

Shared Investment,  
Mutual Opportunity



## Profiles in Success Stop & Compare

Stop and Compare is a family-owned supermarket chain that serves Hispanic and other ethnic populations at their two locations in Lynn and Chelsea. With a mission of “Diverse foods for diverse communities,” President Alberto Calvo knows that success begins with the workforce. “Our workforce is Latino-based. We have 12 nationalities in our store. We attract everyone,” he says. Calvo sees English as the most important skill to create a rapport between employees and customers. “English as a second language is key to our employee’s success. It improves job performance, which increases productivity for our business.”



*Rebecca Sanchez and Joshua Rodriguez are students in Stop and Compare’s workplace ESOL program, where they’ve learned to improve their customer service skills.*

With the help of the English Works Campaign, Calvo connected with Mujeres Unidas Avanzando, a community-based organization that offers English classes in Dorchester and Bunker Hill Community College. Together, they developed a curriculum and course structure tailored to the specific needs of his employees. English Works also helped the business secure a grant from the state’s Workforce Training Fund Program, which funds business training for workers. “I was surprised,” says Calvo. “It was interesting to see the Commonwealth give money to ESL training, which is what we need.”

English classes at the two stores run for nine months, with approximately 35 employees participating in the four-hour per week program. Griselda Martinez, a

cashier and ESOL student, says the English language classes have had an impact at home and at work. “This program is very important for my entire life, my job, and health. Now, I can greet customers properly. I can say ‘Hi, how are you today?’ or if they are looking for a product, I can tell them where to go.”

Guillermo Fernandez, Retail Business Analyst at the Stop and Compare Chelsea market, has seen an overall improvement in employees’ confidence and buy-in to the store’s goals. “These classes are increasing the motivation of the employees,” explains Fernandez. “Training and development of your workforce is one of the most important things for a company. If the employees can do better, then the company as a whole will have higher benefits.”

Sonia Lara, human resources administrator, says the courses help train workers in proper customer service etiquette in addition to improving their knowledge in reading and writing. In this business, being bi-lingual is a huge plus. "You can attract more customers to a

"We've seen a significant improvement in employee skills and advancement."

— Alberto Calvo, Stop & Compare President

business that has employees that can speak different languages. If a business wants to grow, having many languages will be good for customer service," says Lara. At the same time, Lara says, when all employees speak English, supervisors reduce translation time and can provide essential and effective feedback to the workforce.

In the second year of funded training, Stop and Compare employees will be trained further on customer service and also learn supervisory skills.

Time, consideration, and planning go into this type of program, but Calvo believes the benefits are long-lasting. "We have finished our first cycle in ESL, and the results were amazing in terms of enthusiasm of the employees," he says. "We've seen a significant improvement in employee skills and advancement, increase in motivation and teamwork."



*As HR Administrator, Sonia Lara recognizes the value added by bi-lingual employees.*

## english works

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### Contacts:

**English Works**  
617-982-6863  
info@english-works.org  
www.english-works.org

**Stop and Compare Supermarkets**  
Alberto Calvo  
617-884-3552  
abcalvo@stopandcompare.net

**Mujeres Unidas Avanzando**  
Dunia Garcia  
617-282-3500  
duniamara@gmail.com

**Workforce Training Fund Program  
at Commonwealth Corporation**  
617-727-8158  
www.commcorp.org

The *English Works* Campaign is a unique coalition of immigrant community leaders, labor unions, business and civic leaders, educators, and advocates across Massachusetts working toward a Commonwealth that provides all residents with a pathway to economic self-sufficiency; ensures a stable, skilled workforce for businesses; and integrates immigrants into the fabric of our economy, communities and shared civic life.

*English Works* recognizes the key role and contributions of immigrants to the Commonwealth. The campaign targets English proficiency as a critical tool for achieving economic success for immigrants and an essential ingredient to the growth and flexibility of our rapidly changing economy.

The *English Works* Campaign calls upon business, labor, community and government leaders to dedicate the needed public and private resources to create a sustainable, high-quality ESOL system that addresses the needs and interests of immigrant workers and their employers. The Campaign employs a three-pronged approach consisting of education and outreach, capacity development, and public policy advocacy to achieve its goals.

The *English Works* Campaign is led by English for New Bostonians.

**For more information, contact:**  
617-982-6863  
info@english-works.org  
www.english-works.org