



... connecting you to the Latino Community

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A TASTE OF CULTURE

What is comfort? Ask ten people and more than likely you will receive ten answers. Some will make references to feeling at ease, experiencing assurance or encouragement from a friend. Others will say it has to do with relief, solace or security. Whether it's to share a highlight in our lives or we find ourselves in need of support, one thing is for sure; throughout our lives we all seek comfort.

By now you may be wondering what role comfort plays when dealing with the Hispanic/Latino community. Allow me to expound on the following experience with the intent of creating a clearer picture.

For a myriad of reasons you relocate to a destination where the geography is different, the climate is new, the physical appearance of most people is not the same and yes, the language spoken is not that of your own. As time goes by, the geography and climate are of no impact and neither is the physical appearance of those around you. However, origins that do impact you are cultural differences and language. You take time to recognize cultural differences and learn some of the concepts relating to the language. This permits you to function, but not excel. In doing so, you feel you have certainly accomplished something. Nonetheless, you'd rather communicate in your native tongue as not doing so, places you outside of your comfort level.

Having described your accomplishment let's briefly discuss the down side, which is that your ability gives others the impression you have attained a level of fluency alike to that of those around them. This leads to misperceptions and conclusions that may not be accurate. However, being of the Hispanic culture and knowing that pride and losing face is of critical importance, you don't dare bring your limitations to light. Hence, your day to day transactions may be of no consequence, but major purchases such as that of a home, vehicle, or insurance to name a few, may lead to serious consequences due to lack of understanding.

I believe this issue can be resolved through taking the time to learn more about your clientele. By taking a few extra minutes in the beginning in order to make an honest assessment regarding the level of fluency, understanding and overall ability to communicate of your client, you will likely not only save time and effort, but it's more likely you will gain a client for a lifetime. By recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of your client's ability, you can implement the necessary resources to further your chances of a favorable outcome.



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Remember comfort? To those having a limited ability to communicate, having someone go the extra mile to provide you the opportunity to truly be informed at your level of communication in a difficult to understand business world is comforting!