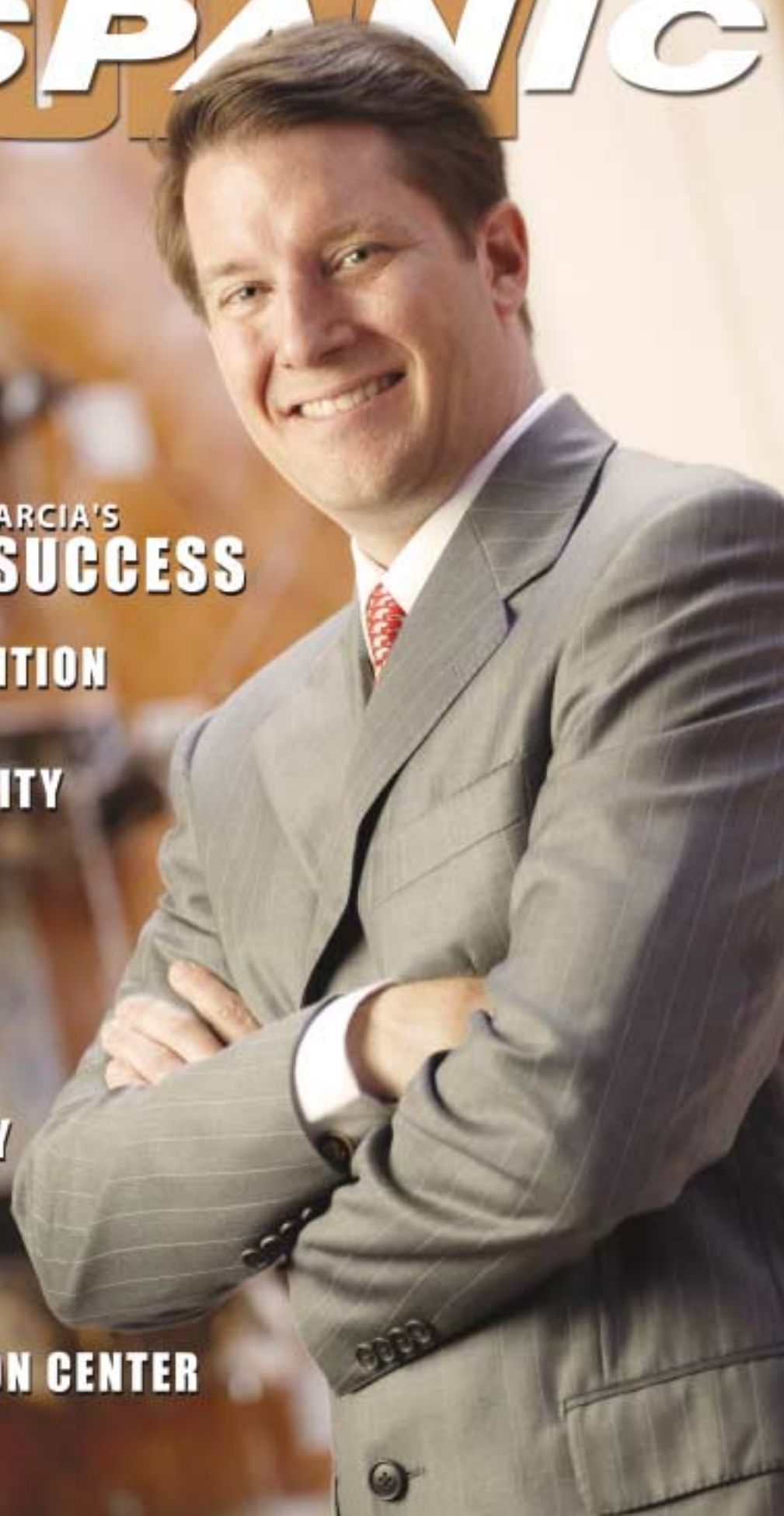


THE CAREER AND EDUCATION RESOURCE FOR HISPANICS

# HISPANIC TODAY

[www.hispanic-today.com](http://www.hispanic-today.com)



CHARLES PATRICK GARCIA'S  
**SECRET TO SUCCESS**

**EMPLOYEE RETENTION**  
*Your biggest challenge*

**NASCAR DIVERSITY  
PROGRAM**

**CAR BUYING  
'En Español'**

**HOTEL INDUSTRY  
DIVERSITY**

**PUERTO RICO'S  
NEW CONVENTION CENTER**

# HISPANIC TODAY

## FEATURE ARTICLES

12

### ON THE COVER

#### CHARLES PATRICK GARCIA Secret to Success

*By Naomi Colton*

Is the secret to success a complex mathematical formula, does it require a Doctorate of Philosophy, or a profound understanding of aggregate supply and demand curves?



6

### EMPLOYEE RETENTION

*By Stuart R. Levine*

The phrase is said so often it's a management cliché: Our company's most important assets walk out the door every night.



30

### HOW WELCOME ARE WE?

Every year the NAACP measures the Hospitality Industry's commitment to diversity, and once again, Marriott International is the industry leader.





