Hispanic Workers <sup>b</sup>	66%	23%	8%

Topics in this table with the same superscript letter are not significantly different from other topics with that same letter.

Respondents were more likely to say they would hire and retain Hispanic workers than they were to say they would recruit Hispanic workers. Most (69%) of the companies would like additional information on training Hispanic workers.

On average, companies with more than ten percent Hispanic employees said they expect to hire, train and retain Hispanic workers more than those companies that have less than ten percent Hispanic employees.

### Additional comments on Hispanic worker training

Those responding to this survey were asked for their additional comments regarding Hispanic workforce training (Question 27, page 57).

Of the fourteen companies that responded to this question, 29% commented on the need for better communication

### **Section 3: Company profile**

The final portion of the survey was developed to help researchers understand the company profiles of the companies that responded to the survey. Companies were asked to describe their company as sawmill, distribution, components, manufacturing, or other (specify) (Figure 9) (Question 28, page 58). Additionally, they were asked to identify a



range of the value of their total shipments in 2001 (Figure 10) (Question 29, page 58), the number of people employed by the company (Figure 11) (Question 30, page 58) and if their company is located in a rural, suburban, or urban area (Figure 12) (Question 31, page 58).

Figure 9: Type of operation.

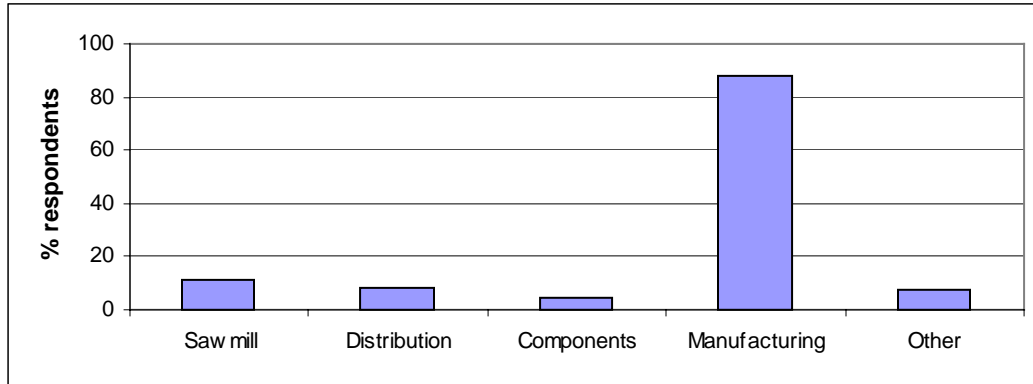


Figure 10: Total value of shipments in 2001.

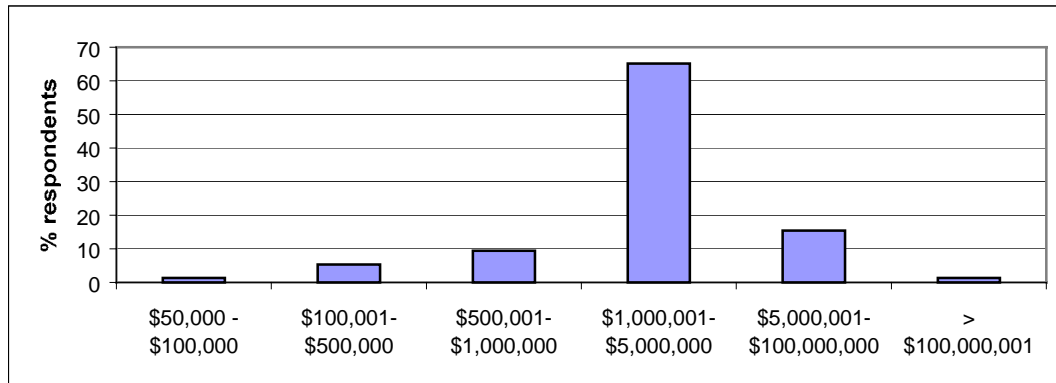


Figure 11: Number of employees.

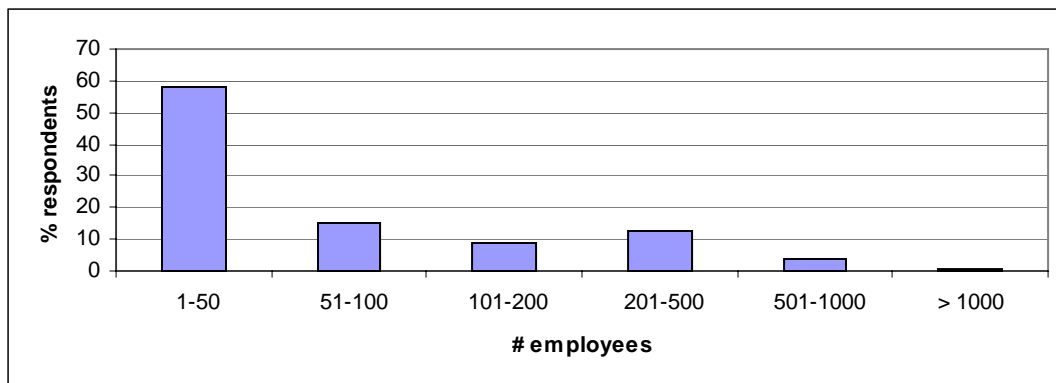
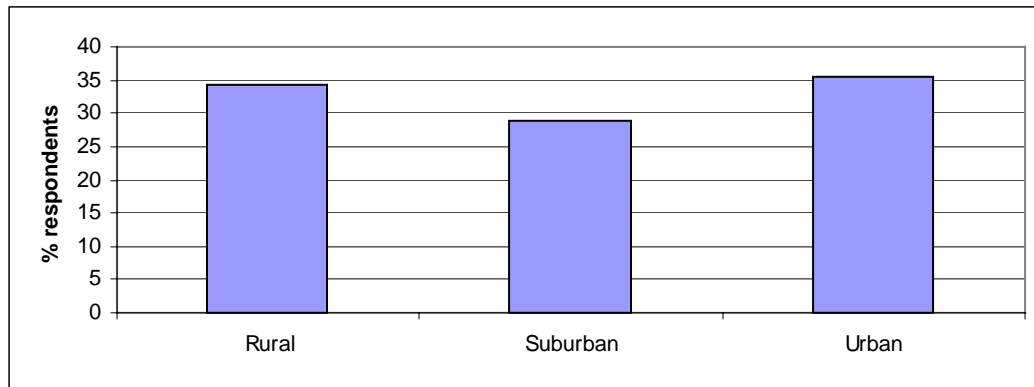


Figure 12: Company profile: Location of company.



Eighty-eight percent described their company as manufacturing, 65% had annual sales of between one and five million dollars in 2001, and 58% had between one and fifty employees. Companies were fairly evenly distributed between rural (34%), suburban (29%), and urban areas (36%). Of the surveys that were completed and returned, 45% were located in the Hardwood Region of the United States.

More companies with greater than fifty employees described themselves as sawmills and distribution yards and on average, were located in less urban areas than were companies with less than fifty employees.

### **Hispanic Workers Focus Group Meetings**

Focus groups with Hispanic employees in the wood products industry were held to identify training and information product needs that would be valuable to Hispanic woodworkers and their employers. To achieve this, it was necessary to assess the Hispanic workers' perspective of training needs and optimum delivery methods.

The assessment consisted of structured, open-ended focus group meetings of 5 to 10 employees in different companies in the wood products industry. Forty-four percent of the companies surveyed that had Hispanic workers volunteered to participate in the focus groups, and eleven were selected and contacted for these meetings. Companies were selected based upon geographical location, diversity of experience with the Hispanic workforce, variety in segment of the industry, and availability.

The primary contact person at the selected company identified Hispanic participants for the meeting. This company contact was encouraged to select individuals with a diversity of positions within the company, a wide range of length of employment, different ages, and native countries. An information sheet (both in English and Spanish) describing the focus group objectives and methodology was sent to the contact person for distribution to company management (in English) and to the participants of the focus group (in Spanish).

Focus groups (in Spanish) were selected as the preferred assessment tool for this audience and phase of the project because individuals in a group feel more secure sharing their opinions than individuals by themselves. The individual participant's opinions and information was kept completely confidential. Participants wore nametags with only their first names and their names were not recorded in any project documents. These meetings typically occurred during normal working hours, and management paid the workers for their attendance. All meetings lasted approximately two hours.

This focus group methodology provided consistency (structured), while allowing the separate groups to further explore topics of relevance for their given situation. Some questions were phrased in third-person, for example: "How many of your fellow Hispanic workers can read and write in Spanish?" This precluded participants from having to make personal revelations which might cause discomfort. The list of the structured and follow-up questions is in Appendix B.

The focus group meetings were recorded on cassette tape to ensure all ideas and opinions were captured. These cassettes were transcribed and translated for evaluation and analysis (Appendix C).

A total of 11 focus group meetings were held with a total of 67 Hispanic workers. Meetings were held in Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

### **Focus group results**

The workers who participated in the focus group meetings were in their late teens through mid-sixties, with the majority being in their mid twenties.

Approximately ninety percent of the workers were from Mexico, however there were also participants from Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Columbia, Guatemala, and Honduras. None of the participants were born in the United States.

Of the Hispanic workers that participated in the focus group meetings, approximately sixty percent were used as unskilled labor and forty percent were in positions running machinery or in finishing rooms. This difference in responsibilities or positions appears to greatly influence the type and quality of training, the dedication of the worker towards the company, and the perceived opportunities of the workers to advance within the company. Due to these differences in skilled and unskilled labor, the results of the focus group meeting will be separated into these two broad categories.

### **Time working with the company**

Focus group participants had worked for their employers from 2 months to 16 years. The average time with their current employer was approximately 2 years. Generally speaking, workers in skilled positions had been with their current employer for a longer period of time than employees in unskilled positions.

### Previous working experience

Prior to working with their current employer, workers in both skilled and unskilled positions had a wide variety of previous work experiences, including military service, pallet company, woodworking, plastic component factory, car parts salesman, meat processing, cellular phone production, agricultural work, housekeeping, migrant labor, and construction. For many of the younger workers, this was their first job.

### Reasons for working in the wood products industry

The workers typically moved to the area where they currently worked after learning from friends or relatives that there was work available there. They usually worked in at least one other company before obtaining a job in the woodworking industry. The main reason for selecting their current employer was for more stable work, (forty hours a week with few lay-offs), better working conditions, and better pay. In one case, workers were not working directly for the wood products company, but were employed by an independent employment agency that had a labor contract with the wood products company.

Workers in unskilled positions were more likely to say that they would leave their current company if a better paying job became available, while the skilled workers were more likely to prefer job stability, the additional benefits, and the importance of the experience they gained at the company. All workers would like to work more hours per week. Both the skilled and unskilled workers came from their home countries for one reason—to work and make money. However, skilled workers said they will probably not return to their native land, while unskilled workers typically said they are here for one to three years and will then return to their country.

### Initial job training

Workers were asked about their experiences and the training they received when they began working for their present employer.

### Company orientation

Participants were asked if they received orientation about the company when they began working.

In the companies with Hispanics in skilled positions, the beginning workers generally received an orientation about the company and a brief tour of the complete operation. This was generally a one to two hour process and typically resulted in information overload. Retention of the information was typically low.

One of the participants responded that: “We came here with our hands in our pockets, without knowing that we knew nothing. First off the language, secondly the machines were completely unknown, it was very different. I used to work in a factory but it was

very different from this. You come in like you were blind and they take you by the hand and like my co-workers say in one hour they take you around the entire plant. This machine is this, this is this, this is this, this is this, are you going to remember all of this?"

Workers in unskilled positions said that they rarely received information on the basic company operations. They were usually only familiar with the areas immediately adjacent to their workstation. Over time and through individual exploration they became familiar with the operation. Even for workers in skilled positions there was some confusion of how their position fit into the production chain in the company.

Workers felt that better and more frequent company orientation sessions would be very beneficial. They suggested that tours of different areas of the factory and detailed descriptions of the various types of machinery would allow them to better understand the company and production schedules. As one of the participants commented, "So I think that it would be a good idea to give an orientation of the entire company and a two-to three-hour introduction of the history of the company, how did it start, what does each department do, what are the different machines and their parts, how do you work with each one, and little by little exposing us to our department and the company."

#### Company policy

In general, workers didn't receive information on the company's vision, decisions, market niche, or future direction. In one case, the workers commented on the disappearance of the yearly profit sharing. The company had posted the monthly profits through June but starting in July, the posting was no longer on the bulletin board in the break room. At the end of the year they did not receive their profit sharing check as they had in previous years. Months later, the company installed a new multi-million dollar machine in the plant. The workers quickly assumed that the machine was purchased with their profit sharing money and were quite resentful towards the machine.

In another example, workers checked the board where their schedule for the following week was posted and found that their hours had been cut to thirty-two hours a week. The employees had not heard previously about this change and didn't understand why their hours were being reduced.

In another case, the employees were not sure about the company policy for being tardy for work or missing a day because none of them had ever failed to show up for work on time. Workers at another plant didn't fully understand the production bonuses and the policy connecting tardiness or missing work to the amount they received for their production bonus.

In general, focus group participants felt that they had little access to management, and in some cases they reported efforts to keep them from upper level administration.

### Training in specific job skills

All workers, both skilled and unskilled, received on-the-job training almost exclusively. Depending on the position and the required knowledge, new employees were usually shown what to do and within half a day left to continue working on their own. They generally felt unprepared to continue alone and learned the details of the position by either guessing or by making mistakes and being corrected.

Workers in unskilled positions were typically taken to their job station and shown what to do through hand signals or with the help of a Spanish-speaking co-worker. They filled primarily labor-intensive positions and whatever decision-making knowledge they needed was gained by trial and error.

Workers in skilled positions generally received more thorough training for their positions, but in general, they still didn't feel fully prepared for the task. One of the comments recorded during a focus group meeting was, "And like my co-workers said, when we first get here and make an error, we immediately think that they are going to fire us. You are under a lot of pressure. My stomach hurts because I am so worried when I make a mistake and I know that it's my fault and I can't look at my boss although he is a very good person, very good, I am so ashamed. And everybody is saying fix it, fix it and when you do they don't say anything."

Only one of the companies had a full time Spanish-speaking translator working in human resources. In three of the companies, supervisors were either bilingual or made an attempt to learn and communicate in Spanish. A focus group participant commented, "It's that when somebody is entering new, they think that when we talk (among Hispanic co-workers) it is just a personal conversation, but how can we ask what we are supposed to do, how a machine works, without asking each other? And they say, "No, don't talk" and so there is no time to be trained. So you end up learning over the weeks and the months. And when you are doing it this way you end up with mistakes."

Most workers participating in the focus group meetings commented that there was a difference in the training of American workers and the training of Hispanics. One participant commented: "When an American comes to work here they show them all of the machines and how they work but for one of us they just take you to your position, show you by signs what to do and leave you there."

### Safety

All workers felt that the company did a good job with safety training although they learned about safety policies mostly through discussions with co-workers or by doing something wrong and being corrected by their supervisor. Several companies had signage or other written information in Spanish.

## Communication in English

Less than five percent of the focus group participants identified themselves as bilingual in English and Spanish. Most of the other workers knew a few English words. In several of the focus group meetings, the information sheet about this project was the first information that they received in Spanish while working at that company.

Workers generally relied on coworkers to translate or explain work responsibilities or other communication needs. These fellow workers or friends aren't always available to help translate, so workers must wait to communicate their needs and questions until translation help is available, communicate through body language, or not communicate at all. For some of the workers, this is frustrating. "Not just here, in the pharmacy, and in the streets, and everywhere you go because you feel this frustration because you want to say something and you're not understood. I feel bad when I don't understand, I understand a little but I feel bad when I want to say something and can't."

However, many workers have little motivation for learning English. Workers in unskilled positions lack motivation to speak English for a number of reasons. These workers are typically those that plan on being in the United States for a relatively short period of time and then return to their native country. They also feel that once they learn their job responsibilities there is little reason for them to communicate with non-Spanish speakers or their supervisors. Additionally, they usually live in neighborhoods composed of Hispanics, and local stores cater to their needs. Finally, they see little financial compensation for becoming bilingual. There are no pay incentives for those who help translate for their co-workers and advancement from their labor-intensive positions is relatively rare.

Even some employees in skilled positions don't see significant benefits to learning English. One worker commented, "But at the machine you don't need to speak English, (because for) the work itself, it doesn't matter if you are American, Hispanic, or whatever, the work is done the same way." Additionally, many of the skilled workers have family obligations that limit the time available for formal classes. They typically work an eight- to ten-hour day and when they return home their spouses leave for work, leaving them with the children and domestic responsibilities.

Another concern with learning another language is the class composition and teaching style. Most classes are composed of students with a wide range of English abilities. Instructors try to fulfill the needs of all students, but those with less experience feel ignorant. As one said, "I'm already short, and not understanding makes me feel smaller and smaller." Most Hispanic workers in the wood products industry have little experience with the teaching methods in American schools. Verb conjugation and grammar mean little to them; what they desire is vocabulary and pronunciation.

Another concern was the amount of time that classes are offered by the companies and the amount of English that could be learned in such a short amount of time. "And I don't

think that you're going to teach all English, is going to take two years; it is not like they are going to learn that quickly."

