

Latinos Who Repress Their Persona Are More Likely to Rise in the Organization, According to Study

NEW YORK, September 14, 2016 –The vast majority of Latinos (76 percent) repress certain aspects of their personas in the workplace, according to new findings, and those who expend a *great deal* of energy doing so (six percent) are also more likely to feel they are being promoted quickly. The study, *Latinos at Work: Unleashing the Power of Culture*, published today by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) makes clear that individuals as well as companies pay a price when Latinos cannot bring their full selves to work.

Latino employees struggle to conform to norms of leadership at their organizations. The new study finds that 43 percent of Latinas and 33 percent of Latino men feel the need to compromise their authenticity to conform to executive or leadership presence standards at their companies, and even higher percentages (53 percent of Latinas and 44 percent of Latino men) agree that executive or leadership presence at their companies is defined as conforming to traditionally white male standards. To be seen as leadership material, that is, Latinos feel the need to cover or downplay who they are by modifying their appearance, body language, communication style, and leadership behaviors.

Repression has implications on the bottom-line, as demonstrated by previous CTI research. Team members who represent their target audience can improve the entire team’s understanding of that end user. Teams with one or more members who represent the culture of the team’s target end user are 158 percent more likely to understand that end user, boosting the likelihood of that team innovating effective market solutions.

“It was disheartening to find in our study that Latinos who cover tend to succeed more in the white-collar workforce than those who assert their cultural heritage,” says Noni Allwood, study co-author and senior vice president at CTI. “They may also cover because, our study shows, they experience slights and snubs at work that chip away at their confidence and prevent them from bringing their authentic selves to work.”

More than half of Latino professionals (59 percent) experience slights and snubs in the workplace. Of the 59 percent, 24 percent say that others are given (or have taken) credit for their contributions, 22 percent say that colleagues tell them jokes that make fun of certain ethnic or religious backgrounds, and 18 percent say they are excluded from after-work “get-togethers.”

The study points to sponsorship – senior-level advocacy – as a key strategy in retaining and advancing Latino professionals. Latinos with sponsors are 42 percent more likely than those without sponsors to be satisfied with their career progression. Yet, a mere five percent of full-time, high-earning Latino professionals in large companies have sponsors in their corner.

Repression, slights and snubs, and a lack of advocacy conspire to make Latinos feel unwelcome, unheard, and underappreciated. Sixty-three percent of Latinos do not feel welcome and included by their team; do not feel free to express their views and opinions; and/or do not feel that their ideas are being heard and recognized. For employers, these figures can translate into diminished engagement, lower productivity, and flight risk.

“As previous CTI research makes clear, team members who represent the culture of the team’s target end users are more likely to unlock innovation and market growth,” says Laura Sherbin, study co-author and director of research at CTI. “When Latinos repress who they are, companies lose out on their unique insights and, as a result, fail to tap into a Latino market that is estimated to be worth \$1.7 trillion within the next four years.”

The study also reveals what Latinos value and how these values impact their career needs. Eighty-four percent of Latinos say they aspire to be healthy in their lifetimes. Fifty-nine percent of Latinas and 42 percent of Latino men would turn down a promotion if they thought it would negatively impact their health and well-being. Latinos are also family-oriented: 89 percent aspire to have a family, have long-term rewarding personal relationships, or help their children, spouse/partner, and/or extended family be successful in their lifetime. As such, 37 percent would turn down a promotion if they thought it would reduce time with their children or loved ones, or their commitment to their communities.

The report showcases best practices from companies like American Express and Morgan Stanley which can be used as guides for other organizations working to better leverage and support their Latino talent.

For more information on *Latinos at Work: Unleashing the Power of Culture*, please visit www.talentinnovation.org.

Research Sponsors:

American Express, Bank of America, BP, Chubb, Freddie Mac, MetLife, Morgan Stanley, and Wells Fargo

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Noni Allwood is a senior fellow at the Center for Talent Innovation and managing director at Hewlett Consulting Partners. She brings over twenty years of experience as a corporate executive specializing in optimization strategies for diverse talent and strategic business operations. Her previous experience includes leading Cisco’s worldwide diversity and inclusion initiative. She has a degree in industrial engineering from Universidad Centroamericana in El Salvador and is an alumnus of the Stanford University Executive Program. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Geographic Expeditions and on the advisory boards of the San Francisco District Attorney and Alliance for Girls. She is also a founding member of the San Francisco Council of Vital Voices.

Laura Sherbin is CFO and director of research at the Center for Talent Innovation and CFO at Hewlett Consulting Partners. She is an economist specializing in work-life issues and gender. She is also an adjunct professor at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University teaching “Women and Globalization.” She is a coauthor of Harvard Business Review articles “How Diversity Can Drive Innovation”; “How Gen Y and Boomers Will Reshape Your Agenda”; “Off-Ramps and On-Ramps Revisited” and Harvard Business Manager article “Letzte Ausfahrt Babypause” as well as the Harvard Business Review Research Reports *The Athena Factor: Reversing the Brain Drain in Science, Engineering, and Technology* and *The Sponsor Effect: Breaking through the Last Glass Ceiling* and CTI reports including *Executive Presence*, among many others. She earned her PhD in economics from American University.

About the Research:

The following research is based on a survey, Insights in-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) involving more than fifty people from our Task Force organizations, and one-on-one interviews with forty-one men and women.

National survey data comes from two large-scale samples of respondents between the ages of twenty-one and sixty-four currently employed full-time in certain white-collar occupations, with at least a bachelor’s degree. Survey 1 was conducted online in March 2012 among 3,929 respondents (1,975 men and 1,954 women with 438 Hispanic and 2,454 white respondents). Data from Survey 1 were weighted to be representative of the US population of university graduates on key demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity, and region). Survey 2 was conducted online in June 2014 among 3,298 respondents (1,578 men and 1,720 women with 468 Hispanic and 1,655 white respondents). Data from Survey 2 were weighted to be representative of the US population on key demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity, region, education, and income). For data collected in this report, Latinos are those who identify as being of Latino or Hispanic descent. The base used for statistical testing was the effective base.

The survey was conducted by Knowledge Networks under the auspices of the Center for Talent Innovation, a nonprofit research organization. Knowledge Networks was responsible for the data collection, while the Center for Talent Innovation conducted the analysis.

In the charts, percentages may not always add up to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses from respondents.

About the Center for Talent Innovation:

The Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) is an NYC-based think tank that focuses on global talent strategies and the retention and acceleration of well-qualified labor across the divides of demographic difference including gender, generation, geography, sexual orientation, and culture. CTI’s research partners now number more than 90 multinational corporations and organizations.

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