# SECRET *to* SUCCESS

*A Magic Formula  
or Simple Keys?*

*By Noemi Coltea*

Is the secret to success a complex mathematical formula, does it require a Doctorate of Philosophy, or a profound understanding of aggregate supply and demand curves? No. On the contrary, according to one successful entrepreneur, it is simple, easy to understand and apply “success strategies” and “success beliefs” that can be adopted by virtually anyone at any age at any stage of their life.

This, according to Charles Patrick Garcia, Founder and Chairman of Sterling Financial Investment Group of Companies, will help you achieve not only the success you desire, but personal satisfaction, professional enhancement and spiritual fulfillment. One of the keys says Garcia, whose own success reads like the biography of a Tom Clancy character, is to “find your calling in life and pursue it regardless of financial gain.”

Sounds pretty simple, and it is, says Garcia. “Once you understand your greatest strengths and what your goals are in life, you must then concentrate all your energy into making them a reality,” says the 43-year old entrepreneur who at the age of 37 formed a 3-person company operating out of a cleaned out broom closet of another firm that has since exploded into a full service global financial services organization with 46 offices in 6 countries.

In a world where competition amongst investment firms is fierce, the recipe for his firm was unique in that he chose to focus on the Hispanic market. "When I first started this company, I realized that there were very few firms who catered to the Hispanic community, either domestically or internationally, and that even those who did not understand the unique culture and customs of Latinos spread across so many different countries."

Garcia apparently understands the needs of Latinos. Born in the Republic of Panama, educated in the United States at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and later earning a law degree from Columbia University, with laser-like determination, Garcia applied this simple yet faithful approach. Only three years later, the magic formula began to bear fruit and the start-up organization had climbed to the number one fastest growing privately held, minority owned firm in Florida in 2000. It remained there for two years in a row, named in the University of Florida's Warrington Fisher School of Accounting annual competition survey.

That was an exciting time for us," says Garcia with a flash of a smile, a sparkle in his green eyes, with sandy blond hair and clean cut looks more common to an Ivy League Wall-Streeter than a Panamanian national. Says Garcia, "it showed that if you have a dream, a plan and follow your strategy that you can achieve whatever it is that you want."

### A Military Man

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Garcia became the 4th highest-ranking officer among 4,400 cadets. He was elected to serve as chairman of the Cadet Honor Committee and was awarded the "Class of 1983 Honor and Ethics Trophy," an honor bestowed to the graduation senior who "most personifies the ideals of personal integrity."

Garcia worked with and reported to General John Galvin, who later became the NATO Supreme Allied Commander, and completed his service as a highly decorated military officer. It is no wonder then that he runs his company with a military-like discipline and expects nothing but excellence from all of his employees. In fact, Garcia keeps a "war book," and at the conclusion of every day Sterling's managers are required to send him daily updates.

"If there are problems, I expect them to be fixed within 24 hours, if not, they go on a watch list," says Garcia. "If they are not fixed, the person at the heart of the problem could be in pretty hot water." Fueling the success cycle for Garcia's company, he has ingrained each employee with one mantra they replay each and every day: "What did we do wrong today, and what can we do better?" It's not magic, but it certainly is one ingredient in an interesting recipe that has added up to success for Garcia and his company, Sterling Financial.

One of the keys says Garcia, whose own success reads like the biography of a Tom Clancy character, is to "find your calling in life and pursue it regardless of financial gain."

**Community Activism with an Entrepreneurial Spirit**  
In addition to being an intrepid entrepreneur, Garcia is also a committed community leader. He is passionate about helping and teaching other Latinos how they can achieve their own dreams. Being passionate about something is one of the keys to success according to Garcia and his passion in the education arena was noticed by Florida Governor Jeb Bush; it also caught the attention of his older sibling, President George W. Bush.

"My mother was an award-winning teacher in Panama," says Garcia, "this is probably where I learned to understand just how important, and the impact that teaching can make on a kids life...it's amazing."

Garcia tells a story when he was invited back to the Republic of Panama by the President to be honored as a Panamanian-American for his accomplishments in the United States. This was in 2001 when his company for the second year in a row was the number one fastest growing privately held, minority-owned, Hispanic firm in Florida.

Garcia took his family, his wife, his two children, and his mother, but not his father who had passed away years earlier. When they got to the anteroom where they were waiting to meet Mireya Moscoso, the President of Panama, 3 different assistants greeted them. "When they first saw us they literally screamed like they just saw Madonna," says Garcia. But it was not screams for him; it was for his mother. Garcia's mother, Marilyn, had taught each of these three women at different points in their lives. "They literally went crazy when they saw her," he says recalling the experience fondly.

Garcia says that he learned an important lesson from that experience, one that he never forgot. "You can have all the material possessions in the world, but to touch someone's heart has the most power of all, and being a teacher can do that." Garcia says that after that moment, "I knew I had to be involved in the education arena and try to make a difference in the lives of children, especially Hispanic children."