However, language isn't the only obstacle in communication at the workplace. One worker commented, "Or you have one (a supervisor) come and tell you to do it this way and another comes and says, 'No, not like that do it this way.' And you tell him that the other told you to do it like that and they say no, do it this way. So you do it that way and the other comes and says no, do it this way and it goes back and forth."

Some efforts to provide training information in Spanish by companies are ineffective due to poor translations. "And so they have these papers in plastic posted on all of the machines and the Spanish there is not correct. We don't understand what it says in Spanish because it is not correct."

#### Additional training and information

The focus group participants were asked what other types of training would be beneficial to them in their job and in the future. Workers in unskilled positions generally lacked the experience and perspectives to identify this need and typically responded with, "We need to know more about the different areas of work, because if all of the time we are at the same place we won't know what we need to learn. As long as we are just there pulling and pulling boards, we will never move to a different place."

Skilled workers identified a number of areas of training that would be beneficial. One worker commented that several years ago the company "took us to training of how to work in groups, how to work within the company, how to have communication with your supervisor in English. And this training that they gave us was good." Several of the co-workers said that they would like to receive this type of training, especially working in groups.

Many other skilled workers mentioned the need for training in quality control, not just for them, but also for all workers and supervisors. They felt that money and resources were being wasted because of the lack of understanding and implementation of quality control.

Several focus group participants mentioned the frustration of having supervisors who didn't know how to do the jobs of their employees. When one of the workers had a problem or question and would ask for help, the supervisors were unable to assist. The Hispanic workers recommended basic training and work experience for the supervisors in all of the positions that were under their responsibility.

#### Training delivery

Participants were asked what they thought would be the most effective way to present training. Training programs and information in Spanish was overwhelmingly preferred. On-the-job training and written materials were almost always mentioned, as was the use of videos and meetings. All workers and their friends and co-workers believe that they



have the equivalent to a high school education and with a few exceptions, all can read and write in Spanish. The majority of workers are computer-illiterate and any computerized training delivery would require prior computer instruction.

### Advancement

Workers were asked about their expectations for advancing within the company. With a few exceptions, the majority of the workers didn't feel that there were opportunities for them to advance much beyond their current position. Workers in unskilled positions were especially pessimistic about their future in the companies. Statements such as "Here we don't hope for much", "You have to fight to get ahead." And "Yes, you have to fight but if you are doing a good job and the company knows it but still pays you a lower salary."

Similarly, skilled workers often have little hope for advancement. One of the participants commented that, "Advancement isn't always limited by English or communication, because I speak English and so does he. It is the company policies. They say that there isn't a position right now or put us back in our position and then they put someone else in the position that we wanted. It's that they don't want us to move from where we are."

However, workers at several companies reported that the company values their work and that there were opportunities and the possibilities to learn more and advance. These employees reported that they were treated the same as all the other employees and they were the most content and dedicated when compared to workers from all of the focus group meetings.

### Participation in company benefits

Almost none of the workers had health insurance. The principal reasons for this lack of participation was the high cost, and the distrust and/or bad experiences that others had. Poor knowledge of how American insurance companies function, deductibles, co-payments etc. appear to be the principal causes of this distrust. Similarly, extremely few participated in retirement packages.

### How can the Hispanic workforce best be integrated?

Depending on their position and plans for the future, the Hispanic workers' perspective on integrating into America varies greatly. Low or unskilled workers tend to think that "Right now we are enduring the culture, not integrating" or that "We will always keep our culture." These are typically younger males who have left their families and, plan on returning to their home country after earning money in the United States.

Employees in more skilled positions typically have their families with them and see more advantages in becoming integrated into American culture. Their children attend local schools. Through helping them with their homework and attending school events, they are more exposed to the culture. They admit, however, "It will be our children (that are)

integrated and not us.” There is the strong feeling that “We need to bring our children up with both cultures” to maintain a Hispanic identity in their homes.

### Immigration status

Overwhelmingly, issues related to immigration status and legal issues were the top concerns of the participants in the focus group meetings. They report that a large percentage of their friends and/or coworkers may have questionable legal status. Instances of workers changing their names while working at a company indicates that some are, perhaps, working by using the documents of other people. There was a discussion during one of the meetings on how a legal worker had his identity stolen and sold to illegal aliens working in various parts of the country. He experienced the rigorous task of rectifying this issue with the Internal Revenue Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Focus group participants feel that this issue is a major obstacle for advancing in their jobs and becoming integrated in both the community and in the company. Additionally, this lack of a legal immigration status, and the real potential of being suddenly deported could be a major disincentives for learning English.

### Coworker relations

One of the topics mentioned during many of the focus groups was the relationships between Hispanic workers and their co-workers. Workers expressed differential treatment from their American co-workers. As one participant commented, “There is this situation here, the company is good, a very good company, but like he says the situation is between co-workers. Like he says, if an American makes an error, they say “there’s more material” but between them, not with the supervisor or the team leader. But if a Hispanic makes a mistake, there is no more material; it was your error, your mistake. They are more critical of us.”

Interestingly, this same situation arises between fellow Hispanic workers. One of the focus group participants commented, “But sometimes one of the same Hispanics, lets say he and I don’t get along and he has his papers and speaks English and we start to discriminate within ourselves, ‘Oh I’m going to call Immigration because I know that you don’t have your papers’ and it is between our selves. Lets say that he has a better position than I do and I’ve got my papers, and they say they will call immigration only because they have their papers. Here within this company and within the Hispanics. I don’t know what causes this courage or why they want you to feel less, but in reality the problem is within the Hispanics.” These two examples were common in most of the companies.

### Future expectations

Most of the unskilled workers did not see themselves staying with the company for any length of time. They would leave for any other position that paid more, where they can work more hours, or where they perceived more of a chance for advancement. This is

largely due to their objectives of making as much money as possible and not having a dependant family here in the United States.

With a few exceptions, skilled workers plan on remaining in the same company but are frustrated by the lack of opportunities for advancement. Additionally, they are struggling financially and would welcome positions with better pay or more hours. However, in a couple of the companies, workers were very pleased with their situation and have stated loyalty to the company. These are the companies that, from the perspective of the workers, treat them in an unbiased and fair manner. These are the workers that have been able to advance or have seen fellow Hispanics given opportunities to improve.

## **Hispanic Training in Other Industries**

A literature review was completed to identify training activities and methodologies utilized in other segments of industry. Additionally, resources developed by Hispanic workforce specialists were obtained and media reports were collected.

Low-tech and labor intensive industries such as construction, meat processing plants, agriculture, garment factories, housekeeping, service industries, and landscaping have relied on Hispanic workers to fill low paying and physically demanding positions.

Recently, the Hispanic workforce has become a focus of training needs and workplace safety. Nationally, fatalities for Hispanic workers increased 15.1% between 1992 and 2001, while it decreased 15.4% for all other workers during the same time period (*USA Today*, March 13, 2003). An automobile accident in Northern Maine in September 2002 killed 14 Hispanic forestry workers as they traveled to their job site (*New York Times*, January 7, 2003). It was the deadliest traffic accident ever in Maine and the resulting investigation sparked both local and national attention.

### Governmental programs

Beginning in August 2001 the U. S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) formed a task force to assess the agency's Hispanic outreach efforts to determine what is needed to improve the training, education and information for Hispanic workers and employers to improve safety and health in the workplace.

On February 25, 2002 OSHA launched a new Spanish language website (<http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/spanish/>) to serve Hispanic workers and Hispanic employers. This site provides basic information on OSHA, publications available in Spanish, and employer and worker rights and responsibilities.

Through the Susan Harwood Grants, OSHA funded over 1.5 million dollars of training activities with Hispanic workers targeted for delivery in 2002, 4.8 million dollars in 2001, and almost 2.9 million dollars in 2000. The training activities specifically including Spanish-speaking audiences averages 41% of all of the grant money distributed through this program. Specifically, the categories receiving the priorities for funding to serve the

Spanish-speaking populations are institutional competency building, averaging almost 4.4 million dollars a year between 2000 and 2002, construction, averaging over 1.8 million dollars a year between 2000 and 2002, and programs for hard-to-reach workers, averaging 970 thousand dollars between 2001 and 2002.

Recently, the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension System launched their website: Extensión en Español (<http://extensionenespanol.net/>), a national clearinghouse for Spanish-language educational resources. Current publication documents include the topics of agriculture, disaster preparedness, domestic insect control, food preparation and safety, animal management, water conservation, government and the community, money management, family relations, and health and safety.

#### The National Ag Safety Database

[http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/spanish/english\\_titles.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/spanish/english_titles.html) has over ninety publications available in Spanish on agricultural subjects, including safety working around tractors, chainsaw safety, preventing back injuries, tractor driver safety training, and general public service announcements. Materials can be accessed with the Internet and there is no charge.

#### Private services and safety information

An initial Web search using the key words “Spanish safety training” turned up 393,000 hits. Of the first one hundred web sites listed, 25% were resources for assisting with OSHA compliance, 20% were general safety training, 19% were designed for manufacturing industries, 17% were agriculturally related, 12% construction, and 7% food handling safety.

In the fall of 2002, Hanley-Wood, LLC began publishing *El Nuevo Constructor*, a Spanish-language magazine for the residential construction industry. This quarterly magazine includes articles aimed at increasing readers’ skills in general building construction, framing, roofing, drywall, painting, carpentry, masonry, concrete work, safety training, product installations, and tool reviews. Ann Seltz, Vice President for Marketing, describes the publication as extremely successful, with over 25,000 copies being printed per issue. They are being distributed nationally in Home Depot, Lowes, and construction associations. Advertisers are eager for the opportunity to reach this important and growing consumer base.

In 2001 and 2003, Cornell University sponsored a conference on managing the Hispanic Workforce for Agricultural and Horticultural Employers. Topics covered during the conference included: Understanding the Dimensions of Culture, Four Factors for Success with your Hispanic Employees, Developing Supervisors from Within, Blending Cultures in the Workplace, Expanding Employee Skill Sets, Gaining Multicultural Acceptance in Communities, and Hiring a Legal Workforce. The proceedings of the 2001 conference can be found at <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/index.html>.

Many private consulting firms provide services for companies including process training and instruction, corporate policies, procedures and employee handbooks, document translation, safety orientation, benefits, and new-hire orientation/training. Consulting companies also offer seminars and courses on cross-cultural management, cultural awareness training, and improving Hispanic relations. There are several publications that give employer advice on the managing a Hispanic workforce.

Other consulting companies provide two-day training courses for companies. The first day focuses on teaching the employer and American co-workers the basics of the Spanish language and culture, and the second day provides Hispanic employees with complementary language and cultural information.

There are well over 200 training resources available in Spanish from a variety of private companies to assist various industries in OSHA compliance. These products include videos, written resources, and computer programs. Topics cover employee safety orientation, hazard communication, reporting for work, safety responsibilities, lockout/tagout for affected/authorized personnel, hearing conservation, respirators and how to use them, human behavior – reducing unsafe acts, forklift operator safety, etc. These are available through a variety of companies via the World Wide Web.

#### Immigration issues

The Immigration and Naturalization Service recently reported that there are 7 million illegal immigrants in the United States and 70% of those are from Mexico. Although California has the greatest number of illegal immigrants, Arizona, Georgia, and North Carolina have the greatest rate of increase between 1996 and 2000 (*CNN.com*, February 1, 2003).

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration <http://www.ows.doleta.gov/foreigntopic.asp> provides information on foreign labor certification and hiring foreign workers.

Many companies that rely on immigrant or Hispanic workers and are concerned about legal status have turned to private companies that provide background checks on employee character reports, criminal and civil searches, credit history searches, motor vehicle searches, county, state and federal records, worker's compensation claims, eviction history, employment history, licenses and credentials, education and degrees, employer and personal references, Social Security, and identity verification to help reduce the risk of employing illegal workers.

In 2001, Tyson foods was indicted by a federal grand jury for smuggling illegal aliens to work at their meat processing plants. In 2003, they were cleared on all counts. This trial, however, was watched closely by many industries as the federal prosecutors had indicated that they were looking to seize all profits of the company for the years in question if Tyson was found guilty.

### Company policy

In April 2002, a Hispanic labor association sued the Texas and federal agencies alleging that federally funded retraining programs aren't assisting non-English speaking workers.

Since 1998, there has been a five-fold increase in the number of companies sued for implementing "English only" policies in the workplace. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is typically concerned if a company establishes a policy that requires English only at all times, especially during breaks (2003 Scripps Howard News Service <http://extensionenespanol.net/articles.cfm?articleid=38>).

### General education level

In 2000, approximately 34% of high school dropouts were Hispanic (USA Today, October 10, 2002). Only 16% of Hispanic high school graduates complete a four-year college education by the time they turn 29, compared with 37% of non-Hispanic whites and 21% of African-Americans (The New York Times, February 10, 2003).

### Community services

A number of national and regional organizations are dedicated to Hispanic families and social services, especially involving migrant children, offering programs dealing with education, physical, dental, mental and nutritional health, social services and parent involvement. Other organizations assist low-income Hispanic families with adult training and employment services, property management information, housing assistance services, real estate and economic development information, resident services, child development programs, health and safety information, and youth education and training.

## **Discussion on Training and Information Needs**

There are significant needs for training materials and information packages for both Hispanic workers and management of companies that rely on this workforce.

### Training programs

A large number of companies identified the need for a more structured, formal, and frequent training program for all of their workers. A company training program template should be developed to assist in the implementation of a well-designed and thorough program for all workers. This should include topics that are typically only covered at the beginning of employment and areas such as safety training that should be reinforced regularly. A structured planning guide, training content, support, and evaluation material, should be provided both in English and Spanish. At the most basic level this resource should help the companies provide additional information specific to the company and employee needs.

Prior to this specific Hispanic workforce project, the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) conducted an effort looking into the needs of the industry for insuring OSHA compliance. Numerous leading wood products associations were involved in identifying the needs for this issue and efforts are being developed to address the specifics of the wood products industry. This continuing activity will meet the needs of the industry to provide more structured, formal and frequent training of all workers in safety and general job skills; however, additional areas should be taken into consideration.

### Communication

Communication was identified as one of the major concerns for both company management and Hispanic workers. Addressing the language barrier offers the greatest opportunity for improvement. Efforts should be undertaken to locate and/or develop programs to train Hispanic workers in survival English for the wood products workplace. The objective is not to gain full English proficiency, but to allow supervisors and workers to communicate on a basic, functional level. Vocabulary and pronunciation should be emphasized over grammar. Similar resources should be developed for Spanish survival/basic communication for English-speaking supervisors and co-workers.

Typically there is a Hispanic worker in the plant that possesses some English ability and his/her assistance in translation is helpful. However, companies should not rely on these individuals as the only solution for communication, and these employees should be recognized for their bilingual ability. This will help motivate other workers to learn English.

Additionally, this individual may take on the role, if only perceived, as a semi-supervisor or team leader. Care should be taken in explaining roles and responsibilities to both the translator and Hispanic co-workers. Obviously, the evaluation and selection of this individual should be made based on work performance.

Companies should consider demonstrating the benefits for English language improvement. Certificates of accomplishment, company merchandise, gift certificates, or other recognition for effort can be helpful in employee motivation; however, nothing is as effective as promoting a bilingual co-worker into a position of increased responsibility and pay.

### Company orientation

Most companies offer orientation on company policies and production cycle only at the beginning of employment, and there is typically little follow-up. Hispanic workers, especially those with limited English proficiency, are inundated with information on this first day, and focus on information needed to fulfill the obligations at their position, retaining little company orientation information.

Regularly scheduled training programs should include time for reinforcing the employees' understanding of company policies, regulations, and the production cycle. These training sessions should include tours of the plant with specific presentations on new machines and methodologies being implemented in the company. This training should be for all employees and not restricted to only those involved in the task.

Hispanic workers who have not received a quality orientation to the company may not understand the opportunities that may be available to them for advancement. This may limit their motivation for personal improvement such as becoming bilingual. Regularly scheduled information sessions can create motivation for the workers if they better understand the areas where they could possibly advance.

Additionally, in understanding the production process, workers more fully realize the importance of maintaining quality work and the reason why production goals are established.

### Company policies

A lack of understanding of the company vision creates confusion and uncertainty when future company decisions are made. Communication of company decisions to the Hispanic workforce is typically non-existent, and these workers are left guessing as to the motivation of management. This is particularly true when the decisions directly affect the workers themselves-especially financially. Hispanic workers generally feel that they have little access to upper management which may limit their ability to demonstrate their desire and abilities for potential advancement to other positions.

Company management should make concerted efforts to fully explain company decisions or changes in policy that directly affect workers. The communication of these decisions could be through company-wide meetings regarding issues that could or will greatly impact the majority of workers. Or for less broad changes, section or division meetings could be held, or an explanation of the rationale for the policy change or decision could be placed on a bulletin board. A quality and reinforced company orientation would make it easier for workers to understand these changes in company procedures.

When possible, workers should have direct access to a member of upper management, perhaps by appointment or during a regularly scheduled time. Perhaps few workers will take advantage of this opportunity, which may cause the manager to (erroneously) conclude that it isn't necessary to continue offering this access, but just the thought of having access to management could be as valuable to the Hispanic worker as the access itself.

### Team Building

Communication and collaboration difficulties exist between co-workers at many companies. This communication deficit exists between American and Hispanic workers, but also within the Hispanic workforce. Training in teamwork, cultural diversity, and



quality control at the company level - for all workers and supervisors - would help open these channels of communication and ultimately increase product quality.

