



15th Annual Workplace Safety Conference
Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation

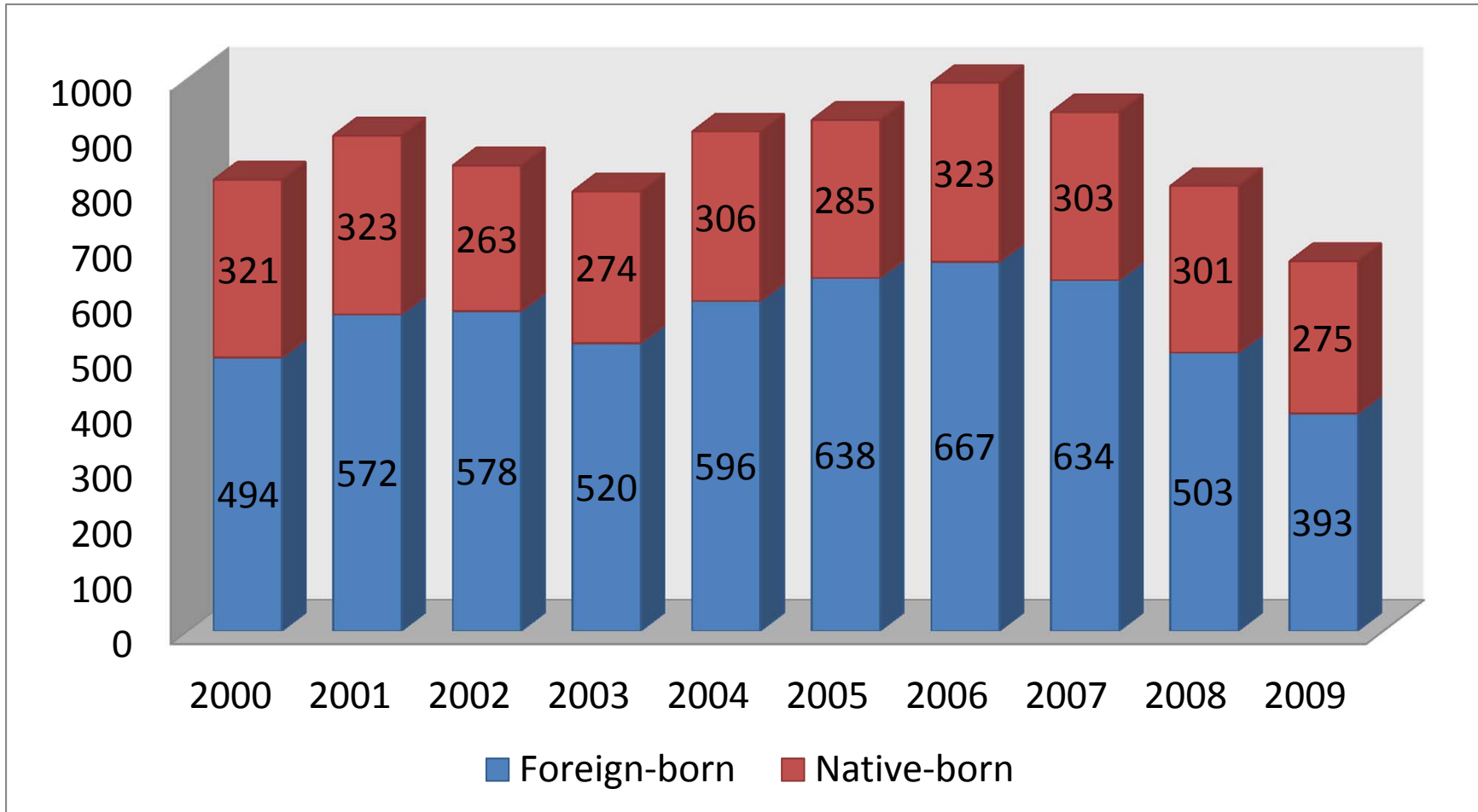
