

## **“The Road to Success Knows No Shortcuts”**

*Hispanic businessman and author exchanges a chaotic destiny for one that is prolific and inspiring*

Robert Renteria is the best example of how, in the midst of adversity, one can achieve the “American Dream.”

Renteria’s story could have been like that of many young people attracted by the world of violence and drugs; he was born in that environment. He reveals that his father was addicted to heroin, and the only legacy he left his family was a pile of bills to pay and plenty of empty liquor bottles in the trashcan. Because of this, Renteria had to sleep in a dresser drawer [as a child]. Despite the poverty that he faced, Renteria took charge of his destiny and decided not to follow in his father’s footsteps.

With the help of his mother, whom Renteria describes as an incredibly hardworking woman, he achieved his dream. Today he is not only the inspiration of thousands of young people across the country who attend the presentations of his book, *From the Barrio to the Board Room*, but in this city of Aurora he is also the owner of WashPro USA, which sells everything from coin washing machines to completely installed coin laundries.

“We are a company of multimillion dollar sales that sells laundry equipment and serves as a broker for already-installed coin laundries,” said Renteria, who was born in Los Angeles, California.

### **Laundries, a need**

Renteria, 48, began working in the coin laundry industry in 1990, as an assistant. In 1993 he obtained a position as sales manager, which positively exposed him so that a larger company wound up hiring him. In 1998, he became vice president of a company that was listed in the New York Stock Exchange, but it wasn’t until 2001 that Renteria decided to open his own business.

Renteria’s business vision led him to invest his savings to found a company that finds a solution for a large need for people. “This is not a recession-proof business, but it does *resist* recessions, because money aside, the whole world needs clean clothes. Moreover, laundries installed in poorer areas, show more profitable returns because [residents of] these areas usually can’t afford their own washers and dryers,” explained the businessman.

Knowing the laundry industry, Renteria knew that to open his own business he would need a plan that was detailed, clear and specific. He knew that he would need to make sacrifices; take care of his clients; begin with sufficient capital; motivate his employees to commit to building a good foundation; and always pay the bills, “because in business it’s critical to maintain good credit,” said Renteria, adding that another key piece of any

business is marketing. “Everyday is a day of marketing. As a business owner you need to be sure that everyone knows what you do and the type of service you provide,” he asserts.

### **There are no limits**

For a natural motivator like Renteria, it’s necessary to point out that achieving success is not easy but it’s not impossible, either. “I want to help young people discover that the road to success knows no shortcuts. Only constant work and education can help them triumph in a world as rough as the one we live in,” said the author.

Renteria’s book, *From the Barrio to the Board Room*, has motivated thousands of young people, and he has become a tool for schools, groups, and organizations that want to help adolescents of all races understand that “gangs are not a lifestyle; they’re a death-style. The book doesn’t only tell Robert Renteria’s story. It’s the story of people who have dared to dream, and I ask that when they start to dream out there, they do it in a big way,” said the author.

It’s natural to have fear, said Renteria, “but when you’re able to face your fears and accept the challenge, you can discover what kind of person you are. Nothing is impossible if we believe in ourselves. If we have confidence, we can face impossible challenges, because there are no limits to flying high,” he concluded.

By: Blanca Avila  
Hoy Newspaper, 2009