According to Garcia, 7 out of 10 Hispanic children cannot read at grade level. "Without being able to read, you cannot learn, and if you cannot learn, you cannot get a good education, and without that, a person's future is compromised,

*continued on next page>>>*

<<<continued from previous page

if not doomed," says Garcia. Education is one of the keys to success and Garcia works hard at trying to give children the key to their own future. His work for Governor Jeb Bush as an appointee as the only Hispanic to the seven-member Florida Board of Education gives him an opportunity not only to oversee the state's more than \$16 billion dollar annual budget, thousands of schools, tens of thousands of teachers and millions of students, but his appointment by the President to the Presidential Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic American's gave him an opportunity to work with a blue-ribbon panel of Latino leaders from around the nation to craft a blueprint to help close the education gap for Hispanic children throughout the United States. This provides Garcia a platform to change education on both a state and national level.

**Balance breeds creativity. Creativity breeds success.**

Charles Garcia's calendar will view plenty of meetings scheduled either with high company officers, Presidents and CEO's of successful national and international corporations or influential political leaders. His schedule requires incredible discipline. "I can operate efficiently on very limited hours of sleep" says Garcia. "Those who prevail are individuals who have the courage and fortitude to stick to their convictions

and pursue their dreams regardless of any obstacles, and are willing to pay the price." That price, for Charles Garcia, however does not include losing touch or disaffecting relationships with those who mean the most to him. Organizations must allow balance between work and relationships that individuals consider sacred. His calendar has a block entitled "Charley time" that is reserved for just that. He enjoys spending time with his children and is very much involved in their daily activities.

Whether he is arranging a surprise fishing trip for his son Sterling's birthday, or having a phone conference with Olivia's school teachers, he prides himself in his children's progress and accomplishments.

"Yes, having a good idea, a plan and taking action to move toward the goal everyday or week is imperative. But having the emotional stamina to withstand the greatest of forces that will invariable challenge you as you move toward the accomplishment of your dream, will take time and perseverance" says Garcia. "Doing things because they mean a lot to you is called perseverance. But doing things because they mean the world to others, is much more rewarding than the first."

*continued on page 17 >>>*



**Charley Time**

-His calendar has a block entitled "Charley time" that is reserved for just that. He enjoys spending time with his children and is very much involved in their daily activities.

"Those who prevail are individuals who have the courage and fortitude to stick to their convictions and pursue their dreams regardless of any obstacles, and are willing to pay the price...having a good idea, a plan and taking action to move toward the goal everyday or week is imperative. But having the emotional stamina to withstand the greatest of forces that will invariably challenge you as you move toward the accomplishment of your dream, will take time and perseverance" says Garcia.

<<<continued from page 14

### **You Make a Living From What You Do, But You Make A Life Out of What You Give**

Garcia's work, as an entrepreneur and as an active, avid community leader in the Hispanic community, and as a forceful voice in education has had its rewards. He was identified by Hispanic Magazine as one of the "100 most influential Hispanics in the United States" by Hispanic Business magazine, he's been featured on numerous magazine covers including Poder, Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, Hispanic Today as well as in countless newspaper and magazine articles both nationally and internationally.

### **Bringing Others Along**

Garcia is using his high profile status to help the Hispanic community. As the largest minority group in the United States, the Hispanic community is becoming a driving force in the global economy, politics and culture of this country and Garcia sees an opportunity to help fellow Latinos by giving them the tools they need to be successful. "One of the tools to succeed," says Garcia "is at the fingertips of every student in this country and that is taking advantage of school and getting a good education." Garcia is doing his part to ensure that Latino's do not slip through the cracks of this nation's education system.

### **A Message From Garcia**

But, his recently published hardcover book, "A Message From Garcia: Yes You can Succeed," published by John Wiley & Sons, that was also simultaneously published in Spanish by Hayhouse, which became a Wall Street Journal best seller by the end of the second week, provides all people, including Hispanics with powerful tools they can use to achieve any dream or goal they might have.

Unlike other inspirational books that offer advice in a relative and theoretical way, his approach is human and therefore achievable. "Instead of wasting time and energy working harder on your weakest skills, focus on your assets and try to improve by 20 percent or more," says Garcia. The concept behind it is quite simple: if you are trying to improve on a skill you are not very good at, the best you will do is be

mediocre. However if you work on something you are naturally good at by investing time and energy into developing and refining this skill, you have a chance to become an expert in that field.

His message is straightforward: focus on your strengths and work hard at improving them each day. He has done just that, and now his hope is for everyone to find their passion, have a dream and to pursue it regardless of financial gain. Yes, you can succeed, Charlie Garcia has proved that it can be done and he shows you how. According to Garcia, "You have to find your passion and that starts with finding out what you are good at." Garcia has clearly discovered what he is good at - being a leader, an entrepreneur and an author. And his goal is to bring that message to people, particularly Hispanic-American people. To change the world you have to change lives and Garcia is doing that one person at a time through his commitment to education, through the message in his book, through his passion to help others achieve their dreams. *Now, it's your turn.* HT