Making Safety a Universal Language

Purpose

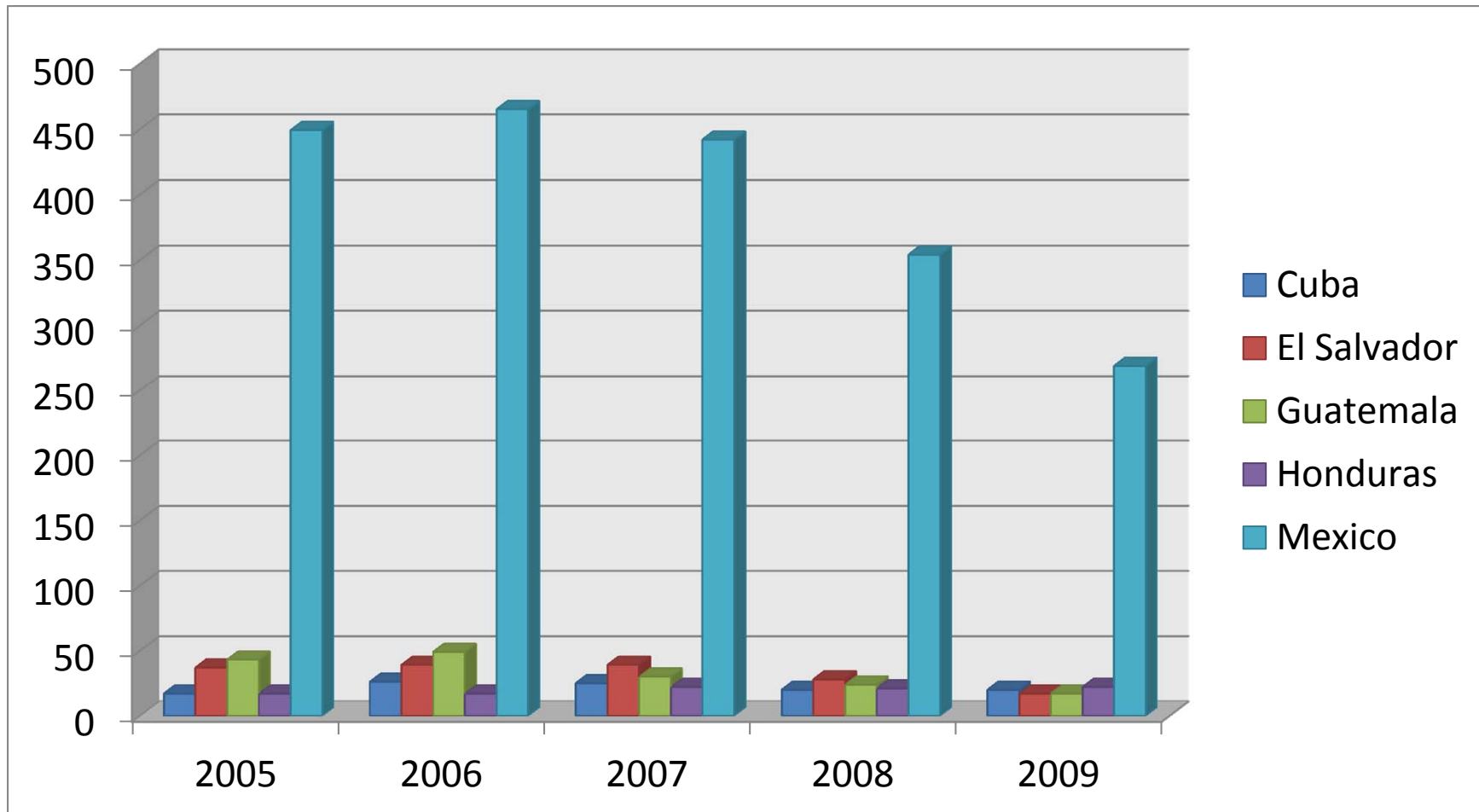
- Review Statistical Data
- Identify language and cultural barriers
- Training solutions