### Documentation/legal issues

Immigration issues are a serious concern among the Hispanic population and to a lesser extent the company management. Information is needed to resolve this issue; however, this is without a doubt the most complex concern identified in the study. Many other industries are struggling with this issue and there has yet to be a well-defined solution.

At a minimum, companies must comply with legal requirements; however, beyond the basic I-9 form, immigration procedures and requirements are complex. Information regarding this process should be compiled “in a nutshell” and made available in a user-friendly format to company management and Hispanic workers. A word of caution: there is no band-aid solution to this issue. It is a complex and time-consuming process.

## **Recommendations and Future Efforts**

Based on the result of this assessment and the continuing efforts of WERC in structured safety training and delivery, the focus of this project will be in the development of resources designed to assist managers and supervisors better integrate and optimize the productivity of the Hispanic workforce. This will be accomplished through the development of a number of resources which, when implemented, will provide a better understanding of the workplace for the Hispanic workers and a greater ability for the manager to truly integrate the Spanish speaking employees into the production environment.

Specifically, a supervisors guide for managing all employees and the Hispanic workforce will be developed. This guide will be user friendly, containing in-a-nutshell information directly applicable to the wood products industry. The guide will include descriptions of, as well as discussions pertaining to, the importance of concepts, activities, and resources regarding the following: Company orientation methodologies, employee handbook template, team building, quality control concepts, and cultural diversity training. Additionally, a Hispanic worker employment guide will be written which will include the following topics: Generalities vs. stereotyping, geographical variability and the implications on management, cultural influences, educational systems in Latin America, communication – overcoming the barriers and immigration. These guides will help identify the difficulties Hispanics face and offer potential solutions

A manual to assist the Hispanic worker in adapting and understanding the American culture and work place will be developed outlining the following topics: Legal issues (INS, IRS, SSA, state & local laws), communication/education (motivation for self-improvement, language/educational resources), work environment (administration/supervisor/employee relations, safety, health and laws regarding health, PPE, reporting accidents, sexual harassment, etc.), culture/community (time = money,

privacy/nuclear family, planning, terms, etc.), and an English/Spanish audio resource of common terms in the wood products industry workplace.

These products will be developed with the input of several individuals including experts in Human Resources management, Hispanic culture and training, wood products/manufacturing, and information technology. Once the final products are developed, they will be integrated into an electronic template for delivery to WERC, participating associations, and their members in the wood products industry.

Many wood products companies already rely on the Hispanic workforce and it is highly likely that this trend will continue in the future. The productivity and efficiency of these workers is directly related to the quality of training efforts. Expectations that Hispanic workers will quickly become proficient in English should be modest. If companies desire optimum performance from their employees, supervisors should be assured that the workers fully understand their positions and the work environment. Developing training materials and efforts specifically for this audience is the logical solution.

**Appendix A:**

**Final results: Hispanic Woodworker Company Survey**  
**Analysis of all responses**

Total surveys sent: 1432. 149 completed surveys: response rate = 10.4%  
 107 (72%) completed on web site, 17 (11%) sent via e-mail, 14 (9%) by Fax, 11 (7%) sent by mail.

**Section 1: Please tell us about your total workforce and your company’s training programs and needs:**

**1) Common obstacles and issues facing companies in the wood products industry include the following. Please indicate (mark one) how important each of the following obstacles and issues are from your perspective.**

		<b><u>Very important</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat important</u></b>	<b><u>Of little importance</u></b>	<b><u>Not at all important</u></b>
1a)	Economy	77%	21%	1%	1%
1b)	International Competition	18%	28%	32%	21%
1c)	Domestic Competition	58%	33%	6%	1%
1d)	Raw material availability	40%	46%	13%	2%
1e)	Workforce availability	66%	32%	1%	1%
1f)	Workforce skills	64%	32%	3%	1%
1g)	Other (specify) Below	4%	0%	0%	0%

Education
Increasing L&I and other insurance rates
Insurance costs both health and workers comp
Must have some grasp of the English language
Training & Re-Training
Work ethic

**2) What percent of your total workforce would you classify as “skilled”? (Please check one)**

3% 1 – 9%  
7% 10 – 19%  
10% 20 – 29%  
13% 30 – 39%  
10% 40 – 49%  
9% 50 – 59%  
15% 60 – 69%  
14% 70 – 79%  
11% 80 – 89%  
7% 90 – 100%

**3) How would you rate the local availability of workers for these “skilled” positions? (Please check one)**

3% Very available  
48% Somewhat available  
48% Seldom available  
1% Not available

**4) What percent of your total workforce would you classify as “unskilled labor”? (Please check one)**

15% 1 – 9%  
14% 10 – 19%  
13% 20 – 29%  
15% 30 – 39%  
7% 40 – 49%  
13% 50 – 59%  
9% 60 – 69%  
10% 70 – 79%  
2% 80 – 89%  
1% 90 – 100%

**5) How would you rate the local availability of workers for these “unskilled labor” positions? (Please check one)**

35% Very available  
60% Somewhat available  
5% Seldom available  
0% Not available

6) Common concerns about the workforce in general include the following. Please indicate how big of a problem each of the following concerns are from your perspective and in your company. (Mark one for each item)

		<u>Very much a problem</u>	<u>Somewhat of a problem</u>	<u>A little bit of a problem</u>	<u>Not a problem at all</u>
6a)	Availability	34%	46%	18%	1%
6b)	Absenteeism	21%	26%	40%	12%
6c)	Substance abuse	5%	15%	47%	32%
6d)	Violence	1%	2%	26%	70%
6e)	Tardiness	15%	23%	46%	14%
6f)	Productivity	11%	40%	39%	9%
6g)	Other (specify) Below	5%	1%	1%	1%

Acceptable attitude
Age Factor
Communication
Competing with other industries pay scale
Cooperation
Education and literacy
English comprehension
Lack of H.S. diploma
Retention & training
Work ethics

7) How often are the following used to evaluate potential workers for job placement? (Please mark one for each item)

		<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
7a)	Previous experience required	42%	31%	19%	7%	0%
7b)	Interview	81%	13%	5%	1%	0%
7c)	Physical test	13%	3%	13%	36%	34%
7d)	Written questions	15%	7%	12%	37%	30%
7e)	Education/Degree required	2%	7%	31%	32%	27%
7f)	No evaluation used	3%	1%	9%	14%	66%
7g)	Other (specify) (Below)	4%	1%	0%	0%	2%

Attitude & enthusiasm
Company fit
Drug test and background check
Drug test pre-employ
References
References
References
Shop tour, oral quiz, demonstration of expertise
Verbal
We require a H.S. diploma, drivers license and passing a physical and drug screen. This eliminates 50% of the applicants.

**8) For all of your employees, how often are each of the following topics included in your current training/ information programs? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
8a)	Company orientation	75%	11%	9%	3%	1%
8b)	<i>General safety</i>	77%	19%	3%	0%	1%
8c)	Personal Protective Equipment	74%	18%	6%	0%	1%
8d)	Lockout/ tagout	58%	15%	13%	7%	4%
8e)	Machine guarding	62%	21%	13%	3%	1%
8f)	Handling chemicals	54%	16%	16%	11%	2%
8h)	Standard company benefits	72%	13%	8%	3%	3%
8i)	Insurance plans	69%	13%	9%	2%	5%
8j)	Retirement programs	54%	13%	7%	7%	17%
8k)	Other (specify) Below	6%	0%	0%	0%	1%

Attendance
Company Policies
constant work (few if any layoffs)
discussion with top level management
Drug Free Workplace
Drug Policy
Employee Manual
Harassment ID & Reporting
incentive plan

**9) How are training/ information programs delivered? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
9a)	Verbally/One on one	45%	38%	14%	2%	0%
9b)	On the job training	50%	41%	9%	0%	0%
9c)	Workshops	2%	11%	39%	28%	18%
9d)	Pamphlets/ brochures	11%	11%	32%	30%	15%
9e)	Videocassettes or Audiocassettes	11%	13%	28%	22%	25%
9f)	Meetings	17%	50%	28%	3%	2%
9g)	Other (specify) Below	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%

Bulletin boards
Newsletter, Bulletin Board
PowerPoint presentations and other written materials
PowerPoint presented by speaker

**10) How often are these programs provided? Please indicate by marking one for each item.**

		<u>Only at the beginning of employment</u>	<u>Periodically, as needed</u>	<u>Regularly scheduled</u>	<u>Never</u>
10a)	Company orientation	81%	17%	1%	1%
10b)	<i>General safety</i>	2%	53%	44%	0%
10c)	Personal Protective Equipment	3%	64%	32%	1%
10d)	Lockout/ tagout	3%	52%	33%	8%
10e)	Machine guarding	4%	63%	32%	0%
10f)	Handling chemicals	4%	59%	30%	5%
8g)	Standard company benefits	27%	57%	12%	3%
10h)	Insurance plans	17%	62%	13%	6%
10i)	Retirement programs	11%	56%	13%	19%
10j)	Other (specify) Below	1%	1%	2%	3%



Company Handbook
Company Performance
Cultural training
Substance free workplace and sexual harassment
When questions arise

**11) How are the training/ information programs evaluated? (Please check all that apply)**

- 74% A “feeling or sense” that they work
- 19% Written evaluations
- 35% Performance measurements
- 18% Participation rates
- 4% Other (specify)

Changes in law/OSHA, etc
Combination written and sense
Feedback
I don't understand the question
Not evaluated
Periodic monitoring

**12) What, if any, improvements do you feel need to be made in your training/ information programs?**

A written agenda should be established. But verbal communication of that agenda always needs to follow and on regularly scheduled intervals. We have a tendency to provide new employees with all of the information and fail to revisit the programs regularly throughout their employment. Implement Consistency.
As our company grows out training/ information needs to be assessed and updated periodically. We have no mechanism in place to do this as of yet. Being a small company, it's been difficult to keep up with this.
Based upon written evaluation results, verbal communication and participation rates our training/information programs are modified as often as needed or required.
Better follow up of the effectiveness of on the job training after orientation is over and the training begins.
Better follow-up to see how well training and information is absorbed and used.
Better job of job skills training, better documentation of shop processes specific to our company
Better organized and better presentations
Consistently executed skills training and education. It is currently on the job and highly dependent on the immediate supervisor with the exception of formal management training and development
Documented programs regularly scheduled
don't have one
finalizing "Standard Operating Procedures" for all items
Follow up
For managers and administration to speak the Spanish language to help with verbal training and communication
Formalized

Having the Hispanic more in tuned to fitting in quickly as possible to the American culture
Improved evaluation
In a perfect world more is always better, but we must keep an eye on cost/benefit tradeoffs.
More and better documentation of training versus transferring information verbally. Verbal transfer of knowledge tends to get lost as we experience turnover.
More education about profit sharing gains and losses
More formal training, and a more formal schedule, for specific woodworking skills
More formal training/information programs would be helpful.
More formal with written criteria
More formalized and prepared
More formalized, more thorough, more consistent
More frequent
More of them
More on-going training. Monthly informative job related training. Training facility. Training video applicable to the "trade".
More reasonably priced and applicable videos
More regular programs
More structure in material/ delivery
More structure including but not limited to scheduled sessions,
More structured, organized approach
More time for meetings
More update material
Need Spanish translation
Need to be more consistent with training and review
Need to develop a formal training plan than rotates a new employee thru several departments.
Need to make the AWI standards available to all employees. Ask all employees to take the Q.& A. tests (from the AWI website) each month. The employee with the highest score (and all employees who get 100% of the questions correct) get a \$100.00 savings bond. Encourage the prize winning employees to review their correct answers with all employees, during a weekly meeting.
No changes planned at this time
None
None
Our safety committee is working to finalize new employee orientation to make it more formal in all areas.
Regular monthly meetings
Regular Reviews
There needs to be focused one on one training as in an apprenticeship program.
They need to be more standardized and more consistent in their content and presentation.
Training for the Trainers.
Training the "shop-floor" trainers.
We are on the verge of ISO 9000-2001. This has caused us to re-evaluate and modify our work instructions. These have been issued to employees and they are accountable and are audited periodically to make sure they are following the work instructions (which include safety issues and standards).
We are planning to offer a 4 yr apprentice program. This program will have outside class work as well as in-house dedicated training/mentoring staff.
We currently utilize our company interpreter in all new hire orientation. We should make more focus

groups a part of the on going procedures although we have certainly done this in the past.
We desperately need a Spanish training program for our new employees. This, in addition to hiring more personnel, is a critical need for our company.
We don't have enough that are specific "job skills" oriented. This has a tendency to be done "on-the-job" solely.
We feel that we have a lot of training going with a trainer
We must purchase video programs in Spanish before we implement a formal training program
We need to figure out a better way to be sure workers get proper safety and training on new equipment as they move from unskilled positions into attempting more difficult tasks. Because we are custom, they are frequently re-assigned from one area to another depending on where we need help. Turnover at unskilled positions and at team leader positions makes it difficult to get a plan going and stick to it.
We need to have a more formal documented program.
We need to have Spanish translated more often. We would get better participation and understanding from our Hispanic employees
We need to work more closely with a young employees and have after hours or Saturday training programs. We need to track what is taught and see if they are retaining the information.
We should include classroom training followed by hands-on training conducted by a trained trainer. For most entry level positions this would require 2 days.
Written material, videos, and enforce them
Written information, brochures, videos
More programs need to be available in Spanish
Recently promoted an individual to full time Human Resources. Need more standardization

**Section 2: If you do not or have never had Hispanic workers please skip to question #28.**

102 respondents OR 68% of participating companies have Hispanic workers.

**Please tell us about your present or past Hispanic workforce. We are broadly defining “Hispanic” as a person of Latin American decent and Spanish is their primary language.**

**13) What is the current % Hispanic workforce at your operation?**

<u>37%</u>	1 – 9%
<u>9%</u>	10 – 19%
<u>15%</u>	20 – 29%
<u>9%</u>	30 – 39%
<u>5%</u>	40 – 49%
<u>12%</u>	50 – 59%
<u>2%</u>	60 – 69%
<u>4%</u>	70 – 79%
<u>5%</u>	80 – 89%
<u>3%</u>	90 – 100%

**14) How many years have you been hiring Hispanic workers?**

- 8% less than 1 year
- 7% 1 – 2 years
- 21% 3 – 4 years
- 19% 5 – 10 years
- 46% more than 10 years

**15) Why did you begin hiring Hispanic workers? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
15a)	I could not find enough local labor	22%	31%	25%	17%
15b)	Local labor became less reliable	25%	25%	30%	13%
15c)	Hispanic workers were more available	33%	40%	17%	6%
15d)	Hispanic workers were more productive	20%	36%	34%	4%
15e)	Hispanic labor was more economical	4%	26%	42%	20%
15f)	Other companies were using Hispanic labor so I decided to try	3%	15%	37%	34%
15g)	Other (specify) Below	14%	3%	0%	1%

Applicants were qualified
Community is heavily Hispanic
Equal employment opportunity employer
Hispanics have been a significant part of this areas workforce for many years
Hispanic applicants are not singled out, they are evaluated the same as anyone else.
Hispanic typically don't apply for jobs at our company
Hispanic workers start applying
Individual qualifications
Labor Force in Puerto Rico is 100% Hispanic
Need to include area for "Have you hired any Hispanic workers?" This survey assumes that we all have Hispanic workers. Items 13 and 14 above need to acknowledge "0" or "none". Item 15 needs to acknowledge "I have not hired Hispanic as of yet"
Original founder of Company was Hispanic
Qualified Applicants
The individuals were the best person available for the opening(s) at the time. The fact that they are/were Hispanic had nothing to do with our hiring decision.
There is a predominance of Hispanic labor in this area
They applied for jobs
They are just as good workers as any other employees

They were successful applicants among others who were not Hispanic. There was no favoritism for or against them.
This is not the correct question for So. California. There are Hispanic People who have lived here 100 year. The question should be not Hispanic but immigrant labor. We have and will continue to hire both.
We are a minority owned company
We do not seek particular groups of people. Hispanics applied, we hired. We do not "import" labor. The Hispanics employed, and previously employed, all live in our area.
We don't discriminate
We have only Hispanic labor
With a local population that is 65% Hispanic we have always had Hispanic employees

**16) What do you feel are the primary benefits of employing Hispanic workers as compared to other workers? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
16a)	They are locally available	28%	50%	9%	2%
16b)	They are productive	31%	56%	3%	1%
16c)	They are cooperative	26%	60%	4%	1%
16d)	They are hardworking	34%	53%	3%	1%
16e)	They are reliable	29%	48%	12%	1%
16f)	They are economical	9%	39%	30%	10%
16g)	Other (specify) Below	3%	2%	0%	1%

Equal employment opportunity employer
Hispanics are a significant part of the workforce, no better or worse than others and are hired on the same basis as others.
No differences
Only Choice at that time
Poor question. I look at all individuals I hire to be 16b - 16e!
See 15 above
We have no other choice
Your questions tend to be classifying Hispanic in a certain category. You need a column that is neutral. My experience is that Hispanics employees are no different than Anglo or black employees

**17) What are your primary concerns with Hispanic employees? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<b><u>Very concerned</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat Concerned</u></b>	<b><u>Slightly concerned</u></b>	<b><u>Not at all concerned</u></b>
17a)	Communication in English	40%	40%	10%	6%
17b)	Basic educational level	18%	35%	29%	14%
17c)	Safety	15%	36%	25%	21%
17d)	Knowledge of the industry	8%	33%	30%	25%
17e)	Integration into the company	10%	26%	32%	27%
17f)	Integration into the community	4%	18%	39%	35%
17g)	Participation in benefit programs	6%	21%	29%	38%
17h)	Documentation or legal issues	39%	22%	23%	14%
17i)	Leave for 1-2 months a year and reappear	16%	25%	23%	32%
17j)	Problems with turnover	10%	17%	39%	31%
17k)	Training	19%	31%	31%	15%
17l)	Advancement	14%	25%	35%	23%
17m)	Cross training	13%	24%	35%	25%
17n)	Other (specify) Below	0%	0%	1%	0%

We have had previous problems with retention, because Hispanics have been somewhat less inclined to "stick with it". This has caused some disappointment, because in one case I remember, the employee was showing great promise. This has not created a reluctance to hire, because this behavior is not exclusive to Hispanics.

