



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Mary Schnack, 800-529-7599
Mary@Prworks.ms

Interactive Language Tool Helps Hispanics and English-Speaking Employers Communicate

(Austin, TX) – A first-generation American who grew up in a Spanish-speaking household has developed a new product that helps bridge the cultural language barriers for English- and Spanish-speaking people who live, work or play together

CommuniCard™, visual communication aids that include pictures for those who don't read or who do not speak both languages, have been introduced by Sylvia Acevedo, president and CEO of CommuniCard™ LLC, headquartered in Austin, TX. The trade-specific cards focus on common tasks in the construction, housecleaning and lawn service industries. At less than \$20 each, they were originally designed for use by construction managers and household operators who need to relay instructions to non-English-speakers. For those seeking to learn the English/Spanish, the language translations are included.

“In starting CommuniCards, I didn't look at the Hispanic community as consumers but as a demographic force having a major impact in U.S. society at large,” Acevedo said. “In this way, I perceived a pressing social need and created a solution that will benefit both the Hispanic community and those who hire its members.”

The cards have proven a boon to immigrant workers who gain more confidence, can attain more work and communicate more clearly with those who hire them. One Spanish-language-only speaker described the CommuniCard as a “passport for work.”

“Spanish-speakers make up the largest segment of the manual labor, service economy,” says Acevedo. “I created the product to reduce the language barrier between English and Spanish speakers who work together. But an unexpected positive result has been increased job satisfaction for Spanish-speaking workers and those who hire them.”

Another positive is that some workers have used the cards to educate themselves in the English language, Acevedo added. Plus, a line of cards developed for the Austin Police Department has enabled non-Spanish-speaking police officers to better communicate with Spanish-speaking-only drivers, as well as help them increase their understanding of traffic laws.

Acevedo created CommuniCard™ after watching friends struggle to communicate with their house cleaners and construction workers. More than 1.7 million people of Hispanic or Latino background are employed in the United States, according to U.S. Labor statistics. Many of them lack English-language skills and hold entry-level service jobs.

-- MORE --

COMMUNICARDS 2-2-2

The Hispanic population is growing at nearly five times the rate of the national population growth rate. By 2020, Hispanics will represent 20% of the nation's population, a surge in magnitude similar to that of the post World War II Baby Boomer population.

To create the cards, Acevedo researched communication issues between English-speaking employers and Spanish-speaking workers, interviewing nearly 1,000 of them in construction and domestic work throughout California, Georgia, North Carolina, New Mexico and Texas.

Researchers created a comprehensive list of the most important work processes, procedures, and tools required for each type of work and the most common terms used by Spanish-speaking workers throughout the country. Five translators ensured that an adequate range of dialects and colloquiums were identified, e.g. Mexican versus Guatemalan Spanish.

The laminated, passport-size guides unfold accordion-style and display illustrations of specific tasks and tools. The housekeeping CommuniCards contain 52 cards with the most common phrases used to communicate with a housekeeper. For those seeking to learn Spanish or English, language translations are included.

CommuniCards are available as pocket guides or as a deck of cards, with each one focusing on a specific task area. They also can be customized to fit different types of workplace environments, such as Police Traffic Stop CommuniCards. They can be purchased at www.thecommunicard.com.

About Sylvia Acevedo

Before starting, CommuniCard™ LLC, Acevedo was founder and vice president of sales and marketing of REBA Technologies. She was previously an executive at top Fortune 500 companies, including IBM, Dell Inc., Apple Computer and Autodesk Inc. At Dell Computer, she led the creation of the first Pan-American e-commerce website for Latin America. Acevedo has a Master's engineering degree from Stanford University and a Bachelor's degree from New Mexico State where she graduated with honors and served on the Board of Regents.