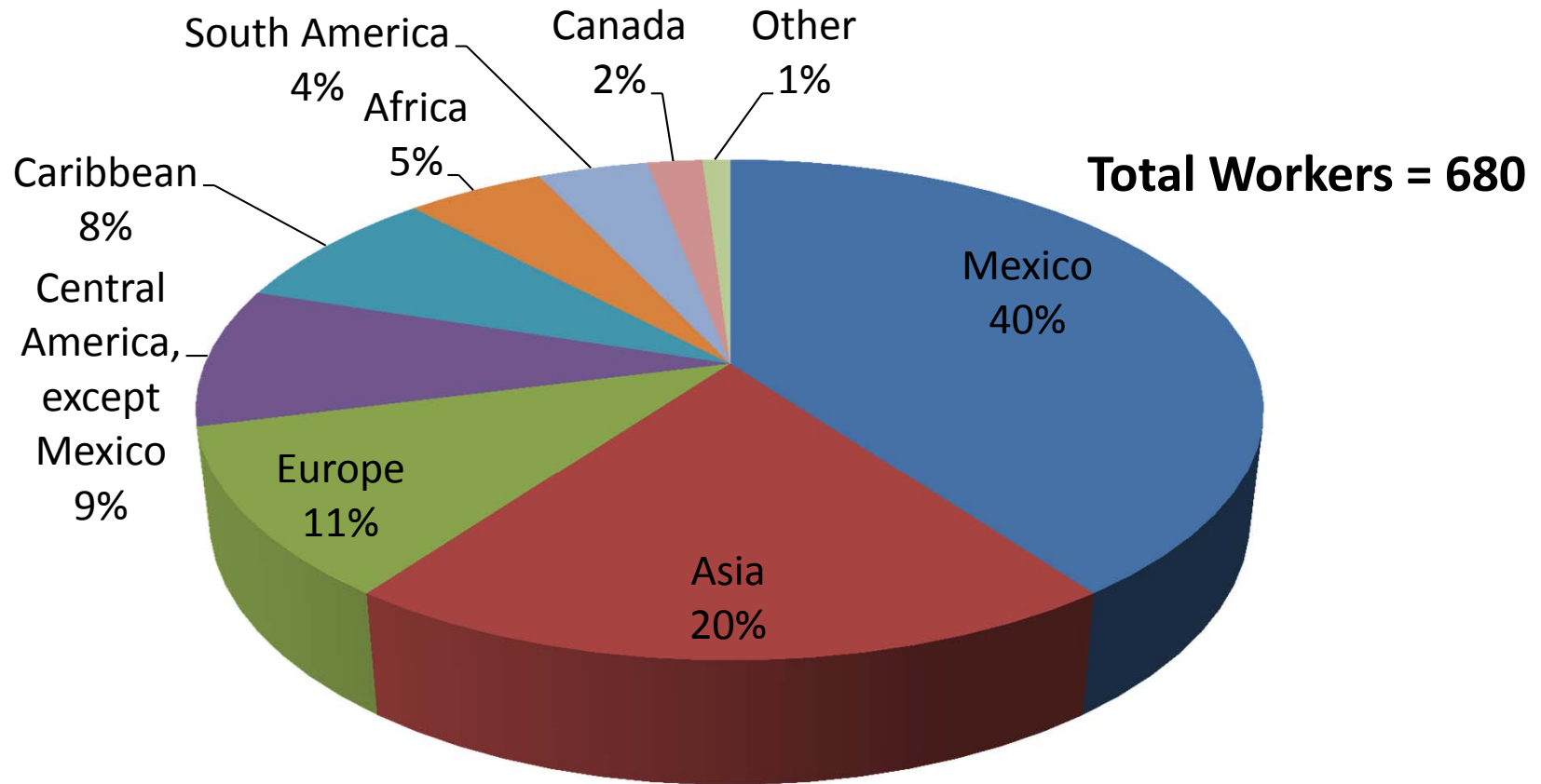
Fatal work injuries involving Hispanic Foreign-born vs. Native-born workers