**18) What efforts or programs have you implemented to integrate the Hispanic workers into your company? (Please check all that apply)**

- 30% Providing verbal training programs in Spanish
- 36% Providing written material in Spanish
- 38% Encouraging English classes
- 32% Encouraging Spanish classes for supervisors
- 29% Hosting company "socials"
- 21% Other (specify) below

Acknowledge "None"
Called the MD State Job Bank to ask for Hispanic Workers
Had current Spanish speaking associate train new associates
Have interpreters available
Hispanic supervision
n/a
No efforts or programs necessary
None
None
None
None of above
Not applicable
Safety Signs in Spanish
Several have advanced to inspection and lift truck operation. Once we had the first bilingual employee trained we used him as a co trainer for Spanish speaking employees to advance to better jobs.
Spanish has not been a big barrier
They fit in quite well.
Try to get supervisors speaking some Spanish
Use translators, try to hire a certain amount of bilingual workers
We do not have the need for any of these with one Hispanic employed at our company
We do not need to integrate Hispanic workers, as all are Hispanic.
We pay for English courses.

**19) How effective were these efforts? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<b><u>Very Effective</u></b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b><u>Somewhat Effective</u></b>	<b>Not Effective</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
19a)	Providing verbal training in Spanish	5%	20%	7%	2%	43%
19b)	Providing written material is Spanish	8%	24%	6%	1%	38%
19c)	Encouraging English classes	0%	9%	31%	13%	29%
19d)	Encouraging Spanish classes for supervisors	0%	5%	17%	7%	47%
19e)	Hosting company "socials"	3%	12%	4%	3%	52%
19f)	Other (specify) Below	1%	2%	1%	0%	8%

Interpreters available
N/a
Signs in Spanish
We have not found this need.

20) How useful would the following training/ information packages for Hispanic workers be to you if they were provided by your association? (Please mark one for each item)

		<b><u>Very useful</u></b>	<b>Somewhat Useful</b>	<b><u>Slightly useful</u></b>	<b><u>Not at all useful</u></b>
20a)	Safety	52%	24%	14%	4%
20b)	Job skills	43%	29%	17%	4%
20c)	Cross training	36%	30%	19%	6%
20d)	Community resources	17%	36%	27%	11%
20e)	English classes	40%	25%	17%	8%
20f)	Spanish classes	18%	24%	26%	17%
20g)	Immigration and Naturalization Service	26%	19%	26%	21%
20h)	General Educational Development (GED)	21%	27%	25%	18%
20i)	Benefit programs	21%	29%	25%	16%
20j)	Life insurance	20%	22%	31%	20%
20k)	Retirement packages	16%	24%	27%	24%
20l)	Other (specify)	0%	0%	0%	3%

21) Are there other, specific training programs that you feel are needed for your Hispanic workforce? If so, please list them below.

Chainsaw safety and maintenance
Help to orient them with local services or needs - housing, social care, etc.
I wish I still had a Hispanic Workforce.
Lean manufacturing concepts
No
None
None
Our company has about 7% Hispanic workers, however we are limited to the availability for Hispanic workers and the employees who we have hired are able to write, speak and read English.
Personal finance, savings plans, investments.
Specifications in Spanish.
Team Effort, Quality Control, Materials Resource Planning
The above covers most our issues
The basic facing our community as in all communities is that young people are not evaluated early and guided toward a vocational program. Students are coming out of high school with no skills and we



have to start from scratch teaching them basic skills. Our schools are failing us.

The current NHLA Rule Book in Spanish lacks the full amount of info. Found in the English version

The Hispanic individuals which we employ have been long standing individuals in the community not transient individuals. Do you have training for Bosnians or Croatian individuals?

Video tapes in Spanish on Woodworking safety, Spanish speaking training consultants, in house English training on job terminology

**22) For each of these training programs for Hispanic workers, which would be the most appropriate audience? (Please check all that apply for each item)**

		<b>All Managers or <u>Administrators</u></b>	<b>All Supervisors</b>	<b>All <u>Workers</u></b>	<b>Only Hispanic <u>Workers</u></b>
22a)	Safety	14%	24%	62%	20%
22b)	Job skills	8%	24%	59%	19%
22c)	Cross training	6%	2%	59%	17%
22d)	Community resources	14%	12%	39%	31%
22e)	English classes	3%	4%	14%	67%
22f)	Spanish classes	17%	41%	24%	8%
22g)	Immigration and Naturalization Service	22%	5%	7%	53%
22h)	General Educational Development (GED)	6%	5%	46%	25%
22i)	Benefit programs	14%	13%	53%	22%
22j)	Vacation days	9%	15%	53%	23%
22k)	Health plan	13%	13%	53%	22%
22l)	Life insurance	13%	14%	52%	21%
22m)	Retirement packages	14%	14%	49%	20%

**23) How would training programs best be delivered in your company? (Please mark one for each item)**

		<u>Very useful</u>	<u>Somewhat useful</u>	<u>Slightly useful</u>	<u>Not at all useful</u>
23a)	Distance learning - video teleconferencing	4%	14%	29%	46%
23b)	Written material	40%	38%	11%	5%
23c)	Regional training meetings	4%	22%	29%	38%
23d)	Local training sessions	33%	41%	15%	4%
23e)	On the job training	60%	25%	5%	1%
23f)	Spanish speaking training consultant	30%	26%	25%	11%
23g)	Videotapes	47%	22%	14%	11%
23h)	Training at a community/ technical college	18%	31%	23%	21%
23i)	Internet based training	5%	17%	37%	33%
23g)	Other (specify) Below	0%	0%	0%	1%

Translation over the phone
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**24) In what other ways could training best be delivered for your Hispanic workforce?**

A bi-lingual Supervisor or employee.
Apprenticeship program
Combine a social event with short training sessions.
Did not answer #22. Selections should have included a column, Hispanic and Supervisors.
Do it in high school and early so they do not drop out of school.
I don't see a need to separate the training we are currently doing for our entire workforce with training for our Hispanic employees.
In-house bilingual trainer
Listing of trained Hispanic applicants for positions that could in turn train employees.
None
not applicable
On the job, Spanish-speaking consultant videotapes et al, as listed above are excellent.
On-site training best suits our needs
The trainee must be bilingual
Train the trainer, deliver by Hispanic lead person
We have several interpreters already in our plant

**25) In the future, what are your expectations for: (Please mark one for each item)**

		<b><u>Will do</u></b>	<b><u>Will consider</u></b>	<b><u>Will not Consider</u></b>
25a)	Recruiting Hispanic Workers	66%	23%	8%
25b)	Hiring Hispanic Workers	83%	12%	2%
25c)	Training Hispanic Workers	79%	14%	3%
25d)	Retaining Hispanic Workers	84%	10%	2%

**26) Would you like additional information on training Hispanic workers?**

69% yes  
30% no

**27) Do you have any additional comments regarding Hispanic workforce training?  
If so, please include those comments below:**

#1 issue is immigration status
A general comment - this survey is FAR too long!
Coming from a heavily Hispanic populated community, this questionnaire feels misdirected
Communication is vital. We've had one Hispanic employee. I set him up with information to attend night English classes at our local Tech. school. I told him if he wanted to retain his job, he would need to learn better English - he never went.
EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!!!
I believe it is utmost importance that everything is done in English only. You will be doing them and the United States a injustice if we continue to baby the Hispanics by training and communicating in Spanish. Many do not try to learn and we play right into their hands when we accommodate them in Spanish. Many Hispanics lie and use fake ID's and birth certificates and I don't appreciate it. We have had several bad experiences with Hispanics.
Learning English and becoming "Americanized" in living habits are most important
None
Seem to be an eager group willing to learn
The problem we have is communication. Work instructions, training, etc. is in English. The employee has to be able to read the paperwork to do the job.
The retraining of the trained Hispanic worker is a major problem, because the large percentage of the available Hispanic workforce is so young. They have a tendency to return to Mexico as soon as a few dollars are earned.
This study troubles me. It seems to treat Hispanics as foreigners, when we have lived side by side forever. Are you advocating bringing in more documented aliens from Mexico or South America and sponsoring them here?
We have several people in management positions that speak Spanish well. Most generally Spanish speaking people are only limited in the job market in our community by their ability to communicate or willingness to learn to communicate to English speaking coworkers or management.
We need Spanish-speaking inspection trainers.

**Section 3: Please tell us a little about your company:**

28) **How would you describe your company? (Check all that apply)**

- 11% Sawmill
- 8% Distribution
- 5% Components
- 88% Manufacturing
- 11% Other (specify)

Custom millwork
Custom Residential Cabinetry
Custom Store Fixtures
Design and build
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Mill work shop
Pallets
Profit Seeker
Veneer manufacturing plant
Wholesale
Woodworking

29) **What was the total value of your shipments in 2001? (Please check one)**

- 1% \$50,000 – \$100,000
- 5% \$100,001 - \$500,000
- 9% \$500,001 – 1,000,000
- 65% \$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000
- 15% \$5,000,001 - \$100,000,000
- 1% More than \$100,000,000

30) **How many people does your company employ? (Please check one)**

- 58% 1 – 50
- 15% 51 – 100
- 9% 101 – 200
- 13% 201 – 500
- 4% 501 – 1000
- 1% More than 1000

31) **How would you categorize the location of your company? (Please check one)**

- 34% Rural: In the country; farming/agricultural/forest areas.
- 29% Suburban: The region around a city
- 36% Urban: located in a city

32) **In what state is your company located?**

Alabama	1.34%
Arizona	2.01%
Arkansas	0.67%
California	2.68%
Colorado	2.68%

Delaware	0.67%
Florida	2.01%
Georgia	3.36%
Illinois	1.34%
Indiana	10.74%
Iowa	4.03%
Kansas	2.01%
Kentucky	2.01%
Maine	0.67%
Maryland	2.68%
Massachusetts	1.34%
Michigan	2.68%
Minnesota	3.36%
Missouri	2.01%
New Jersey	1.34%
New Mexico	3.36%
New York-Home Office	4.03%
North Carolina	4.03%
North Dakota	0.67%
Ohio	4.03%
Oregon	0.67%
Pennsylvania	6.04%
Puerto Rico	1.34%
Rhode Island	1.34%
South Dakota	2.01%
Texas	10.07%
Utah	1.34%
Virginia	2.68%
Washington	2.68%
Wisconsin	3.36%

33) A selection of interested companies will be contacted and times and dates will be defined for an assessment focus group meeting with 5-10 Hispanic workers. This group methodology will be most effective to gain insight into the training and information needs from the Hispanic workers' perspective.

Are you willing to have a group of your Hispanic workers participate in a focus group meeting during working hours? Information collected from these companies on the survey will not be linked to information collected from any company employee involved in the follow-up focus groups. All information will be completely confidential.

44% Yes (of those with Hispanic workers)

56% No (of those with Hispanic workers)

## **Appendix B**

Hispanic workforce: Focus group protocol.  
Integrating the Hispanic workforce into the wood products industry.

Hispanic workforce: Focus group protocol.  
Integrating the Hispanic workforce into the wood products industry.

We are holding focus groups comprised of Hispanic employees in the wood product industry to develop and deliver training and education products that are valuable to Hispanic woodworkers and their employers. To achieve this it is necessary to assess the Hispanic workers' perspective of training needs and optimum delivery methods. It is important to gather this information directly from the target audience to optimally address their needs.

The assessment for the Hispanic workers will consist structured open-ended interviews of focus groups of 5 to 10 employees in the wood product industry. Approximately twelve companies that have volunteered to participate in the focus groups during the company survey phase of the assessment will be selected and contacted for the scheduling of the meetings. Companies will be selected based upon geographical location, diversity of experience with the Hispanic workforce, variety in segment of the industry and availability.

The primary contact person at the selected company will identify potential Hispanic participants for the meeting. They will be encouraged to select individuals with a diversity of positions within the company, a wide range of time working for the company, different ages and native countries. A white sheet (both in English and Spanish) describing the focus group objectives and methodology will be sent to the contact person for distribution to company management (English) and to the participants of the focus group (Spanish).

We feel that focus groups (in Spanish) are the preferred assessment tool for this audience and phase of the project. A group of individuals will feel more secure sharing their opinion than would an isolated individual. The information will be completely confidential. To help illustrate this name cards will only contain the first name of participants and their last name will not be recorded in any project documents. Ideally these meetings will occur during working hours and will last approximately two hours. Refreshments will be provided.

This focus group methodology will allow comparative consistency (structured) while allowing the separate groups to further explore topics of relevance for their given situation. Some questions will be addressed as third-person for example: "How many of your fellow Hispanic workers can read and write in Spanish?" in an attempt to capture the reality of the workforce without causing personal revelations which could cause discomfort. A list of the structured questions and follow-up ideas follow this overview of the focus group process.

A large flip chart will be utilized to capture ideas and comments. At the top of each page the question or topic will be written as it is posed to the group. As participants respond the moderator will note the comment on the chart and when fresh ideas are exhausted will return to gather additional background and depth on the written comments.

In addition to written documentation of comments/ideas written on the flip chart and hand written notes by the moderator the focus groups will be recorded on cassette tape to insure all ideas and opinions were captured. These cassettes will be transcribed and translated for subsequent evaluation and analysis.

The results of these group meetings will be categorized and tabulated to identify the information/training needs and appropriate delivery methodology.

### **Hispanic workforce: Focus group agenda.**

#### **Explanation of project:**

Objectives: Improve the quality of work and working environment for Companies and Hispanic workers in the wood product industries.

Phase 1: assessment

Phase 2: development

Phase 3: delivery

#### **Explanation of focus group process:**

I will write a question at the top of the page and read it to the group and give two to three minutes of reflection before soliciting comments. Initially, during the general introductory questions I will ask for volunteers before asking specific individuals for their ideas. This will allow more timid people to become comfortable with the methodology before entering the topics of Training needs and delivery methods. When this section is addressed I will ask all participants to respond by identifying them in a clockwise direction. When fresh ideas are exhausted I will return to these initial comments to gather additional background and depth. This process will be completed until all questions are addressed.

### **Focus group content-what do we need to know.**

#### **General introductory (warm-up) questions**

How long have you been working for this company?

What type of previous experience did you have before working at this company?

How long have you worked with wood products in a sawmill, factory or shop?

- In your home country
- In the United States

#### **Training needs and delivery methods**

How difficult has it been to learn your job? Why?

How did you learn to do your job?



Has language been a barrier to your learning skills for your job?

What percent of your coworkers are bilingual in English and Spanish?

What types of training efforts or programs were provided?

What worked about these training efforts? What did not work?

What types of training/information would be helpful to your job?

What else would you like to learn so that you can be better at your job, feel better about working for this company, be promoted and identify with the company as your future employer?

How would you feel most comfortable learning this information? On the job training, Pamphlets/books, Visual, Computer, In Spanish, Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like the most about your job?

What do you like least about your job?

What goals do you have for your work?

What would you like to learn?

### **Community integration**

How long have you lived here?

Did you move here for this job?

Does your family live with you?

Do you (and your family) like living here? Why?

What community services do you or your family use?

How did you find out about these?

What do you think you can offer the community?

### **Fulfilling company needs**

How can the industry needs best be met?

Based upon topics identified above,

How can the Hispanic workforce best be integrated?

Why did you choose to work in the industry?

What are the hopes for the future?

What is your background/experience?

What is the average grade level that your coworkers have completed?

How many of your fellow Hispanic workers can read and write in Spanish?

Do you plan on retiring with this company?

- If no, how long do you plan on working for this company?

## **Appendix C**

Recordings of focus group meetings.

## **Recordings of focus group meetings.**

A total of 11 focus group meetings have been held with a total of 67 Hispanic workers. These meetings have been held in: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

At the beginning of all of the focus groups a white sheet of the project, in Spanish, was handed out and the people were asked to write their first name only on a name badge. The focus group leader then described the project and the issue of confidentiality was explained. The purpose of the tape recorder was explained and taping began.

Results below have been scrambled (all focus group responses randomly mixed) to preserve confidentiality.

Questions posed by the facilitator are underlined. Individual responses are on separate lines and listed below the facilitator question.

How many speak English?

We all speak a little

A few words

Not enough to hold this meeting in English.

I took classes there were offered at the last place I worked the offered two hours of classes three times a week during work hours.

