

# Immigrants Are the Solution, Not the Problem

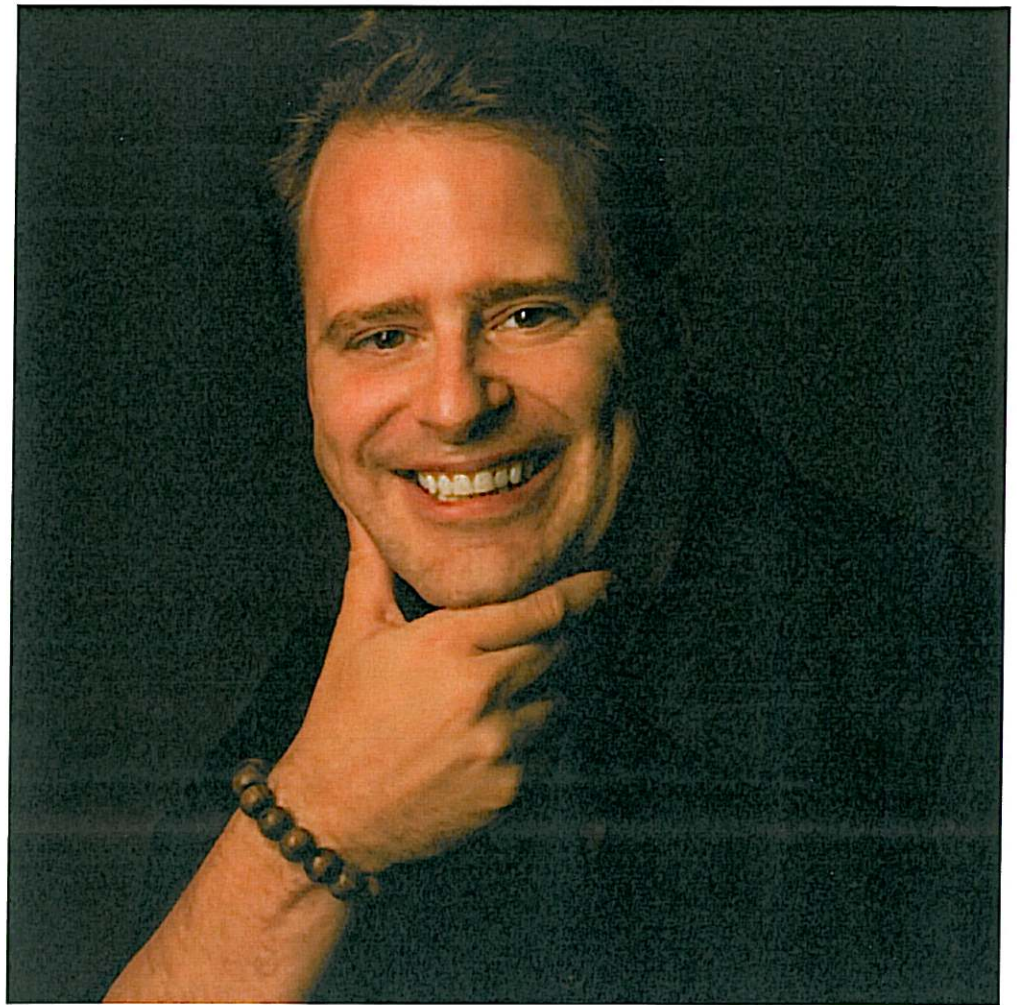
RICHARD HERMAN

**T**he problem plaguing America today --- job loss --- was not caused by immigrants. But immigrants could be the solution. Immigrants are America's secret weapon --- they are the job-creators.

Recent research confirms what many of us see in our daily experience. Immigrants, those who embrace risk and hardship to start a new life in the New World, are twice as likely as native-born to launch a new business, whether it's a small restaurant bringing new vitality to a neighborhood corner or a tech business in Silicon Valley, where over 50% of the businesses were founded by immigrants (think Google, Intel, YouTube, PayPal, eBay, Yahoo!).

In American cities across the country, Hispanic immigrants are leading the way in launching new businesses. There are now 2.8 million Hispanic-owned companies, generating over \$400 billion in sales, carrying a \$65 billion payroll, and employing over 2.2 million people. Depopulating cities like Detroit and Cleveland would do well to welcome Hispanic and other immigrant families to launch new businesses, renovate homes, and breathe fresh life into declining neighborhoods.

