

## **Influent Expands Hispanic Market Services**

November 5, 2004 - Influent, a provider of outsourced customer sales and service solutions, has taken several exciting steps to enhance its Hispanic Market service offerings. The opening of a new state-of-the-art contact center in Colón, Panama offers an attractive mix of multi-lingual services, Hispanic cultural awareness, and cost effective resources. The Panama facility offers clients a strategic advantage in several vital areas.

The highly Americanized culture of Panama and stable socio-economic conditions are beneficial for business growth. Being located in the same time zone as the Eastern U.S. and accessible by flights of only a few hours from major U.S. cities, Panama offers the cost benefits of offshore solutions but significantly easier access for U.S.-based clients as well as a gateway for servicing all of Latin America.

Influent's services are designed to provide clients with the critical elements for Hispanic market success. The Hispanic market provides tremendous avenues for business growth, noting the nearly 200% increase in segment buying power over the past decade. Selling to the Hispanic market often requires speaking Spanish, but success depends on more than merely speaking the language. To put all of the pieces in place, marketers must first be fluent in the Hispanic culture and its sensitivities. With twenty Spanish speaking countries around the globe, each with a different cultural bias, this is not an easy task.

Mr. Adolfo Carrion, Senior Vice President of Hispanic Markets for Influent, has been working closely with clients to develop a suite of offerings for Hispanic market success. Mr. Carrion brings tremendous insights into Hispanic marketing based on over two decades of executive management experience Hispanic operations at firms including Capital One, American Express, and Cigna. "The Hispanic market potential is vast, but a specialized expertise is required to succeed in reaching this lucrative market. The opening of our contact center in Panama is an amazing asset for our clients," stated Mr. Carrion. Unlike many previous immigrant groups, Hispanics are retaining a stronger bond to their culture and language. Studies show that nearly 70% of Hispanic households are Spanish language dominant, though many Hispanics readily switch between Spanish and English. The U.S. Hispanic population is comprised of many regional sub-groups, so cultural sensitivity is important for building relationships. A recent study by Yankelovich, a leading research firm, noted that "companies clearly need to increase their Hispanic marketing investments, but they must make their messaging culturally relevant."

Influent's Panama operations are company-owned and operated, with a management team anchored by seasoned call center professionals who have relocated from the U.S. The majority of our representatives are either college-educated or working towards degrees. Mr. Andrew C. Jacobs, President and CEO of Influent, emphasizes "Our focus is on delivering the right blend of multi-lingual proficiency and cultural awareness so clients realize the benefits of exceptional program management coupled with impressive cost savings. I've never seen our clients so enthusiastic about a new facility as they are about having us run their programs in Panama."

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