I help my daughter when she is doing homework.

Listening and trying to speak.

No one takes formal classes mostly because they are tired after working for 9 hours and have to go home and cook dinner, take care of the kids, there are locally available classes, but we are too tired, I have to make dinner for my wife.

In the Catholic Church that gives classes on Saturdays.  
If someone wanted to there are opportunities.

Do you think that there will be opportunities to advance with the other company?

Not yet because we are still new. And we don't know what the other company does.

We went to South Carolina and got a job with them. They told us that there was work here and brought us up to work. They checked our papers and did all of the arrangements. They rented the house, the water, the electricity, the cable, everything.

And they deduct it from our check.

Did they give you a general orientation of the factory and how your position fits into the chain of production in the company?

Yes, yes, they showed us from up above to where we are. Where we will eat, where the bathrooms are, all of that they showed us. They showed us where they paint the wood and they showed us where we worked and the measurements of each different type of wood and how to measure the wood.

They showed me where I will be pulling wood and all of these things.

How to work.

But all of this was explained to you?

Yes, in English.

We always follow the rules of the company. That is one of the requirements of the job. Wearing your gloves and glasses is one of the things that you have to do.

Going back to the topic of those who have papers and those that don't I took a class in this: the rights of immigrants and every Mexican, Central American or South American where ever they come from that entered the United States, when they buy something they are paying taxes. This is to be a citizen. With a piece of gum that you buy you are paying taxes. And so you are contributing to the Government. And so that is a right of the immigrant even though you don't have your papers.

The majority of the immigrants work and don't report their taxes and of all of this money we don't get anything back.

That's why they want to have the control of every person. Of me of you, the privacy, my privacy where you go, what you buy, the visa, all of these things. In New York they are starting to put a computer chip that is the privacy of a person that you can buy for \$500 I could pay in installments of \$10. But it is the privacy that they are putting in your hands so that they can control you.

If you get paid \$300 or \$400 a week you end up with \$100 maybe and so for a Hispanic there is no benefit. They say that they are helping you but they aren't doing anything because they don't know the problems and the debts that you have. Here if you are renting a house it is at least \$700 a month and the bills are another \$300. That's \$1000 a month and if you are earning \$300 a week? And they don't do the calculation of our budget to see how much we are living on.

Every illegal immigrant who is working here without papers, here in this factory, is a citizen, a resident, because they are paying money to the Government. And when that person gets married to a resident or citizen of the US, immigration asks if they have been working although they say that you can't work, they ask for you to take the W-2's to immigration and Immigration says "this person is a resident because they have been working and paying taxes to the Government". I am telling you this because I am taking a class and we are studying this. But when you submit your papers within three to five years you will be a resident. And during this time they do not give you permission to work.

But how does immigration not know that we are here and working because your family or husband or someone has sent in their papers and so immigration has to know that you are here.

That's why they ask you for the papers W-2 and you have to pay a fine, but listen to what I'm saying tomorrow if INS comes and takes me, they cannot immediately deport me. Not me not you, not you, because they will come and say "sign this paper" and you are declaring with this signature that you are deported all at once.

That's why you always need to take your papers with you, whenever you move, keep them with you. Because if you don't have them INS will take you.

But in a lot of companies they send the papers earlier. One of my friends told me that before that the companies could help.

But that was before the laws are different now.

Now the help is the opposite. To help you out they take you away.

Those of us with children who are at school and they come and take me what will happen to the children?

And if all of went they would have to close down the factory they couldn't do it with four Americans. And not just this factory, there are many that are almost 100% Hispanic workers. What would they do then?

There are places where the town is 100% Hispanics.

How long have you been working here?

3 years, 1.5 years, 1year, 3.5 years, 2 years

Is this pressure put on you more by your fellow coworkers or your supervisors?

More by our coworkers.

Our coworkers.

Our coworkers

Like I said, the supervisors say there is nothing we can do about it now we'll just get some more material because there is more. It's like if you are making a chair and you make a mistake, you didn't do it on purpose, it was a mistake.

On my first day of work it was much the same as the others, the only difference is that I had worked with wood for four or five years before coming here. So I had a better idea of the materials and what the different machines did. So I came here with a little experience, I won't say 100% of experience but some. And since we have to work to have a stable and safe house I had to accept the salary that they were offering although it is low. And now I try to help people out who come here with little experience but it is difficult.

It's that when somebody is entering new, they think that when we talk it is just a personal conversation but how can we ask what we are supposed to do, how a machine works without asking each other? And they say, "No don't talk" and so there is no time to be trained. So you end up learning over the weeks and the months. And when you are doing it this way you end up with mistakes.

How many years have you worked in this company?

2 years, 1 years, 8 years, 8 years, 13 years, 2 years, 10 months.

Do you think that there are opportunities to advance here within this company?

That depends on how much time you are working here, right? We are here pulling boards and it is like whatever other place.

When you first came here on your first day of working, how were you trained?

They just showed me the department where I was going to be working and it's logical that we would learn everything in one day, they tell us that this is for that and this is for this but it really is in the following days that you learn what is going on. But sometimes they think that you are a recorder and that you will be able to remember everything in one day. In the following days they expect you to remember everything so there are some days where there is too much pressure. Sometimes, not always.

Sometimes I think that it'd be better if, well it's not that they are treating us differently like Mexicans, with other they give more time to learn but with Mexicans they want you to do it well on the second day. When you start to give then they want more. There are times when this you pay for this. On the second day they expect production now, quickly. It's not that I want equality, because we'll never have that but I'd like them to give us a little more of a chance to learn before pressuring us with production. Also and

we talk about this a lot is problems with the language. This also causes a problem although someone is helping translate, and that person is helping you out that day, the next day that person is not there to help you. Like I said, that is the situation. We always see the difference in how a Hispanic is treated and how the others are treated. Give us a little more of a chance, an opportunity and patience.

You feel the comparison to the other people and feel fearful more than anything if I don't do well they'll fire me and where will I go?

Like he said at first they don't explain everything to you or you don't remember it and you have to figure it out. And if they don't like the way you are working they will get rid of you.

In your neighborhood are the majority of your neighbors Hispanic?

All of us live in different parts of town, but I live between people of color and Hispanics.

We live among the colored and Hispanics.

The majority of the whites live outside of town they don't like to live in town. It's very rare to see an American that lives here in town.

We always live among the colored.

They are saying that it is important to train the workers. I am here now to see how to best train Hispanic workers. And the training that you currently get is largely on the job and watching what is going on, there is little training of the supervisors.

Yes, there has to be several levels of training, not just the English. All of us here, like me know their job and what to do. But they don't work about the people, how they are working, there needs to be better communication.

But for training we all know our jobs now.

It's the communication.

The communication we don't have even among ourselves, the Hispanic worker.

Communication of what if I have a line full of doors?

We are returning to this same problem of communication. What solution can we find to improve the communication here?

The easiest would be that we learn English.



You feel the need to do this, god willing the others but sometimes the owner or the supervisor or the boss calls me over and asks me what someone is saying and I have to translate, and I know that the factory is paying me by the hour, but I have to translate is someone is feeling bad and the ask what are they saying and I say the feel bad and want to go home. Or other good thing or other bad things. I'm the kind of person that likes to help. For quite some time we've been helping the Mexicans, the Central Americans, wherever they are from in a school where we teach these persons English teach them a lot of things like the Rights that people have here in the United States, all of these things, and I've had to teach the little that I know to others. I'm the kind of person the will help all of you by others that don't understand look at me badly. There is something among us Latinos, when we see someone helping others or advancing the look at you badly. We are in an area where you want to help be the others don't want you to.

What about the level of education of your coworkers, does it make it harder with measurements in English?

We'll say that yes, for the people that don't know the language, yes the measurements are difficult inches, centimeters, one-sixteenths.

But when you start working that is the first thing that you learn. More than anything else because it is the basics.

Yes but the style of measurement is different.

Yes, what motivation and help can the company give you to help you advance and learn something new, like English or other ability at work?

That depends on the individual.

If you want to learn something don't be shy.

The people who want to learn and move forward find and attend classes.

It would help if they gave classes here.

How did you learn the safety regulations?

Signs in Spanish

Written information is Spanish: how to stop a machine, maintenance

Someone came to talk to us in Spanish about the company benefit programs.

About this question of reading and writing in Spanish, in Honduras, about 45% of my workers couldn't write their own name. Do you think that there is a similar problem like that here?

I think that we all know.

There are some that know less, they can do enough to function.

And what is it like here?

This is a purely racist town. Pure America.

I can't say that because I live here.

He is the only Hispanic that lives in this town. But here it is known for its racism. Here if a Hispanic comes in and buys a house all of the people don't like it.

I've got a house here and I can't say that.

The only thing is that the houses here are more expensive. But I can't say anything about racism. I've worked with blacks, Korean, Chinese, and I don't have a problem with anyone.

So this company didn't do any training or orientation, you went to the other to apply and when they brought you here they explained what to do. At this time did they tell you what the rules are for their company like being late for work or missing a day?

No they didn't tell us any rules they just checked our papers and told us what we were going to do and they explained what we were to do in our area, in all of the area, they told us that we were to be pulling boards, but rules and policies no.

Was all this explained at the beginning of your employment?

When you are first interviewed the manager explains all of this. And then if you forget they tell you that you need to use it.

For the people who come to work here who have no experience in working with wood I think that they need an introduction at the very beginning but it has to be Spanish because there are people who can't speak English and others who really can't read or write.

There are others that would change jobs for fifty cents more an hour would you?

No, for fifty cents, no that's what the blacks do and it's not stable.

What about if it was three dollars more?

Then, yes, clearly I would change for a better opportunity for my family.

But you're not taking into account the benefits that you get here with the benefits that you may get there. You'd have to be there for a year and a half to get the benefits there that you get here. What if you get the three dollars an hour more there but you will only be working twenty hours a week.

There is another detail is that here they pay is fairly well so that we stay. Changing with people who don't know what is going on and two or three months later they are gone.

And this work is steady I know people who work three months a year for fifteen an hour and then they have no work. Working year round is a benefit as well. Last year in December the orders and production went down and the bosses didn't say that they were going to cut half of the workers. No they suffered through. That's the thing that here there are days when production is down and there is nothing to do. No here they don't send you home to rest they say that there are things to do. Maybe in your department there is nothing to do but in other there is or take out the wood. There is always something to do. Here there are no twenty or thirty-hour weeks, they say forty and they give you forty. And in that way they are helping us. Not just the Hispanics but also all of the workers.

That's what I was saying about including all of the benefits that we receive. They are good people.

Before I worked at another factory making mobile phones and making pretty good money and the started cutting hours and that isn't convenient for me and from what I understand they are still cutting hours.

I worked for three weeks at a place where they only worked four days a week.

Are you all planning on staying with this company or are you looking for other jobs?

All of us are planning on staying here. It's that we can't look for other jobs because in many other places they require English and there aren't many other jobs available. In other places they require English.

And papers.

That's why there are companies like this that are hiring all Mexicans because we are the only ones that will work but we are here without papers.

We are the ones that want to work so they should give preference to us for papers.

Is communication a problem at work?

4 yes, 1 no.

The supervisor does his part by learning some Spanish and understands us.

We can communicate by hand signs or symbols.

It would be better for us to learn English than for our supervisor to learn Spanish. But if a new employee came to work here and didn't speak English how are they doing to understand? For us it would be good but what about people who come behind us?

I'm not here to defend anyone, I don't work for this company but if the boss has let me come here to talk to you about training needs and integration shows me that he and the company have an interest in improving the situation.

I think that they need training on how to better communicate with their workers and how the workers can work better together. And better quality control.

Now she has to run to find someone if there is a problem and there are too many where the other workers are at.

Since they changed supervisors here all of the Hispanics are working in fear.

It all started when some of the people changed their names. Yes, yes, yes. It all started when people were working with the papers of another person and so were called by that person's name. And then they found out.

And how long have you worked here?

I'll have been here for a year in March and when I started working here a Hispanic helped me as well to explain things. But he was with me for half a day because the work was simple checking parts. Since I had worked before checking parts, not the same it was plastic, but you get used to what to look for.

I've been here for almost eight years and for me it wasn't difficult to learn because I entered the paint room and in that room everyone speaks Spanish. It wasn't difficult; I learned everything in my language.

For me it wasn't hard either. I'll be here for three years, I run a machine in the line checking production and quality. For me it wasn't difficult because I was also trained by a Hispanic. I came in on the second shift.

When one enters, there are some things that make it difficult. I entered in the paint room as well, there they showed you what type of paint went on which furniture, there was one English working there and the rest were Hispanic. I've been there for eight years now and have a lot of experience.

I'll be here for ten years, and I didn't have problems either. I entered in the first shift. Before coming here I worked in Texas as a carpenter, making houses. So I was used to working with wood and so it was easy. I entered in the paint room which was with

mostly Americans and I really couldn't communicate with them. But they showed me the colors, the sprayer, I've been doing that until they bought that millionaire machine out there, and now they have retired the bonuses. They used to give us \$25 on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December and they used to give us bonuses for each year that we were here it was good money, \$500 almost \$600 and they took that away to buy this machine. What they are doing is just to benefit themselves without taking into account the employees. Almost all the things that they do are for production, production. We know about English and I can't communicate well but it is difficult for me to adapt to how they are working. I like to work with wood but they are going to put in another machine. This company, sadly, has changed a lot their policy and systems. A lot a lot. And almost always the changes that they have made is for them but we have been forgotten. That is my point of view and I think the others agree because this is one of the things that has happened.

The people that have been here for more time I have heard these comments I don't know why. I will be here for one year but people who have been here for more than three are those that comment a lot about this.

If someone came here to teach English two days a week for one hour per day after work and it was free how many of you would come? Without pay.

Without pay?? No one would come.

It's that we have to go to or house because my wife works.

I have to take care of my daughter.

I have to cook for my family.

In Questions of safety rules, and similar types of information, did you also learn this on the job or did they give you papers or instruction in Spanish, videos, how did you receive this information?

We saw some videos but they were in English, we have received nothing in Spanish.

And in the neighborhood is it just Hispanics or are there others living there?

Maybe four houses are Hispanic.

For me too.

Where I live maybe 90% of the houses are Spanish.

Can I ask you something, in general, not for you personally, but how many of your friends are here without papers?

(Long quiet space)

We have permission and all.

That one of the reasons that we don't think about or hope to advance more here because we will be here for only one or two years and it takes more time than that to advance. I don't want to be here for more time than that I want to go to Mexico.

Let's use the example of using a measuring tape. How were you taught to use it and measure in English units?

Here we have to make furniture that is very exact and well made.

In Mexico we use centimeters, but inches we know perfectly well, so there is no problem. A 1/8, 1/32, 1/64 isn't a problem at least for me.

In almost all of the machines there is a table that you can review that shows how much is a 1/16, you don't learn too fast me you have to learn it. The first day you have to think hard about what a 1/64 is but you learn it quickly.

The thing like he said is that we are not dumb, what the paper says is the reality. We came here to work from Mexico or wherever we came from. With work you can make money and we can do whatever it takes. You do your best to make it perfect, that's why we are working in various different companies. The only thing that we need is a little more information. Like he said we are never going to be exactly like the others, the fact that they are from here and we are from the outside, it's logical. But if there is work we can do it. We do it for the company, good production and good quality. The thing is that just because we can't speak English well doesn't mean that we don't know how to work. It's a disadvantage, but we can still do the work that we know how to do. We need a little more opportunities.

In our case, in our location, we have some problem with the measurements, not because we're dumb but because the machines sometimes move. So it cuts a little too much or too little. You have to check it, check it, because if you don't and you're making a five verticals and five horizontals pained window a 1/64 error at the end you would have a error of 1/16. It accumulates the mistake. That's too much now it doesn't close. It's not that we are dumb it's that the machines move. So the measurements aren't the same so you have to always check the machine. So although you know the production well it'll move and only the first two come out all right, and you have to start over. Or they send us parts that we need of a certain size and when we get them they are the wrong size and that has happened several times. Or they give us the wrong number of pieces.

How many of you are bilingual in English and Spanish?

For my part I understand a little, a word here and there.

Here at work we understand the basic things but when it get complicated is where it gets hard.

I understand almost nothing. That's why I'm taking my English classes.

There are three or four coworkers who help translate if we need it.

The company is helping offer English classes, one hour after work, and it is something that we should take advantage of. Not all companies do that and for me it is excellent. I'm learning a second language and it is difficult but very good to learn. It's good.

I'm not taking classes, I came here to work and that is it. If I can still work then I am fine.

There are giving classes here but the thing is that my wife starts work at five o'clock and so I have to go home to be with my daughters. So there is no way I can attend the classes after work.

I came here like that and I didn't receive any classes, I think that it is too hard, once they offered classes and we came here and the teacher used examples and I said please repeat and so she did an evaluation of each of us to see where we were and all I want to know is how to say this how is it pronounced so they understand me, but she would use examples of this and that and I'll never learn like that. Thank you very much for the classes but I can't do it, no more.

What happens is that when we use a little bit to say hello or good morning they think that we can speak good and start speaking very quickly and the words in Spanish and English run into each other. I know with some word more or less what they are talking about but to understand more is where it is the most trying.

They are giving classes that are like the High School, for people who are prepared for that. But I can't do that, I can't.

