

news

# CLUE

Cultural & Linguistic Understanding of Ethnicity®

September/October 2001



September 15 - October 15

*This month-long celebration recognizes the influence and contribution made by people of Hispanic heritage on American history and culture.*

*For more information on Hispanic Heritage Month in Minnesota visit [www.hispanic-heritage-mn.com](http://www.hispanic-heritage-mn.com)*



INTERNATIONAL

[www.creo-works.com](http://www.creo-works.com)

520 Marquette Avenue  
Suite 700  
Minneapolis, MN  
55402-4444  
612 342-9800  
800 632-1388

## Ethnic Employee Relations and Communications

In the last ten years, the United States saw a tremendous increase in its ethnic populations. Overall, Hispanics grew by 58% and the Asian population 48%. Other ethnic groups that previously were quite small, such as Russians or Somali, are also increasing rapidly. An even larger rate of growth for these groups has occurred in Minnesota. Statewide, the Hispanic population grew by 166% in the past decade. The statistics for the Asian population are just as impressive with a growth of almost 80% in the same period. The Somali community in Minnesota is estimated to be between 15,000 and 60,000 strong.

Cultural ignorance can be very expensive in today's economy. Luckily, many corporations in Minnesota, as in the rest of the country, take advantage of the great opportunity that diversity offers and make a point of employing people of different ethnicities because they believe having a diverse workforce is simply good business. This approach allows them to identify more with their equally diverse client and customer base.

### Dealing with a Diverse Workforce

Although employing a diverse workforce is the logical conclusion to our country's population makeup, it also brings a whole array of challenges. Failure to recognize and address the differences among ethnic groups may lead to increased polarization among workers. As a consequence, employees may become frustrated and eventually seek other job opportunities.

Today, corporations can no longer just be culturally aware, but must become **culturally competent**, and able to operate skillfully in a multicultural arena. Addressing the cultural and communication differences among ethnic groups cannot be seen as a cost, but rather a benefit and revenue generator for companies wishing to compete in today's economy.

### Bridging the Communication Gap

For new immigrants, the lack of English language skills often represents the biggest challenge. Companies are often unprepared to deal with their culturally and linguistically diverse employees. As a multilingual communications agency, CREO has helped many companies across all industries develop employee communication materials that address this challenge and over time result in better employee relations, improved performance and greater productivity.

The areas impacted range from training and development to employee benefits and incentive programs as well as corporate communications that deal with a company's mission and philosophy.

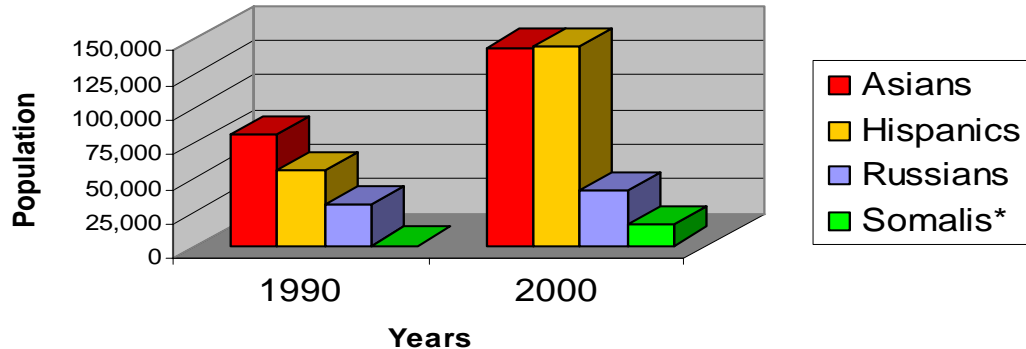
While there are many solutions to the communication dilemma presented by a culturally diverse workforce, very simple steps can often yield good results. There is nothing more beneficial to a company than making its employees feel recognized and valued. By communicating effectively in the language spoken by the employees, they will feel more empowered. The effort is sure to pay great dividends in the long run.

Ethnic Diversity

**The Global Village...** when something is incomprehensible, an English speaker usually says: "*It's all Greek to me*". Greeks, on the other hand, say "*Stop talking Chinese*"; to which a Chinese would respond "*Your words are like Buddha's attendant: 12 feet tall, whose head I cannot reach.*"

# Statistics

**Increase in Ethnic Populations of Minnesota  
from 1990 to 2000**



## Upcoming Conferences

**“Building Full Partnership:  
Purpose, Process, Payoff.”**

October 4, 2001

Minnesota Cultural Diversity Center

Bloomington, Minnesota

(952)881-6090 or [www.mcde.org](http://www.mcde.org)

**“Building Professional Competence  
in a Multicultural Society”**

November 2 - 5, 2001

National Multicultural Institute

Washington, D.C.

(202) 483-0700

## International Holidays

### September

15<sup>th</sup> – Respect for the Aged Day (Japan)

16<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day (Mexico)

### October

1<sup>st</sup> - Moon Festival (China)

1-2<sup>nd</sup> – National Day (China)

12<sup>th</sup> – Dia de la Raza (Columbus Day)  
celebrated throughout Central America,  
Spain and most of South America

25<sup>th</sup> – Chung Yeung Festival (Hong Kong)

**In our next issue of CLUE: *Corporate Communications for Global Companies***

## CLUE Newsletter

*A publication of CREO International © 2001. All rights reserved.*

*If you would like to receive a copy of CLUE or have suggestions on future topics,  
please call us at 612-342-9800*