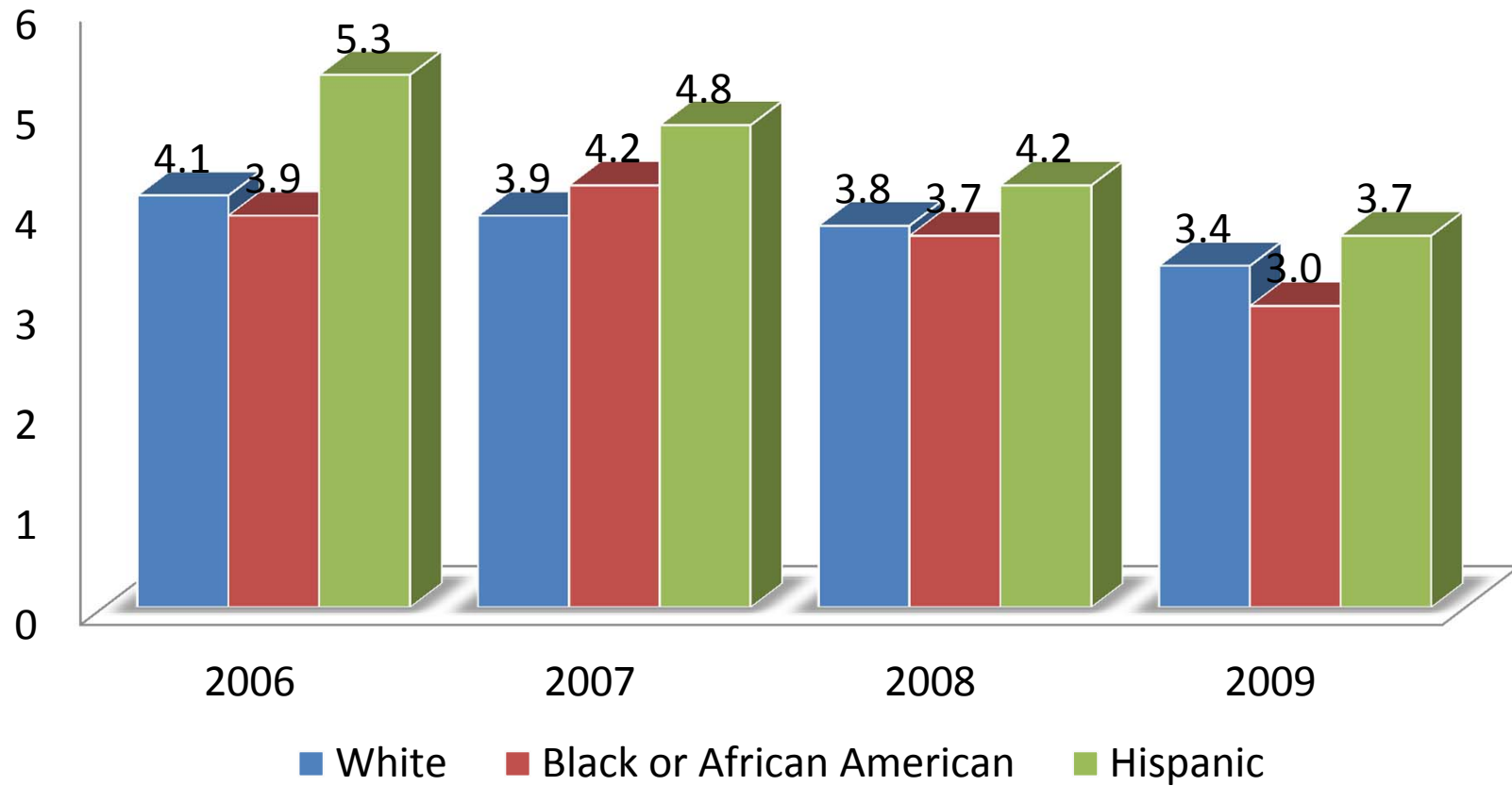
Foreign-born Workers Top Five Countries



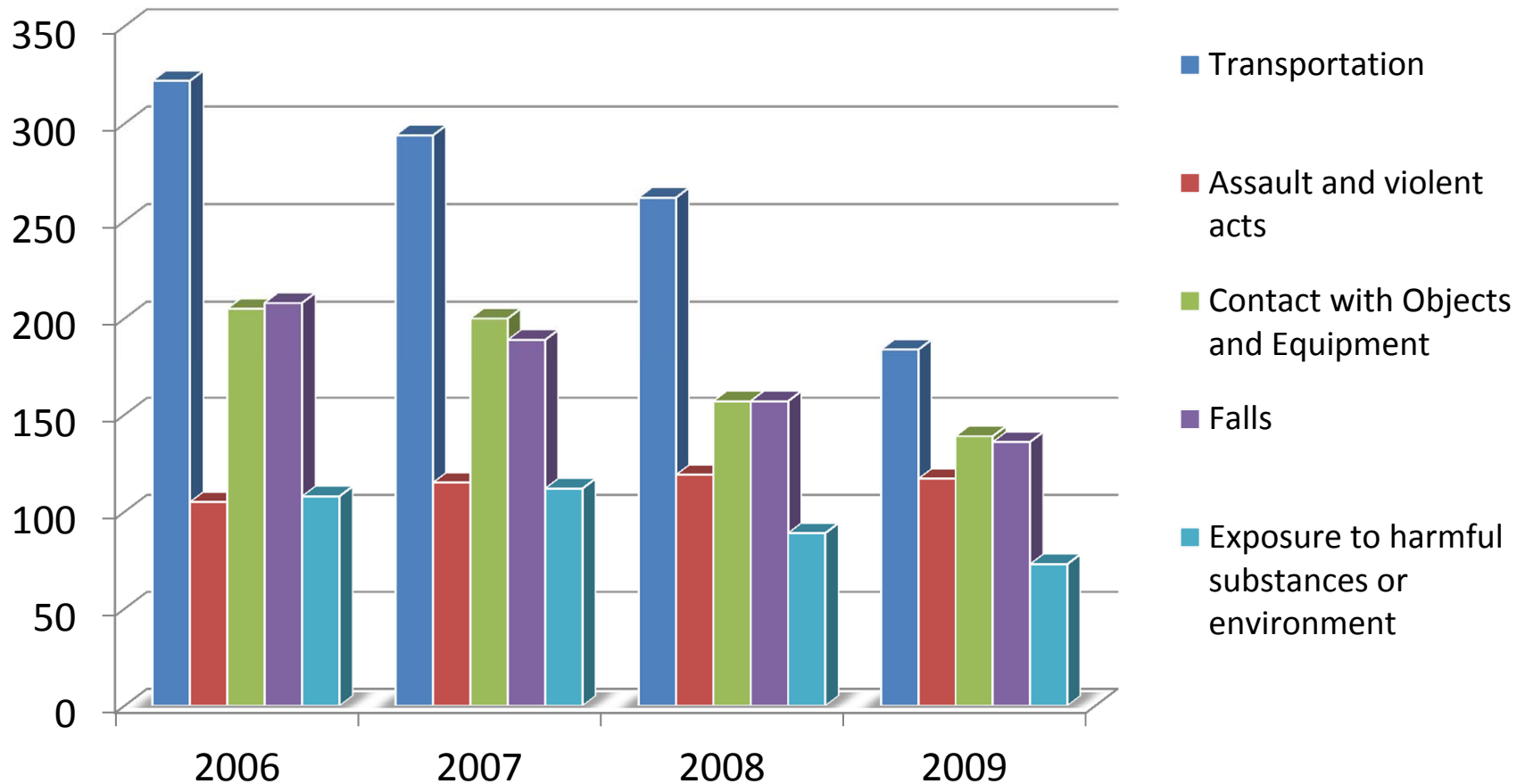
Fatalities of foreign-born workers by region of birth, 2009



Fatality Rates



Fatality - Event or Exposure for Hispanic Workers



Top Five Occupations of Hispanics in Texas

- Service
- Transportation and material moving
- Construction and extractive
- Production
- Installation, maintenance and repair

Cultural Differences

Hofstede Dimension	U.S.	Mexico
Power Distance Index	40	81
Individualism	91	30
Masculinity	62	69
Uncertainty Avoidance Index	46	82

Common Cultural and Language Barriers

- Roles and Status
- Personal Space
- Body Language
- Religion
- Personal Appearance

Hispanic Cultural Traits at Work

- Degree of Intimacy
- Level of Interaction
- Social Harmony
- Personal Contact
- Respect for Authority

More Traits

- Male workers may think it is more masculine to take risks
- Some workers accept risks as part of the job and place higher value on having a job and earning income than on safety
- Immigrants may be used to little workplace safety protection and may not be able to recognize safety hazards
- May not speak up, because they don't trust authorities

Some Questions You May Have

- Why do Hispanics insist on speaking Spanish among themselves?
- Why are Hispanics reluctant to look you directly in the eyes?
- Why are Hispanics hesitant to call managers by their first name?