Now we have a very good teacher,

I don't know how the teacher is but the one that I had just didn't work out for me. If they would just teach one word per class I could do it. But with these examples, because there were some there who knew a lot more than I.

That's the problem with learning with a group because there will always be some people that know more than others and it should be that groups have people who are the same. I don't know how you learned Spanish, maybe with lectures or talking with people but when they put a square root of the words up on the board and dissect the words it doesn't work for me. And she wouldn't let us speak Spanish. How can I ask what is this, how is that and understand what the words mean if you can't explain it to me in my language.

We are talking about work and here at work not understanding makes you feel depressed. I'm already short and not understanding makes me feel smaller and smaller.

Did you know about this company before you came here?

No, we got here and then found out about the company and the job.

Everybody has their own story, most come from the south just looking for work.

Also when you come here you have no idea what kind of work you'll find or what kind of company you will be working for. You have no idea of what kind of work is done in a company and what kind of work you'll be doing until you enter the job and they start to show you what to do. And then you start to understand and learn the work because you have to understand the work. And you have to learn the work or you'll not last two weeks. But you really have to pay attention and focus on everything that they are showing you. Sometimes, although you don't speak English, because I don't know English, in whatever area they put you to work, you need to learn. And so you need to have experience of how to learn. Look at how many Hispanics there are here and the majority can speak some English, those that don't need to put forth the additional effort. So is really a problem to not speak English, but the work itself, it doesn't matter if you are American, Hispanic, or whatever, the work is done the same way. Sometimes they ask a Hispanic for more production, and you say, well I have to do it or they will get rid of me. And it is not fear of papers or anything because the majority have their papers, but as I said, one has to learn their job and do it well or they will get rid of you because what they want is production. And so what they want is production and for you to follow the regulations of the company. But there are sometimes that they don't follow the regulations for the workers. Like they were saying about the bonuses and the raises. They know what kind of production we make but they use the excuse that it is because we don't speak English. But at the machine you don't need to speak English. Because I have overheard some information here, a supervisor said, "Why here am I going to speak English" and he is Hispanic and then there was a rule that you aren't allowed to speak Spanish here and I told them you can speak to me in English but I'm not going to understand anything. I understand works here and there but I'll not answer so I don't say anything bad. But the thing is that we know the work. If they send me to a place and say for me to do it I will because I know what to do. So why are they obligating us too speak English? If I don't know English they will get rid of me. Do you think that a company can do this if I know how to do the work? So you want to tell me for a Hispanic there are no favors. They want that we change to be like them and if you don't you are left behind.

When they started with this English policy I felt that it is a form of discrimination. I understand that the company has to have its rules but like he said, he has been here for ten years and knows the work. What does it matter if he speaks English or not?

I've got another question. With the one or two months of classes that they are offering, you're not going to learn English in such a short time.



I think that it is not the obligation of the company; it is the obligation of the person. It is a necessity for each one of us.

Yes but they shouldn't be obligating us so much. They know what work we are doing.

In other companies they have bilingual people and they don't have these types of problems. I don't know why it makes me laugh but when a white complains about this because they don't have communication with a person because he doesn't speak English. I agree with what she said, that it is our personal responsibility. But the company is trying to help us and not leave us behind.

As I said in the beginning, this is completely confidential. I'm going to take this cassette and those from the other meetings and write down what they say. With all of this I'm going to aggregate the results and give a description of your point of view.

With just wood product companies?

Yes. Furniture, sawmills, distribution plants in the Eastern United States.

All of them are going to tell you that the problem is this question of papers.

As I mentioned, we are thinking of something like a menu from a restaurant for the companies. And if they have concerns about papers the minimum thing that they need to have is the I-9 with a copy of the Social security card and a photo ID. Other options are for the company to help with sponsorships. Or for the company they can do a check to make sure that the person doesn't have problems with the law, isn't a felon, doesn't have problems with the police, etc. And these are examples of the different types of information that we'll include. We also talked about English being a problem it could be that the company helps by offering classes here at work, I know of some companies that offer classes and pay half salary for attending.

A place that I used to work paid us for two hours of English classes, paid us overtime.

And that is why the people went.

If they paid us we'd come too.

What other types of work did you have before coming to work here?

Soldier, pallet company, pallets, woodworking, everything, pallets, none

Do you think that English is important?

Yes,

Of course,

For me it is.

If you found a job that paid fifty cents more an hour would you go?

Excellent

Yes,

Yes,

Definitely,

If it was killing chickens or ...

Yes,

Yes,

Yes,

We came here to work for a short period of time. We don't care what the work is, we want to work and make money.

More hours.

The more we make the sooner we can leave and get home to see our family.

What about safety rules, safety glasses, hearing protection, how did you learn what those were, on the job?

On the machine there are signs that say don't put your hand in here, or that you have to use something. They have signs in both English and Spanish and with drawings. This depends on us. Sometimes we bring in our own things.

But in questions of safety this company is very good. There are safety glasses, ear plugs, information.

How many years have you been here?

9, 16, 2, 5 months 4 months 11 months, 16 years.

They give us training here and opportunities to move on to other positions. There are always problems in work but you work to improve and take advantage of the opportunities as they come.

For me there are opportunities. When I came here I didn't know anything about wood, and I entered here as a general assistant. So I learned all of the areas. My training was by seeing and them telling me to do it like this and this and this.

The one thing that they could do is that they give a raise after five years or something like that but in terms of training they give us a lot.

Yes they gave me an introduction to the company, the different section of the company and what processes they did. They give us opportunities here when there are positions and that is good for both them and for us. Let's say that there are two people in the same position, the work is delicate, there are certain abilities that we don't have the same experience as people from this country, so that makes us have to be more thoughtful more able that's because in our country we don't have the tools and the knowledge and here there is everything. And so we often have to adapt and think of new ways to do things. When there is a Latino and Gringo working side by side the company knows that a lot of the time the Latino can do it better but in terms of the salary they are paid better.

You have to fight to get ahead.

Yes, you have to fight but if you are doing a good job and the company knows it but still pays you a lower salary.

And are there opportunities here to learn English?

Yes,

Yes,

Of course

How?

The company told us that tomorrow there will start to be English classes in the morning. From 12:00 until 2:00 in the afternoon. Last night they gave us a paper announcing it. It is good for us to learn English but it is difficult as well. Especially for an older person I will be thirty-two years old and it is easier for one of the younger guys.

Are all of you Mexican?

No, I am Honduran and the rest are from Mexico.

And so the objective of this is to see if it is convenient for the owner to train workers, or not?

So this white sheet that I gave you has been the first thing that you have received in Spanish?

Yes, but here there are boards (groups of workers) and some of the members understand English and some of them don't so where there is a meeting and one of them that speaks English will translate for the rest. So this is the backward communication that we have here. We don't have a reliable, stable person that can translate for us. So that when they go to a meeting they (the managers) know that that person is speaking on behalf of all of the workers. And it seems to me that this is what the communication is lacking.

Is that the same for all of you, did you have an orientation to the company when you started to work here?

When an American comes to work here they show them all of the machines and how they work but for one of us they just take you to your position, show you by signs what to do and leave you there.

To start I'd like to know how many years have you been working here?

7 months, 9 months, 7months, 7months, 9 months, 9 months, 9 months

How many of your coworkers are illiterate in Spanish?

All the people they know can read and write in Spanish.

So did all of you have experience in factories before coming to work here?

Car part salesman, Yes, plastics, my first job.

What percentage of your coworkers doesn't have papers?

That's the problem in other places they check for your papers.

Of pure Mexicans maybe 10% have their papers.

If we are important to these companies in the wood industry why don't they help us get our papers?

Americans don't do the work. So immigration should give us papers.

The company should help us.

It would cost us 2,000 dollars or more to get our papers.

Do all of you work in the same area?

Yes, we all work in the same place.

We work on the chain, pulling boards off and sorting them.

Pulling boards, separating them by quality and putting them in carts.

Do you plan on staying here in the United States for a long time or are you just here to make some money to take back home?

Just a little time,

For a while,

Just a while,

Who knows, it depends.

We are sending money home and they like having the money so who knows?

Do you all want more hours?

Yes,

Yes,

Yes,

Yes,

Yes,

Yes,

Yes,

Do you do the maintenance on your machines?

No, a mechanic does that.

Some machines are simple and easy to understand but there are others that are too complicated. But usually, and especially now, the operator of the machine can't do the maintenance. And sometimes when you need to repair a simple machine but you can't do it because of the new policy and they say that you can't fix it and sometimes the mechanic takes two to three hours to get to you. That is supposedly his job to fix the machines and maybe he is fixing others but you end up wasting time for that reason. And so there are other situations where he is busy and you are standing there knowing that you could fix the machine, and it is dead time.

And sometimes the mechanic says, “ It must have been a Mexican who broke it” but if it is an American they don’t say anything. I don’t like that they assume that a Mexican is always the person who broke it. And I don’t like that they think that we are all from Mexico. It hurts that they always think that it was a Mexican. Sometimes they break on us but not because we want them to.

When I went to Honduras I didn’t speak any Spanish but I was surrounded and I had to speak, by force. That or starve. And that’s one of the interesting things that Hispanics tend to group together and don’t feel the need to learn English.

And you lose the interest to learn English because I don’t have to they understand me in Spanish.

In your case in Honduras you had to learn Spanish because you needed to communicate with others.

My mother is from Honduras, San Pedro. She told me that it is a beautiful country but poor.

So when they bought this new machine and you didn’t get the bonus was that for all of the workers?

Yes for the gringos and the Hispanics. Including up in the cafeteria they have a paper that for each month they write the amount of money that was there. Three thousand in January, four thousand in February and there was ten thousand dollars there. Nobody told us anything; it was there on the paper. Ten thousand dollars, it was the profit. And all of the sudden they stopped putting it up. So we were expecting a hundred dollars or even fifty, because the paper said that there were 10,000. So that money was ours because it was on the paper.

And it was our work making sure that the doors were ok and fixing them if they weren’t that got the money.

There also has to be a way to motivate the employee so there aren’t so many bad doors. I don’t know if you do your good production, and few of them are bad there will be a bonus and not wait until the end of the year. I think that would motivate you to make fewer errors.

But this is a job where we are all working as a team. Because we are all doing a part of the production of the door. You do one thing and I do another. So I don’t think it would be fair to give some to her and some to him and nothing for everyone else. You feel bad if some days there are four hundred, up to 500 doors that are bad.

But the supervisors are just making their rounds making sure that everybody is at their workstation but they are not making sure of the work quality.

The supervisors don't know how to do the job.

But I don't understand do they demand production or quality of the product?

It's that they don't have quality control like they are saying.

There is a lack of communication I have to run to my boss and ask them how did this production get by? Like it is it wouldn't have passed for me.

But I've noticed that in assembly they note that the things are bad. And they pass through the machines, the sander, for the paint room, and if they would have pulled it out here they would have saved on the cost of all those steps. However they always say, "it's good enough". And I am the one that moves the production and if I say anything about the poor quality they say, "who are you to question me?"

That's the thing, the other person feels bad and because you aren't a supervisor, you can't say anything. And the other is because you are Hispanic, and so in the end you don't say anything about the quality.

Here we work in two shifts. The second shift is all Hispanic so if we find something wrong we blame the first shift. The problem with all of this is the supervisors. They should learn how to run the machines and if they won't get rid of them. For me the supervisors, it doesn't matter if they are white or Hispanic need to be educated and learn quality control in a factory. Because here they put that person and if he doesn't do the job then they should get rid of him. But they don't do that for the person's pride. If they put a person in a job and he doesn't work out they say that he doesn't know the work but why doesn't he? Because they don't have quality control, what is a supervisor, what should their job be?

But over time you learn how the company works.

Yes by watching how other people are working.

Do you think that there are opportunities to advance here?

Only if we play like a dog.

There are Mexican workers in other plants that have advanced, you know, but here no because it is based on a lot of seniority.

Was it difficult to learn your job?

Easy.

One or two weeks of getting use to the job.

Observe what is going on.

If you have a desire to work you learn the job.

I'll tell you about construction where Hispanics are only 13% of the workforce but have 54% of the fatalities.

Because of communication.

Because they don't know the dangers of the job.

It's like when you cut your finger here, they make sure you wear you gloves, your glasses.

And do you speak to them in English?

These are people who can speak a little Spanish.

Did you come to this town specifically to work in this company?

More money.

My reason is almost religious. My family and I came here from Texas we came looking for a better life and it is working out well, I've been her for almost ten years.

So which is more important?

Needs are papers first, then English to help advance.

We have been here a long time (9, 5, 6, 2) years without seeing our families.

And more money, look he has been here for 13 years, me and him are going to be here for nine soon and we are still at eight dollars.

Over time the pay should increase and here it isn't that way.

Here they say to conform with the bonuses, but the bonuses come because we are making the production.

Bonuses have nothing to do with the salary of each person.

Americans here are making 12,13,14 dollars and have been here for only 4 years. And they have advanced. Us no, we are all at the same, same, same, same place.

Do you think that you will retire here in this company?



No.

No.

No.

No.

If they pay more.

I will say something. Other companies of wood products, maybe they pay more but I don't need to look for another job while I'm here. But I think that once I finish my studies, I'll get another job where I don't have to work so hard and they pay me better. I'd like to work at a television station. That's what I've been working for. I never thought that I'd be working with wood but it was the only way that I could survive and get educated and get ahead.

Since I've been with this company the policies have changed a lot, they have gone downhill. There aren't benefits for the worker anymore, they only think about production for themselves. I've made an observation that many people are entering the company now but they are all supervisors. And I don't know how many years they have studied, but they don't have any experience with the work. They don't have it. The supervisors say I need so many doors, and I can't make them that fast, I don't know why they don't know the job and they are a supervisor. And they have assistants that also don't know the job. And so this policy of hiring people who don't know the job I don't understand. And there is no quality of work. So here there is no future for us. No they bring in Americans who don't know the job. Look at him he has been here for three years and speaks good English and he is still here below with us, if there is no opportunity for him there is less for us. They just want us to work.

Here we don't hope for much.

You have one that knows the work well, speaks good English and look where he is, those of us that speak little there is no hope.

I agree with him, I worked in his area, now I'm in another, but there we arranged things as we could because the supervisors couldn't help us because they didn't know. They would put a supervisor and one day we'd say "there is this problem" and they would say "I don't know it is your machine", "yes it's my machine" "I don't know".

I think that they shouldn't put a person as supervisor just because they like them or because they have a title. If they are going to put them in charge they should know well the entire area.

What I've seen it that look at this man, he started out at the bottom, just like us, at the bottom and learned and learned. And you guys know, how this company works, when

they didn't have this machine, it was "go, go, go, the Hispanics are good workers, the Latinos are good workers" and we worked and got out the production, pure Hispanics. And they should advance these people because they know the production.

But when they bring in another person the production suffers because they don't know. And so you can't get an answer.

Or you have one come and tell you to do it this way and another comes and says "no, not like that do it this way". And you tell him that the other told you to do it like that and they say no, do it this way. So you do it that way and the other comes and says no, do it this way and it goes back and forth.

And I call it discrimination. Because someone in this position is there because he knows the job very well knows how things work from this side to the other side of the building. He started at the bottom and worked his way up. And after words it lowers the self-esteem when they take him down to another machine down below. And I've seen other persons who speak English or are from here and they say that they are going to make changes here and put another person that comes from another side, that doesn't know anything, doesn't know what a door is, and the promoted who was the supervisor to a computer and there he is touching the little buttons there. We see him there. What I see is there was a Hispanic that was up there, the lowered him to another position and here is this man who gave his entire life, his sweat, working in this company and they didn't give him a position more advanced.

Especially with the experience that they have, I could come to them and say that this isn't working or there is this problem and I would feel better hearing them say that this is the way to do it because they have the experience. But with the new ones they don't know and you have to ask them because they are your supervisor.

That's why they should put someone like him; he speaks both languages and knows the work.

Look I will say that the supervisor that we have doesn't have experience, and doesn't know anything. This guy has been working in this factory for fourteen or fifteen years. And the other who is higher up, and you all know who I'm talking about, he has been here for only a little time, and this Latino trained him. But there was a controversy between the white and the Latino. And the white had more influence with the owner, and all at once threw him down to a lower position. And so that is what happens here and if it happened to him it could happen to any of us if we had a problem with a supervisor in a little bit we would be out. And the fall would hurt.

It like if I became the supervisor I would get rid of him and him and him because I don't like them. Why? Because I'm in charge and I don't like them so they are out or I demote them.

One of us doesn't have any value.

For all of the Hispanic workers here we are in a situation where we are standing at the edge of a hole and if we don't do our work well, or have problems the boss is watching us and we are out. Whatever little thing and we are out.

Do you grade the boards or is there another person before you that makes the decision?

There is another before us that grades the wood and puts a mark on it.

And are these English classes free?

Yes, they are free.

Do you have a copy of your contract?

No, I don't have one.

Nobody has anything.

Nobody knows anything about papers and contracts. We don't know anything about the house. They just brought us here and said go to work.

This is where you are going to work and this is where you are going to live.

Are you going to go to the English classes?

I will.

So will I.

Perhaps.

I think so.

I'll say yes but who knows when the time comes.

What happened the first day that you came to work here?

