

**Joaquin Carbonell**  
**Executive Vice President and General Counsel**  
**Cingular Wireless**

Joaquin Carbonell, Cingular Executive Vice President and General Counsel, understands the value of diversity both inside and outside the workplace. Discussing the background of his legal staff or his passion for fine wine, music and gourmet food from around the world, it's clear that he savors the richness that a wide range of cultures and experiences have brought to his life.

Carbonell came to the U.S. when he was nine years old as part of the "Peter Pan Project," a program through which the Catholic Church brought children out of Cuba in the early 1960s. He spent several months in a south Florida refugee camp before shuttling between an orphanage and three foster families in Wisconsin during the five-and-a-half year period before his parents were able to join him in the States.

Reflecting back, he says, "All of sudden I was in an orphanage and a city where there's not a single Cuban and the temperature is ten-below-zero for a month at a time. I had to learn to adapt to different people, environments, and cultures – even the weather."

Carbonell believes adapting is the true key to successfully leveraging the benefits of diversity and inclusion. He calls it a "business imperative" and cites an exercise from his days at Stanford business school to illustrate his point. In the exercise, students individually ranked a list of 20 items in order of importance for surviving an Arctic plane crash and then ranked them again in teams. "The results were scored against what it would really take to survive and the teams inevitably scored higher because they had the collective wisdom of everyone's experiences. You get better decision-making with inclusion," he says.

For a real-world example, Carbonell points to Cingular's tag line, "raising the bar," which has no literal Spanish translation. Instead, the company's Hispanic marketing uses a phrase meaning, "leaping forward," which resonates with Hispanic aspirations and cultural values. He believes implementing such strategies will preserve Cingular's leadership position in the marketplace, and help the company effectively tap into the fast-growing purchasing power of minority groups.

Carbonell's commitment to diversity and the opportunities it provides is evident in several different ways. His own department includes Hispanics and African- and Asian-Americans in numbers he feels are on their way to mirroring the percentages in the general population. He also points to Cingular's overall make-up, which is over 40% people of color and more than 50% women. In addition, over 60% of the direct reports to the CEO are women and/or people of color.

As the economies of China and India expand and various minority communities within the U.S. grow at double-digit annual rates, Carbonell predicts, "The marketplace is going to change drastically over the next 40-50 years. We all have to expose our employees, our companies, even our children, to as much breadth and vision of inclusion as we can. It will make them better people, better companies and help them operate successfully in an environment that will be dramatically different from the one we know now."