Some Questions You May Have

- Why do Hispanics say they understand directions when they don't?
- Why don't Hispanics speak up when there is a problem?
- Why are Hispanics often reluctant to wear safety equipment?

Help Employees Bridge the Cultural Divide in the Workplace

- Learn as much as you can about the culture of the people you are dealing with
- Recognize the broad ethnic diversity that exists within groups
- Respect individual differences, abilities and personalities
- Provide an orientation program for new hires that addresses cultural differences and language barriers

Help Employees Bridge the Cultural Divide in the Workplace

- Consider having co-workers serve as mentors or coaches
- When working with immigrants, refrain from using jargon or slang
- When training immigrant employees, make sure they understand your training material and why it is useful to them
- Never assume your communications with someone with limited English-speaking abilities has understood

Help Employees Bridge the Cultural Divide in the Workplace

- Be patient
- Recruit bilingual managers and supervisors
- Consider offering English as a Second Language class
- Help workers take care of their basic survival needs
- Provide sensitivity training to native workers
- Promote immigrants when appropriate
- Keep current on immigrant regulations

Tips for Relating to Your Hispanic Staff

- Understand the cultural differences
- Make a conscious effort to recognize your Hispanic employees on a personal level
- Show understanding of the relationship of employee to family
- Pronounce employees names correctly
- Be ready and willing to shake hands
- Be a leader not a “boss”

What Many Spanish Speaking Employees Think

- You may be required to risk your life or health
- No effective government inspections of work sites
- The law does not apply to immigrant workers, for whom the government has no concern
- Regulations are designed for American workers, who are not as tough as Hispanic workers

What Many Spanish Speaking Employees Think

- A lost-time injury or accident cost the employer nothing; if one worker is injured, there are plenty of others waiting to take his place
- Training a new hire or setting a positive example for him will jeopardize your job security; he'll do the same job for less money and you'll be fired

What Many Spanish Speaking Employees Think

- A builder can buy a government inspector a nice meal or gift and no fines will be imposed for infractions
- Most employers do not truly value a worker's health and safety; workers are dispensable and replaceable.

What They Need to Learn

- Nobody wants you to risk your life or health
- The U.S. Government actively inspects work sites
- The laws applies to all workers, regardless of race, religion, national origin, etc
- Regulations are designed to protect all workers
- The cost of a lost-time injury or accident can easily be more than a worker's annual wages and can be severely debilitating, especially to small companies

What They Need to Learn

- The ability and willingness to train new employees makes you a much more valuable worker and improves your jobs security
- Here, heavy fines are often imposed on employers for non-compliance with the law
- Most employers do value worker health and safety. Workers are valued as both human beings and as resources for the company

7 Steps to Mentoring

1. Pre-Mentoring
2. Welcome to new employees and current employees
3. Acclimation
4. Assignment of an experienced coworker
5. Orientation
6. Job-related training
7. Feedback/communication

Training Tips: Language

- Use more pictures and fewer words to point out hazards and teach safety procedures
- Because most communication is nonverbal, watch workers' eyes, body language and expressions to see if they understand instructions. Get them to demonstrate.
- Train supervisors in basic, conversational Spanish and send non-English speaking Hispanic workers to conversational English classes

Training Tips:

Language

- Hire experienced supervisors who speak Spanish and English
- Ask bilingual employees to translate safety messages
- Hire a company to translate safety training materials into Spanish. Make sure the translator is familiar with the Spanish dialects spoken by your employees

Training Tips: Literacy

- Keep training basic by providing simple, hands-on safety demonstrations
- Do not let employees start work until they demonstrate they understand the training
- Provide follow-up training, and be sure to address new workplace hazards

Training Tips:

Fear

- Encourage employees to report unsafe conditions
- Offer safety training away from the workplace
- Make sure non-English speaking employees have peers in whom they can confide in
- Deliver safety messages to employees in their environment
- Reward safe behavior in front of coworkers

Common Pitfalls to Training

- Poor translation
- Asking bilingual employees to present or interpret
- A presenter who is an expert in safety, but not familiar with the culture or belief system of the participants