New research also tells us that startups are the key to the nation's economic recovery, inasmuch as new companies, those less than 5 years old, account for all net job creation in America since 1980.



And immigrants are driving startups, from retail to robotics!

In fact, 40% of the Fortune 500 companies were founded by either an immigrant, or a child of an immigrant. Think Apple, Goya Foods, GE, Procter & Gamble, McDonald's, Bank of America, Budweiser and many others, creating millions of jobs and trillions of dollars in annual revenue.

So, if America really wants to create a lot more new jobs, the country will need to have a new conversation about immigration.

The hostile, emotional sanctimonious arguments used today regarding both undocumented and documented immigration misses the point. Instead of demonizing immigrants, the country should discuss ways to leverage the immigrant



dividend.

The objective should be to grow the economy, plain and simple. Immigrants can help us with that. If we let them.

And not just in terms of launching new businesses, creating new jobs, boosting exports, and priming the economy with a new wave of consumerism ---- these are all huge drivers of growth.

But immigrants help us in another but equally important way: by creating an optimistic and confident tone in the country.

In effect, immigrants are the living embodiment of the American Dream. They are the Dream-Keepers.

Part myth, part religion, part reality, the American Dream is essential because it is what unites us. It is the shared belief that, in America, anything is possible, that people starting at the very bottom can catapult themselves to the very top.

It is a belief in tomorrow. And immigrants keep this flame alive.

"Before we arrive, we already know that America is the best that mankind can offer. So when we arrive, we go full blast!" says Ratanjit Sondhe, a successful entrepreneur from India, who first came to America in the 1960s to study polymer chemistry at the University of Akron.

Sondhe, who now lives comfortably in the Cleveland area after recently selling his road-surfacing technology company to Dow Chemical (also a company founded by an immigrant, Herbert Henry Dow, who studied chemistry in northeast Ohio generations ago), knows something is special about the combination of immigrants and the American Dream. They go hand in hand.

"Immigrants are those with the starkest sense of how this country differs from all others, and their very belief in that difference makes it -- partly -- come true," writes James M. Jasper, author of "Restless Nation: Starting Over in America."

Driven by an unshakable vision of a land of opportunity, often described by Ronald Reagan as a "shining city on the hill," immigrants bring the American Dream with them. In the process, the hardy new arrivals continually renew the country's belief that the dream exists

Richard T. Herman Robert L. Smith

# Immigrant, Inc.

Why Immigrant  
Entrepreneurs Are  
Driving the New Economy  
(and How They Will Save  
the American Worker)



and is attainable to all, regardless of who you are or where you start, through hard work, perseverance and appreciation of the freedom and opportunities that are abundant in America.

Renowned chef and Chicago restaurateur Generoso Bahena, an immigrant from Mexico and "master of the moles," said that upon first arriving in the U.S., "I found myself in the middle of nowhere and I had to prove to myself that I could do something."

Every day we see immigrants who

came with nothing achieving great things. "If they can do it, so can I," we say to ourselves. Or should.

The immigrants themselves become evangelists for the dream, preaching to anyone who will listen that America is the promised land for those eager to develop their full potential. And the dream becomes contagious.

Without a fervent, and sometimes delusory, reverence for the dream, America loses much of what makes it so special.

When those with a crazy dream stop coming to America, or are being kicked out or marginalized, more

of the pixels of the shining dream begin to fade.

Still looking to regain our footing after the Great Recession, America needs to get its swagger back. To do that, we have to embrace the Dream-Keepers.

Echoing that observation, author and historian Harold Evans observed in his book *They Made America*: "it is commonly said that these later immigrants brought their dreams. In fact, they brought ours."

**Richard Herman**, an Ohio-based immigration lawyer, is the co-author of "Immigrant, Inc. -- Why Immigrant Entrepreneurs Are Driving the New Economy (and How They Will Save the American Worker)." (Wiley, 2009). He is one of the architects of a national movement to revitalize America's economy through federal and local "immigrant friendly" policies. Herman travels the country as a speaker for the Partnership for a New American Economy, a national coalition founded by Mike Bloomberg & Rupert Murdoch and comprised of 500 CEOs and Mayors who believe in the economic benefits of smart immigration law reform and in welcoming immigrants. He has appeared on FOX News (The O'Reilly Factor), ABC News 20/20, National Public Radio, and interviewed in USA Today, BusinessWeek, Forbes, Inc., and in publications from around the world.