

Giving Voice

to the Messengers

By **Judi Jordan** Photos for Latino Leaders by **Jordan Gomez**

Grounded, humble and personable, **BOB SANCHEZ**, the hardworking President and Owner of United Print Group, Inc. started small and slowly, but he built his business one form at a time. “Seed money was very small. I basically was opportunistic and developed credit relationships with my suppliers.”

Back in 1980, when paper was still viable, Sanchez was encouraged as a minority supplier to expand his printing business into a custom forms company.

Twenty-two years later, United Print Group has diversified into production of a wide range of promotional marketing materials including but not limited to: multi-color collateral print products, large format signs, posters, billboards, vehicle wraps, promotional and advertising specialty products and online services for stationery print and inventory management.

Although the end product in Sanchez’ business is a physical take-away, the biggest secret of Sanchez’ success is service, on which he immodestly (and uncharacteristically) prides himself.





Bob Sanchez is the President and Owner of United Print Group, Inc. Based in New York, Sanchez has worked with several large companies and non-profits.

"Brand evolution, where we will sit down and develop ideas with them... we became true partners with them."

He's the guy that gives credit where credit is due, praising his clients for their loyalty and continuing to earn it by anticipating their needs and focusing on customer service. Remember what it was like speaking to a real person on the phone?

Sanchez' earthy 'New Yawk' accent is tempered with a friendly, low-key confidentiality that is old-school and reassuring; brick and mortar, not steel and glass. Sanchez listens and converses the way you wish your broker would but doesn't. Sanchez' calm and trustworthy demeanor has hooked some big fish. Customers include many of New York

City's leading financial institutions, insurance companies and advertising firms where service and precision count equally.

This doesn't mean that Sanchez's stuck in the past with his printing technique. They have a booming novelty 4D printing business that's left branding impressions on USBs, fans and lapel art. In the era of off-shore customer service, United Print Group has held firm to providing local and meticulous customer attention. As Sanchez puts it, "We streamline the customer experience."

Remember the old sales mantra, KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid)? Sanchez has the

21st century version of it, KISCAP: Keep It Streamlined, Consistent And Personal. "We drop everything for the customer, and we don't answer the phone with voice mail." This kind of hands-on approach can only lead to more business, and one of Sanchez's most meaningful client partnerships is with SODEXO, the dynamic, much-lauded, \$8 billion food and facilities behemoth. Named by Fortune Magazine as one of the World's Most Admired Companies in 2012, No. 1 on Diversity Inc.'s Top 50 companies for diversity inclusion and Catalyst 2012 Award Winner, Sodexo is a great fit for

Sanchez' business and personal philosophy of personal best. The relationship was off to a great start when they met at the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Annual National Convention in Phoenix in 2003. Sanchez met Darleen Fuller, Director of Supplier Diversity, who brought her director of procurement, who was prepared to do business. Sanchez was blown away by the seriousness of the Sodexo commitment to diversity.

"Most of these conferences send their HR people, but when they came with their procurement director, I knew they were serious." Sanchez directed

his approach to Sodexo's bold and environmentally conscious branding. "They've got this 'Better Tomorrow' plan. It's their sustainability, so we sat down and explained that our proposal could eliminate paper. We went back to New York, and they went back to Baltimore."

Sanchez heard from Sodexo, and business boomed. Sanchez explains: "Sodexo's requirements are quite large... they're doing the food at USC and University of Miami. About 150 to 200 orders a week come in."

Working with Laurie Kelly, Sodexo Director of Brand Management and

Corporate Communications, Sanchez has had a stellar experience. "Working with Laurie Kelly has been extraordinary. She works with us as partners to best represent and maintain the Sodexo brand across many platforms and locations.

His business is compact with sales at \$4.5 million. With so much potential and great contacts, Sanchez can easily expand, but sales staff is an issue. Finding passionate candidates has been a challenge, even with unemployment numbers and his willingness to hire and train. "I don't know what the answer is to that," Sanchez admits.

Over time, the Sodexo relationship has progressed to what Sanchez terms a "Brand evolution, where we will sit down and develop ideas with them... we became true partners with them."

Aside from Sodexo, Sanchez has found many of his best contacts come through Hispanic chamber events. He found his banker there when he was getting the run-around from bigger banks to buy the building for his business. Sanchez has been fortunate, and he enjoys giving back. He doesn't spread himself too thin sitting on a dozen boards, preferring to focus on the few places to make a real difference. Some time ago he got involved in the education of underprivileged girls.

An event planner came to United Printed Group to get programs printed. "I did what I should never do. I read what I was printing," Sanchez said. He got hooked. Years later, Sanchez is a director of the Cornelia Connelly Center in the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

"It's a spectacular organization. They take girls from one of the worst neighborhoods in New York — Avenue B — and they provide them with the best place they can go... they can stay there and get their education. We work to try to get them college scholarships... 90 percent graduate high school and 40 percent go to college. Most are the first person in their families to go to college. I'm director of development, and frankly, we do good work because we change lives."

Founded in 1993, in response to the crisis in education facing girls from low-income families on Manhattan's Lower East Side, CCC's mission is simple — to break the cycle of poverty through education. And it fits in with Robert Sanchez' streamlined philosophy of doing his very best to provide extraordinary service to both his clients and his community. ●