We came here with our hands in our pockets, without knowing that we knew nothing. First off the language, secondly the machines were completely unknown, it was very different. I used to work in a factory but it was very different from this. You come in like you were blind and they take you by the hand and like my coworkers say in one hour they take you around the entire plant. This machine is this, this is this, this is this, this is this, are you going to remember all of this?

Not me.

Right you're not and we just did one pass and a little while later they took us to where we were going to work and we never had another tour not even a talk once a year or whenever explaining that this material is for this or that or give updates of the company.

I think that it would be very interesting to have a talk at the beginning to explain what the company does and later give talks like he said but that helps every fifteen days, every month, explaining that this machine does this, this is how you use it and in the end we would know a lot more and the more time that we are here the more we would produce. We would have our house better fed and my family would be safer because I would be more stable in my job.

Do you think that there are opportunities here for you to advance to better positions here in the company, to be a supervisor or boss?

Yes.

Yes, that depends on the individual. It depends on the capacity of each individual.

It depends on each person and how motivated they are. In my case I had my English classes and I can understand 50% of English, and I have had opportunities to do other jobs, not another job but little things and besides that I take care of my job. And this depends on each individual, if I would have had the dedication to continue with the English classes, I think I would be a little higher up than I am now. For the position of supervisor I think that you need to have more preparation. But thanks to the company they give us chances to move and improve.

So what could be a solution for this problem in communication?

It's like she said English.

Yes, you need to learn English.

Because that is another way to learn English, and how I learned Spanish is to mix with the community. Is mass in Spanish?

Yes.

With your children here learning English and the United States culture will it be difficult for them to return to your country?

We are not going back.

I have another question, you say that 80% of the people don't have their papers,

80% perhaps don't have the papers.

I don't think that it is fair what they are doing. We are all workers. I know that I don't have my papers and that he does. And I'm going to work twice as hard as he does and the one that do have their papers don't do anything.

When you first came to work here how was your initial training?

What I remember on my first day was that it was very difficult because I had never worked with wood. I was an auto parts salesman before. And so when I started it was difficult. Not for the language but for the work with wood. I was trained on the first shift on a machine. White trained me. Language wasn't much of a problem, not that I spoke English but perhaps I had a person appropriate for it. So it wasn't that hard and I learned and I continue to learn. I learned little by little and I continue to learn the problems with the machines, the shapes of the wood. Many things. And so for me it was easy.

And how is it here in the town when you have to go and buy things, take care of insurance or go to the Doctor how have been your experiences have communication been a problem?

Yes.

We have to do everything ourselves, there is no help.

That is what we need most.

We always get dirty looks.

And the doctors don't help us at all, we take our family there and they do nothing.

Are any of you working two jobs?

No,

No,

The problem is English.

Here there aren't many other places to work.

That's one of the subjects that always come up in these meetings, discrimination and racism. Is this a problem here? Both here at work as well as in the community?

At work a little bit as we were talking about earlier. Because the majority of us speaks very little English and even among us Hispanics there is racism. But all of this goes back to what we were saying earlier about if we had a little bit more information. Outside in the community there isn't any problem; sometimes they look at you bad, but compared to other states, no it isn't a problem.

The town is tranquil.

That's why I'm working with this project because I think that it is an opportunity for both sides to win.

And the Hispanics what are they going to get?

Well I hope that.

What help, what benefit?

I hope that.

No, no, what benefit, what is for the Hispanic?

Can I talk? I hope that it is going to help you with your future. Most bosses don't realize that documentation is a problem but we do. So we have to look at how we can address this problem. It is really interesting to me to hear you say "yes English is very important and we have to learn" and then later you say "No I don't need to learn English because my machine doesn't speak English" and we have people who have been here for many years and still can't speak English. So my question to you is; we know that learning English is important, then why don't you learn it?

It is hard and also we don't have the time to study. When I get home I have to attend to my babies.

I've been married for a while with my wife but and she hasn't finished high school. And I said to her do you want to work in a factory? And she said that she didn't. Then you have to study, study at home or go to school. I'll work and you study. So now she is a Doctors assistant. I paid for her to learn with the purpose that she would help me in my home. We knew that in California things are very difficult. And so if you want it you do it. Don't waste your time, there are many, many schools.

But if you have little kids you can't.

I don't watch many soap operas, I work ten hours then pick up my baby, then my other girl, I have to give them a bath, then cook dinner, clean the house and wash clothes. Then I have to go to bed at 8:00 or 9:00 because I have to get up at 4:00 in the morning.

What happens is you have to sacrifice something for another you have to look for the time and make the time because if you don't you'll never find the time.

You have to look for life. If you don't look, you'll end up staying here. I'm not going to retire from here.

That's why it is good to look forward.

Advancement isn't always limited by English or communication, because I speak English and so does he. It is the company policies. They say that there isn't a position right now or put us back in our position and then they put someone else in the position that we wanted. It's that they don't want us to move from where we are.

I see it that the company is always looking for people that are like them. Look like them like Michael Jackson. Look this man has been here for fifteen years, working, working, and he is still in the same position. He knows how the factory works but they won't use him.

The thing is that we don't think about the future.

(During the initial description of confidentiality the focus group leader used the example of immigration as a theme that would be individually confidential. The workers immediately began the following discussion of the issue).

Talking about documentation, it is a problem. The laws in the United States are not well written. We know that the situation in the world, everybody wants to work. However, everybody, not just in Indiana, has needs. My point of view is everybody has needs. And we all come here for work. We don't always think about the problems that we can have and what problems we can create for the company. I understand that it is a fine of \$10,000 for each person that they find without documentation. That is the fine. As I said, it's confidential... right? for my part I'm legal, it's a personal issue for each individual.

All of you are at the same position that you started in?

Yes, in the hardest positions.

Would you attend if they gave classes here, what other ideas do you have to help learn English?

If we learned English and they paid us more money for learning then yes I'd learn.

But if they keep paying the same there is not reason to do it.

Do you all live in the same town?

No, some of us live in one and some in another.

How many Hispanics are living here in this town?

Just us.

I don't know if you have any other questions or ideas.

What we want is more hours and more money. We are here to work and make money.

More hours.

So you learned your position by working with someone?

Yes, you learn it along the way.

I agree with what my coworkers say, but I'd like to make a few more comments. What I think we are missing when the company contracted us is an explanation of the entire company, how many departments are there what do they do? Truthfully, when you get to this company you don't even know what the name of the machine is in English, you don't know English, when we get here we don't know anything at that time. So I think that it would be a good idea to give an orientation of the entire company and a two to three hour introduction of the history of the company, how did it start, what does each department do, what are the different machines and their parts, how do you work with each one, and little by little exposing us to our department and the company. Because as he said really you feel the pressure because they are on top of us and when we make a mistake, the entire work knows about it. A Hispanic did it and immediately they know it. They say fix it, fix it, what a dummy, he doesn't know. But if an American makes a mistake they are all Shhh, close your eyes and send it on, pass it. And that doesn't happen with us.

Excuse me; I'd like to make a comment about this. There is this situation, here the company is good, a very good company, but like he says the situation is between coworkers. Like he says, if an American makes an error, they say "there's more material" but between them, not with the supervisor of the team leader. But if a Hispanic makes a mistake, there is no more material; it was your error, your mistake. They are more critical of us.

And you feel bad with so much pressure and a head and stomachache because of the error we made with the door or window. We know it cost time and money with all of the people who were working on it. The measurements that we use are so exact, that for me 1/64 is a lot, too much. But if there is an error they say "it's your fault, I told you, why didn't you check it, you are supposed to check it, you can't use a ruler" so you really feel a lot of pressure.

It's the truth, like he is saying, it would be good to get an instruction of one or two hours, an introduction about all of the different departments and their function, and explain that if you do or don't do something, this will happen and the material costs money.

And do you get information about the retirement program and health insurance?

Yes, these companies come here and explain the retirement plan.



I'd like to touch on two topics first. In terms of these gossip and bad feelings between people you will find these in whatever company and in whatever country. People are people wherever you go there will always be those that don't get along, Israel and Palestine, Catholics and Protestants, there will always be people that have more influence and others with less so in looking for a solution for this situation perhaps there isn't one. And this project isn't really here to address these interpersonal issues. At the end of this project, I mentioned the company surveys, and with the results of these meetings we are going to develop what we think of as a menu of different options for different needs. If there is a need for documentation there are these resources and products. If there is a need for communication there are these resources.

This question of English is very important for the Latinos, communication like he is saying. I think in two or three weeks the company will be sending people to learn English.

I don't even know my name in English but we still have hope.

We have hope.

It is very important.

Many times is language that stops us Hispanics from attaining something higher. You can know and develop in your work well but you don't know English you don't advance. What happens is that we are people that come from our countries and we had our education maybe the level of high school and we all learned to write in Spanish. But when we come here we practically don't know how to write in English or how to speak English. That is why they have better opportunities and better communication because they studied here. For us to do the same, we have to go to school, to start at the bottom and work our way up. That is my point of view.

My question is for those who don't have their papers, have they applied for a visa or tried to get papers?

No.

No.

No.

No.

A Mexican can't apply for his papers because there is no help for them. There is help for Hondurans, and I don't know why.

A Mexican can't apply only if a family member sends in an application, and I don't know I told my coworker if I could I would because I feel bad. I have a lot of family that

doesn't have their papers, and we don't have any rights. It shouldn't matter if you are a resident or not, we have rights.

I'll say with all of the people that have changed names it is to say that the company knows that you have been or are without papers.

And that is why they treat us this way because they know that the majority of us are without papers.

Like it happened to the big one, and they demoted him to the machine, and he is legal, so listen don't say it was because of the papers.

Does this company have production bonuses and do you understand how they work?

No, they didn't explain this to us, we don't know if we get bonuses.

With other groups we talked about different ways of learning a language and one of those ways is to interact with the community. What I have from other groups is that it is best for you to learn English for both the short long term but also the long term of your lives. How did you all get to this town and job at almost the same time? Are you related?

I don't know if I am getting myself into problems...

No, he doesn't need to know.

No this is what the man wants to know, we here aren't working directly for this company, we work for another company. We work for a company located in another state. This company contacted the other company and they brought us here. The other company pays us.

Do they fire a lot of people?

No.

No, and besides this the owners are good people, very good. It is a good company; it is not the type where if you make one mistake they will get rid of you. Until this time the owners, the big bosses have been really good people.

But like he says at the moment there is pressure up to now it has always felt like that.

If I was the owner of the company why would I invest time and money into a worker that would go to another company if they paid fifty cents more an hour.

Yes, we would go.

Do you have any final thoughts?

The most important is English.

There is a difference in the training of the American workers and the training of the Hispanic worker.

Also there is a difference in the work conditions, now for example there are no heaters and it is very cold. If you come to work with too many clothes to stay warm and when you start working you start to sweat. And in the summer it is hot.

What if they paid you after work to learn English?

Yes, or before work better.

But, if they don't pay, no.

We have to have some way to pay the baby sitter.

Returning to the theme of advancing in your job. Of course for more money but why else?

Better opportunities.

Yes for more opportunities but always with English.

Many of us say why do I need to learn English? There is always a friend to help us translate. But we always have to struggle with this. Sometimes they are not there, and although we know a few words here and there it isn't enough. Yesterday for example, my brother was sick and he asked me to go get some medicine. So I went looking for my friend to translate and I couldn't find him. So I went to tell my brother I couldn't get the medicine and he told me to go and use hand signs and get the medicine. No, man that is why we need English.

But it seem as if the people don't want to learn English.

There are people that no, no, no.

It is for their own benefit.

Look, it's not just English that is the problem with communication. There needs to be better communication between the workers as well. If we coworkers don't know how to communicate, we are not doing anything. Just in English no just look at this factory, almost the majority are Hispanic. And I don't think that you're going to teach all English, is going to take two years; it is not like they are going to learn that quickly. The communication is between all of us. You have to understand others and try to be understood. And if the supervisor is American and not Hispanic, there are people here,

him and him that are only in English, English, and so you come along and want to talk to your supervisor and you use the help of others. But the majority of communication is between coworkers. Form a good group or team, make sure that the production is good and follow the rules of the company. I feel that I am doing a good job at my work and that the production is good so English really isn't necessary, well it is necessary, but as a worker where is his area and how to do the job and they know.

Yes in terms of the work it is fine but sometimes I need to go to the bathroom and I find my supervisor and want to say that I need to go and ask a coworker to come help me, sometimes I have to run so yes there is a big problem with communication.

Yes but once you know your job you don't need the supervisor he is over there looking at the people and checking people.

What they want is to see you working.

I respect the words of all of you who are here; you can't say that there is no need for English. Always there are details, small things that you need to ask and so English is necessary. I'm saying that I'm not against anyone but I need English for myself, for understanding these details. I'll tell you what the company did and I don't know if any of you were here, the company gave us training but in aspects of the job. They took us to training of how to work in groups, how to work within the company, how to have communication with your supervisor in English. And this training that they gave us was good. They paid us for the day and it was good. And the thing is that those of us who attended these classes are the oldest here with the company.

No they didn't give me any training of this kind.

The majority of the people who received this training have now left the company. The people who are new here now didn't get it.

I think that they should give us this training.

I think that it was good even though it was in English it was a good training.

How did you learn about the health insurance plan?

The thing is that here the health insurance is too expensive; nobody has it for his or her family.

It is \$150 for the family. Since we are in the large wood products companies it should be cheaper. It isn't just the Hispanics; in general nobody has the insurance because it is too expensive. You just can't do it.

But you know that you need to have insurance because you never know that one day something could happen.

Where are they going to be held? In a church or here at work or where?

We don't know, they gave us the address, but no, it isn't at a church.

What would you like to learn in either this company or another company?

I would like to learn anything but people have to show me how to do it.

I'm too old, I won't learn anything else.

I'd like to learn English.

And do you plan on working in this company for the long-term would you like to retire from here?

We came here for better opportunities, and if I'm here for five or ten years and a better job comes along then I will take it, that's why we are in the US. But if nothing better comes along, I got this.

Hispanics have the reputation of going from job to job for wherever pays five cents more but the truth is that maybe 2% do this. You always enter a job thinking that you are going to stay there.

Because the majority of us are married with families and responsibilities, we have the obligation to pay the rent, the gas, the electricity, the school for the kids, we can't be changing jobs all the time, it's not good. You've got to adapt to the rules of the company and try your best to take care of your job and produce it's your responsibility.

Before you came here were there other Hispanics here?

No, we are the first.

Or my other question is if INS comes tomorrow would they be gone?

Yes they know the owner of the company knows.

The government of the United States is checking a bunch of things now because of September 11 and from this time on they are looking and looking for us.

And I saw in the news that the same Americans were the ones that trained the people on the planes. Imagine that? The same Americans.

And they found a Mexican in the White House and he was illegal and they asked him what he was doing in the White House and he said that he worked there. Illegal and working in the White House. So it's not just a problem in this factory.

They will find one without papers and very soon another will come along. And this with us making more or less, getting along fairly well and if we leave there are others who will come along without their papers and will work for \$6.25 an hour like they pay there in other places. And there are people who would work for that.

It's that we need to work. We have children, we need to eat, we need to pay the rent on the house.

So I'm going to be like one of the Blacks. I'll work for a little bit then I'm going to go ask the Government for assistance. But I'm not going to ask for help, I will work but for \$6.25. In California they are paying \$5.75 and the Government will have to help because that will pay the rent but nothing else.

For these reasons I want to learn English because it is very necessary. Not just here in the pharmacy, and in the streets, and everywhere you go because you feel this frustration because you want to say something and you're not understood. I feel bad when I don't understand a lot, I understand a little but I feel bad when I want to say something and can't.

We got off track there a little bit.

A lot.

The truth is that every time I remember my mother when she got to California y California before was very different, you made a lot of money, my mother was only fifteen years old and she made good money. But then many things entered the picture with the companies where many work. All of the Hispanics look for the best place to work where you make the most money. And many people from California have immigrated to other places because there it is very expensive and you don't make much.

The other question that I wanted to ask is about the papers, you know it is a problem no matter what they put against the Hispanics the Hispanic are hard workers we are advanced for that.

If the company gets rid of a worker there is always another 20 coming to replace them.

One of the things that the companies are doing is paying less to the worker.

That's why I'm asking, you have told me that English is very important and that you are going to stay here and one of the principal reasons that you are not advancing is because of English. How can you be motivated and helped to learn English?

How can we be helped to learn English?

But you have been here for thirteen years.

... yes he has thirteen years and there was the case of a guy that married with a niece of a boss and we were all waiting in line for the job...and after two, three months he was in a better job, in the yard. Its not across the board. They say that it's because one doesn't speak English, but there are people that speak English and have more time how is it that there... there was a Mexican in the machinery shop and a guy left. The Mexican speaks very good English and had been there for the longest and by law the job should have been his. But they brought in another, do you understand? And it turns out that this other didn't know anything, his old job had nothing to do with being a mechanic. And he just followed the other mechanics around because he didn't know machines. So this is the problem, besides knowing English there are other things, so in this plant no, I don't think that there are opportunities to advance.

Do you have meetings here about safety or whatever every month or every so often?

No, there is only for safety they put in a video every so often, but training like that no. Training about working with wood or about the work or about what is happening in the company we don't get. Now we only learn about our position and with time we learn about what kind of defects the wood could have and how you can fix it, but you learn it over time because there is no training of that kind. Little by little you get experience.

