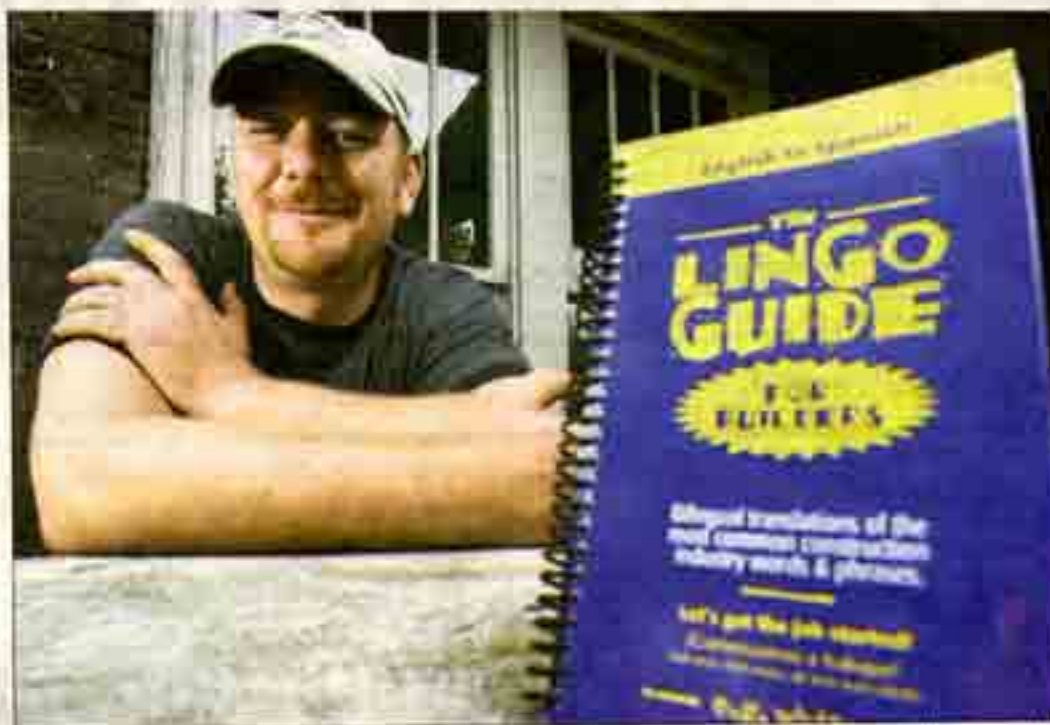


BUSINESS



Nashville contractor Ed White put together *The Lingo Guide for Builders* to ease communication at bilingual construction sites. The book provides English to Spanish translations, and vice versa, for common phrases and terms.

Construction phrase book helps build understanding

Contractor already is working on an edition for landscape workers.

By KEITH RUSSELL

Staff Writer

Even though he hardly speaks a word of Spanish, Nashville contractor Ed White is finding a growing audience for books he's written to help people communicate on increasingly bilingual work sites.

Published this summer, White's *The Lingo Guide for Builders* offers English to Spanish translations, and vice versa, of a host of phrases and terms used in the construction industry. The translations range from general phrases such as "Do you have your own tools?" to construction-specific sentences that would be hard to find in a traditional English-Spanish dictionary.

20%

Percent of foreign-born Hispanics in the total work force in the U.S. construction industry

571,000

Number of new jobs the industry added last year

40%

Portion of those jobs filed by foreign-born Hispanic workers

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER REPORT

A plumber, for instance, can turn to the plumbing section to tell a colleague it's time to "solder that pipe." A roofing section includes the Spanish translation for "We need to flash around the chimney." There also is a section devoted solely to safety terms.

In just a few months, the book has started to get noticed by builders who want ways to better communicate with an ever-larger and important part of their construction work force.

According to a report released earlier this year by the Pew Hispanic Center, foreign-born Hispanics make up about 20% of the total work force in the U.S. construction industry and were the beneficiaries of 40% of the 571,000 new jobs the industry added last year. In some construction trades, including stucco masonry, drywall installers and roofing, foreign-born Hispanics make up more than one-third of the work force.

"For about the last five to six years, the numbers have increased greatly," said White, who has run his own Nashville-based real estate investment and remodeling

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Excerpts from 'The Lingo Guide'

Do you have references?

¿Tiene referencias?

Do you have your own tools?

¿Tiene sus propias herramientas?

Can you give me an estimate for this job?

¿Me puede dar un presupuesto por este trabajo?

Are the fixtures in yet?

¿Llegaron ya los artefactos?

We need more scaffolding.

Necesitamos más andamiaje.

What is the pitch of the roof?

¿Cuál es la inclinación del techo?

We need to level this wall.

Debemos nivelar esta pared.

Book: Deal takes guide worldwide

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business for 15 years. "That's when you started seeing more (Hispanics) on the job."

But while praising Hispanics for their skills and work ethic, White said their emergence has created language barriers that can slow down work on a job site, or worse, create safety hazards.

"It can be the simplest of jobs. 'Can you get me that wrench?' 'Can you get me that piece of wood?' White said. "If you're not proficient in Spanish, you're sort of in trouble a little bit, and vice versa. The Hispanics have a rough time also trying to communicate anything, and it just slows things down."

So about four years ago, White sat down and brainstormed a list of phrases and terms that construction workers need frequently

to communicate. He then enlisted Diana Holland of Hispanic Links Consulting in Nashville to help translate the phrases into Spanish.

After an initial 500-copy printing, *The Lingo Guide* is past its fourth, 1,000-copy print run. Among large buyers was Brasfield & Gorrie, a large construction services firm based in Birmingham, Ala. The company bought 150 copies to give to employees at construction sites.

Sales may climb even faster in the coming months thanks to a recently signed deal with La Vergne-based Ingram Book



The Lingo Guide for Landscapers should hit bookstores later this month.

Group to offer *The Lingo Guide* to its national and international distribution network. The book is available at Borders and other retail book stores nationwide, as well as through online retailers such as Amazon.com.

"It's all we can do to keep them printed," said Ed's wife, Tina White, who is involved in the book's marketing and distribution. "We can hardly keep up with it."

Meanwhile, White isn't stopping at helping builders. Another book, *The Lingo Guide for Landscapers*, is scheduled to hit bookstores later this month. ■