



Diversity is nothing new to Michigan businesses, especially in the Detroit region and in the multicultural work forces of automotive factories. In 1914, for example, 71 percent of Ford Motor Co.'s employees were foreign-born from 22 different nationalities. The man who led America's "Arsenal of Democracy" production efforts during World War II— the late General Motors President and former Ford executive William S. Knudsen (whose Danish birth name was Signius Wilhelm Poul Knudsen)— once humorously said that he learned to shout "hurry up" in 15 different languages to workers on the line.

Part of the nation's heritage — the American dream — celebrates the success of individuals of various backgrounds who had the freedom and liberty to pursue their goals. Corp! magazine, a longtime supporter of diversity and multiculturalism in business, is recognizing 39 businesses and organizations for their efforts to promote diversity in positive ways. Many of these firms face pressures to cut costs, but their diversity efforts are seen as a key component of their strategies for success.

DIVERSITY LEADERS

Founded in 1987, **ASG Renaissance** of Dearborn is a woman- and Hispanic-owned international

professional services firm aiding small businesses to Fortune 500 companies in the automotive, alternative energy, higher education, defense, health care, construction, government and nonprofit sectors. Employing 225 people — 45 percent of them women and 29 percent minorities — ASG provides marketing communications, human capital recruiting, performance management and diversity services. The firm has received numerous honors and awards. "Our biggest diversity milestone is that we've maintained a diverse work force throughout our 23-year history," says CEO **Lizabeth Ardisana**.

"We are involved with numerous minority associations, such as the Michigan Minority Business



ASG Renaissance
CEO, **Lizabeth Ardisana**

Development Council, Hispanic Business Alliance and the Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, because they allow us to share best practices and implement diversity programs, both internally at ASG and for our clients." ASG Renaissance creates work forces that mirror the populations and customers of its clients. "Our recruitment, retention and training

strategies seek the best and brightest individuals while ensuring a diverse work force," Ardisana says. "This may mean taking extra steps to adequately promote open job requisitions to a diverse candidate pool by specifically targeting websites, user groups, organizations and associations that are affiliated with differing races, ethnic origins, genders, age groups, etc. In addition, formal training or individual mentoring and counseling promotes the benefits of diversity and assists employees in developing the proper skills and abilities to be successful in a diverse work environment." www.asgren.com