Nobody told me that you are going to work like this and like this, I stood next to an operator and saw how they were taking care of the defects, and learned it like that.

They give us a short orientation of ten or fifteen minutes to tell us that this is this and that is that and don't do that and if you do this that will happen, and so they have these papers in plastic posted on all of the machines and the Spanish there is not correct. We don't understand what it says in Spanish because it is not correct. It says put this needle through this only one time and there and of this. And everyone wonders what this is trying to say.

OK I won't ask it so directly. Do you think they value your work in the new position?

Yes, but the amount of things that I had to learn and they told me that as soon as I knew how to run the machine I would be getting a bigger raise and now I can run the machine well and nothing. Promises, promises, promises.

We are talking about training and supervisors, and how you all learned you position by being next to another worker for half a day and seeing how they did the job.

There is something that always get confused here and that is the question of seniority. We don't want to confuse the amount of time a person has here with their ability to do the job but no matter how much seniority a person has they still need to learn and needs to be trained to learn what it means to be a supervisor. Perhaps in five or ten years one of us will be promoted to a supervisor and perhaps we have the capability to produce and they know what is going on but, but we need the ability to communicate. And that is not just a

question of the language. It is my point of view if there is no communication we are not going to work.

I'd like to ask about the training that you have received. When you entered here for your first day of work how were you trained?

Here we have orientation classes for safety, the rules of the company, when I started out I when I started out I was sweeping and now I am in varnishing. But I will tell you in respect of the salaries they need to raise them more especially for those who have more experience.

Do all of you live in the same area of town?

Yes.

For how long is this arrangement?

We don't know.

And that is one of the reasons that we don't know how to advance in this company and what our future is. We don't know what the other company is doing with our money and how much they get from our paycheck.

The reason that I'm asking is that one of the ways that you can learn English is with classes and the other is by living and talking with those you live around.

This town is very tranquil; the people hardly ever go out in the street. From work to your house and from your house to work. Maybe to the gas station but in general the people are alone. Compared to Mexico where there are people on the corner, out in front of the houses, talking and playing. But not here.

Do you like to work with wood or would you rather be working in another area?

I'd rather be working somewhere where I could get more hours than here, but with less work.

If there were better opportunities I would rather work there than pulling wood all day.

What kind of abilities or information do you need to be able to change positions or advance in your work?

It would have to be English to be able to talk to everyone else, with Americans who are working here.

Also if the person in charge would give us opportunities to learn other positions we would be able to change positions but that depends upon the person in charge.



I agree with what they say it depends on the supervisor giving us more opportunities.

It'll take time for us to be able to advance. Time and English.

We have the desire if they give us the chance.

What do you think about unions? I, personally, think that unions can be bad and break the company. I agree they are bad. They can keep people from advancing and learning new positions. They limit flexibility and competitiveness of the company. In the 1920's the served their purpose to protect the workers from exploitation but now there are governmental agencies like OSHA to do that.

I use to work for a company with a union. And they took our money and one of my friends put his hand into a machine, and he was punished with 15 days off for that, they didn't help the worker.

OK thank you for your point of view and opinions, and I will be sending a copy of the final report to your supervisor, in English, the results will be aggregated so there will no way to connect you with individual comments. Nice to meet you and have a nice day.

Are there other ideas for training? We talked about one on one training that you are receiving, the written information that you receive, there are training options using videos, or computers. What do you think about receiving training using computers? Can you use a computer?

No, I don't know how.

I don't know how to turn it on.

It would be better in another form as they would have to show us the computer first.

How many of you now have health insurance through the company?

None, it's too expensive, it's cheaper to pay the doctor when you get sick.

I know and that is why I ask the question of what do you need or how can you be motivated to learn English?

There has to be a good time for one to do it.

How many of you have health insurance?

It is too expensive.

Very expensive.

I only have it for me.

It is very expensive like forty dollars a month.

I've had insurance at the beginning and one day I went to the hospital, and so after fifteen days the bill came to me and the hospital sent it to the insurance and the insurance sent it to me. One thousand five hundred dollars. And so I paid it. And the insurance didn't pay anything. And later the same thing happened. And so the insurance company is charging me to have coverage and they aren't paying anything. I paid three thousand dollars to the insurance and they robbed me of it. So I came to the office here and asked them why the insurance wasn't paying and they told me that if I get sick within 90 days of the first time the insurance will pay and if not then no. So look what I want to say is that there is no help for the worker. Every week they take it out of your salary. And when I came to the office to ask they told me that. I brought in all of the papers and a person from the insurance came and they didn't solve anything. The only thing that we fixed is that I don't have insurance anymore. But they stole \$3000 from me. And that's the help that I got.

I pay a hundred dollars a month.

Well we are just starting and we got a little off track.

I was going to ask the same thing but now that we are talking about documentation do you think there will be some kind of favor for people who are working without papers a favor with the company that if one day there is a problem Immigration won't take you away?

Is it something that the company could do to help or is it up to each individual to see how to learn and advance, because it seems like this isn't working, we know that it is necessary for advancement both here and in other areas, but we aren't doing it.

Because living here there are a lot of Hispanics, the largest minority here in the United States is Hispanic. So there are more people speaking Spanish.

Because, when learning English, one of the other ways is to mix with those who don't speak Spanish.

I only have one friend that isn't Hispanic.

For me I don't have any problems, when I go to the bank all the people say here comes XX to deposit money or for a withdrawal,

But they are that way because you have communication with them.

Yes they are because I can speak English.

How many of you are bilingual?

One of us.

So he helped train you?

Yes.

How is it when you have to go out to the store or to the doctor or pharmacy? How are the interactions between the community and you?

There are no problems.

For me either.

We don't have any problems here, we have gotten to know a couple of people here.

What percentage of your coworkers or friends can't read and write in Spanish?

Truthfully, I don't know.

The majority of us can.

Very few can't.

It is something that we really wouldn't know; it is something that is personal to each one individually. And it's not something that you can ask because Mexicans are a little aggressive and if you asked you would be insulting them. So it's not something that we know. They would be the only wants to know. They come however they can but they come to work. We always come and try to do the best work and the other are there to help. We come here and produce, the Hispanic works hard, and I'm not just saying that because we are Hispanics, and if we are good why can't we have, not equality, but a little more rights. We always feel a little lower than the others.

Like discrimination.

And when you have been here for a year will you have the option of working here for this company?

No, we will be always be working for the other company.

So you are all new here that is good. I'd like to know about your training, on your first day of work here how was your instruction?

They explained to us what we were going to do, our job at our station. They had somebody translate for us. And after that they left us to work with somebody watching us to make sure we were doing it right and correcting us if we did it wrong. And that is how we learned, little by little. Now more or less we can do it without problems. And I don't move from where I'm at.

Did you receive a raise when you were promoted to this new machine?

Uh... (He didn't want to admit it in front of his fellow workers, which means he did)

What percentage of people are without papers?

80%

I think that that is one of the reasons that they have changed their attitude towards the workers and why we don't get better pay.

The accounting of the factory isn't done here, it is another company that does the payroll checks as they say. They have all of the control and control over what is happening. And this company should automatically include the raises in the check but they don't do it.

So if you are only working four days a week you have time to study English.

Yes.

Yes.

What percent of the workers here are Hispanic?

20%

The majority has been here for three years or less.

We talked a little about safety training and I want to return to this subject. How many times a year do you have safety meetings?

If anything they will give us a paper with information.

So when you began working here they took you to the place where you would be working and showed you how to do it, safety information is written in Spanish and someone came and talked to you about benefits in Spanish. What other ways was information presented to you? Video?

Yes, but it wasn't in Spanish.

In other companies they take you around and show you the process of the company but here no, they just take you to where you will be working and leave you there.

Would you like to learn things like this and advance? What are your wishes for advancement in this company?

You need a lot of English.

We'd like to but who knows?

Why did you decide to work here?

There was a job, one of my friends works here and arranged it for me.

Better pay.

My family works here and told me there were jobs here, money.

Family contacts.

It is interesting for me to hear that you say that you need motivation to learn English but at the same time telling me that you are not advancing because of problems of communication. Isn't it motivation to learn English for a chance to advance?

Clearly.

But the question is we learn English are they going to pay us more?

And the health insurance?

The health insurance is very expensive.

In terms of your work, do you feel comfortable with your knowledge of your position? What is your position here at the plant? What do you do?

We all do the same thing, pulling boards (off of a chain and stacking in carts).

It is hard and heavy work.

Some companies have a policy that production bonuses and being late or missing work will reduce your bonus. Is there something like that?

No, we don't know anything about that; none of us has missed work.

How did you learn your job?

For me it was easy as well, I entered in the afternoon and a Hispanic trained me. It takes a while to learn the problems of the machines, but to know the color of the wood was easy. Because a Hispanic was training me. And then they changed me to the morning shift and I learned with an American. I can say that I learned about half of the job and the other half was up in the air like guessing what it was. Some of the things I understood but the majority of it I didn't but some of the little things I understood.

And in this neighborhood are there Americans living there? Do you have American friends?

No it is just Hispanics now, there aren't whites there any more.

Now when you go to stores or to the insurance company they speak Spanish.

It is very rare that you need to talk to a gringo.

Who does the grading of the lumber?

The Americans, it is all graded when it gets to us.

How did you learn your job?

They take you to where you will be working and show you through signs what you need to do.

Working next to someone and seeing how they do it.

All: on the job.

And you are not advancing principally because of English?

For being Mexican.

You can't blame English on this because we know our jobs, we know what to do and do twice as much as they do. And they make more.

What benefits are we going to get from what you are doing? How are you going to help us? What is this conversation how is it going to help?

Is your company specialists in human resources? No, we are specialists in Natural Resource communication, wildlife management, forestry, land management. Human resources is more involved in worker contracting, company policy.

One of my friends was working and got hurt and went to human resources and they just gave him four days of rest and wanted him back on the job. They didn't help him at all.

Did they also explain your salary and deductions for the housing and everything?

They brought us here and left us with a car to get around.

We are making \$6.25 an hour and \$9.25 overtime.

(Inaudible)

We are paying less than half our salary towards housing.

And you have to get over being shy speaking English.

When I try to speak I get embarrassed because I know that I make mistakes.

Don XX, you've been here for ten years, is it true that the company fired a lot of the people that were here without papers.

Yes, they fired them but they don't call immigration. It's the same thing that is going on now. That why nobody says anything.

What happened then? Did they fire a lot of people?

Yes, the majority. They called them to the office and said the your Social Security Number isn't good, so if you don't have your papers don't come to work tomorrow.

And that happened then what are they going to do now when the majority of the people working here are without papers?

According to what I heard, of these people who left, there are other people to replace them. And I will go to where they were working and get their job. There will always be some one to replace the position.

And that is one of the things that I don't like about us. If I get mad at him or he gets mad at me he tells that I don't have my papers even if I do. And unfortunately that happens among ourselves. And that doesn't happen the legal situation is personal and we shouldn't be involved in other peoples business. Like she said we all have the need to work to pay bills and eat we shouldn't even mention if people are legal or not.

Like they say, we all came here the same, if we are Hispanics we all came here the same way. If you have you papers or not now we all came here the same way your race is Mexican.

In order to advance, what type of information or knowledge do you think that you'll need to move to a better or higher position?

First off to advance we need to know more about the different areas of work, because if all of the time we are at the same place we won't know what we need to learn. As long as we are just there pulling and pulling boards we will never move to a different place.

Are there any other themes that you would like to address? From our discussion papers are the most important thing and English is next but only if the company is willing to pay you to learn.

It's a good excuse to say that you get out of work too tired to go to class but it is to improve yourself.

There are a lot of people who would like to receive these classes, who need them, if not we'll be left behind.

It is important.

What is the level of education of your friends and coworkers?

All of them have an equivalent High School level in Mexico.

How many of you are participating in the retirement plan?

Only one.

What we need is good health insurance.

When one leaves they don't have anything.

I agree, but there are many examples like one in the southern U.S. where there were many undocumented workers, the INS came in and created a lot of problems for that company.

It's because of the need to work. Many of us are here with other people's papers. What you need to understand is that we need to work. We have children, a house, bills but we need to move forward. Many of the people who have all of their documentation don't work. And English is also a problem.

Sometimes but it isn't English that is the problem at work because your hands talk.

But there is also discrimination. They come to the companies and take all of the Hispanic workers, but everything is ok, but why did they take them? Because they are Hispanic.

No, because of an error by another person.

No, because they are Hispanic, they think that if you are Hispanic, you are illegal.



What happens is that even within ourselves, us the Hispanics, we have many problems.

And sometimes, when there are problems between people they take the chance to cause problems within the same Hispanics.

What happens is that sometimes the Whites feel, how do you say, jealous because you are working in one of their jobs and I'm doing the job like the company wants with communication with the coaches, supervisors. Sometimes we Hispanics have something very bad as well. Also with the whites but when someone advances to a new position, they feel bad, why did they give that job to him? And there is a great controversy.

However, the communication that you have, I speak English, and I speak Spanish, I understand the Whites so that I have more access to the Whites. Sometimes it is the language. So the Whites say I can't work with the Hispanics because they don't understand me. And so they are jealous, they are jealous. So that is the problem. It is there when a White calls Immigration and Immigration hears their voice it's a White they say, lets go. And that's what happens in these companies.

But sometimes one of the same Hispanics, lets say he and I don't get along and he has his papers and speaks English and we start to discriminate within ourselves, "oh I'm going to call immigration because I know that you don't have your papers" and it is between our selves. Lets say that he has a better position than I do and I've got my papers, and they say they will call immigration only because they have their papers. Here within this company and within the Hispanics. I don't know what causes this courage or why they want you to feel less but in reality the problem is within the Hispanics.

It's true, many problems.

If they have their papers and want to feel more important than me and other people.

The problem is that people are working with the papers of another person and they start using their true name. So if you have another person's papers don't start using your real name because that's when the owner is going to hear.

I'm going to tell you something that happened to me three months ago. When somebody fills out an application for a job or for apply for a car, you never know who you are working with. You give all of your information to that person, your name, social security number, address and all this information and you never know if that person is doing business with your information. It is there where the person makes papers or has communication with other states, it is a huge network that we are talking about and this is what happened to me. Three months ago the IRS was trying to collect almost \$4,500. Why? Because they said in the year 2000 I didn't report other companies where I was working. But I've been working here for quite some time, I wasn't working Iowa, I didn't work in San Jose in California, I didn't work in San Diego, I haven't been working in those places, I've been working here. So I went to Human resources and asked for a paper that said that I've been working here for this time so they gave it to me and I went

to Social Security and what they did was take pictures of me and they told me to come back in a month. So I returned in a month and they told me that all of these people who are working with your documentation have been found, and held; hopefully deported. They told me that they were held. That's great I said, because one never knows. I was working in this company and I never knew what was going on around the United States. So this is what happened to me. Now I never give out my information to anybody, nobody. Even in computers you give out all of your information and you never know who is taking that information. I've got a computer in my house and now I never make payment not Visa, MasterCard, nothing on my computer. All cash now. We are talking about this issue, no matter what company you go to you are going to have the same problem. I have the same point of view; everyone comes here to work, that is their personal issue and if you don't get involved with them you won't have any problems. But if we are here talking about this issue there is a solution and I think that it is necessary. One person is brave, the other has courage and people develop according to their capabilities. But there needs to be a solution for this. No matter what company you go to you will have these problems. And if you talk in confidentiality like we are doing here you will find it. But are we here to find a solution?

Would it be useful to receive information and training materials like the NHLA grading standards written in Spanish?

We don't do any of the grading; it is all graded when it gets to us.

The objectives is this project are to improve the training and the integration of the Hispanic workers how can the Hispanics be integrated?

Right now we are enduring the culture, not integrating.

It will be our children integrated and not us.

We will always keep our culture.

We need to bring our children up with both cultures.

But you will always need to be trained. How were you trained in basic safety?

The other company had someone bring us up and told us what to do, they rented a place for us to live and arranged telephone, electricity, cable, water everything and then they deduct it from our checks.

Regarding company policies and rules, like what happens if you come to work late or miss work, did they explain these to you?

If you miss work they won't pay you, that much I understand, for one day no. None of us has missed work so we don't really know.

Do you all have your family here, your wife and children?

Yes all of them.

So do you think not advancing is principally because of the language?

Yes, principally because of that,

Do you have health insurance?

Yes, just for us, we don't have our family here.

Do you know what is your contract between you and the other company?

For me that is important to know, how long are we going to be here.

What percentage of the workers are Hispanic?

Mexicans or all Hispanics? There are nine of us, we don't know how many total workers there are here to give a percentage. It is just us. And we all work in the same area.

So are all of you planning on staying here in the United States and retire here with this company?

If immigration doesn't throw us out, yes.

The majority of the Hispanics that are here plan on stabilizing here in the United States.

Do you like working here?

All yes.

So how long have you worked here?

I'll be here for five years.

Do you have other benefits like a retirement plan?

No. We don't know anything about a retirement plan, we don't have one.

So it was on the job training?

Yes.

So the company doesn't have a long history of hiring Hispanics.

No.

And are there bosses or supervisors here that speak Spanish?

No, there was a translator that was here. He was Hispanic.

You don't have a member of the family an Aunt?

Aunt's charge for babysitting.

So do you all live in the same neighborhood?

Yes.

Do you have any additional ideas on training and how we can provide it?

We are all ready to work: we came here to work.