CYBER SECURITY
The IT arm of top defense contractor
Lockheed Martin plays an invaluable role
in the company's business operations.

Technically Speaking

The dynamic field of information technology (IT) that is reshaping the business world today boasts a language of its own. In this special technology section, *Hispanic Executive* talks shop with an elite group of IT professionals—currently steering the technology divisions of major corporations— about what it takes to succeed in this ever-changing niche.

by Matt Alderton

Nations are like businesses. To survive, they must respond, react, and sometimes even revolutionize. If they don't, they risk obsolescence. Or worse yet: extinction. Like a business facing a major market shift, the United States is in the midst of radical change. And while nobody can predict the future, at least two things are certain: its Latino population is exploding, and its economy is becoming increasingly—and irreversibly—technology driven.

To maintain its status, success, and station, the United States must strategically leverage these two fast-growing assets in order to drive innovation, growth, and prosperity. Unfortunately, it still has a lot of work to do. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the country's Latino population—already its largest minority group—will triple in size by 2050, when it will make up 29 percent of the US population, versus 16 percent in 2009. And yet, Latinos are "vastly under-engaged in technology careers," according to the Latino Technology Alliance, which recently found that Hispanics are employed in only 5.5 percent of information technology (IT) jobs nationally.

IT represents an enormous opportunity for Latinos, who are leading the adoption of technology in the marketplace despite their underrepresentation in the IT workforce. A 2009 study by comScore Inc., for instance, found that the number of Hispanics using the Internet is growing at nearly four times the rate of the rest of the American population. A similar survey by Mintel found that Hispanics adapt to new Internet technologies faster and use social networking, instant messaging, and mobile Web browsing more often than non-Hispanics.

What does this mean for America? As the country continues rebuilding its economy, reshaping recession into recovery, it must do a better job of engaging the Latino community in IT careers, which are among the fastest-growing due to trends in social networking, mobile marketing, cloud computing, working remotely, energy efficiency, and data security, among others. Thanks to their rapid population growth and increasing adoption of technology, Latinos are uniquely positioned to drive bottom-line benefits in the form of bilingual communication and cultural literacy that will help US companies adapt and advance in the face of new social, political, and economic realities.

The challenges—increasing educational access and achievement, for instance—are real. So are the opportunities, however, which include higher earnings and increased representation, with more products and services designed by and for Latinos. Just look at the Hispanic executives featured in the following pages. As IT innovators, they've opened new doors for themselves, their companies, and their communities. They've set the example; when other Latinos follow it, the result will be more economic activity and fewer economic disparities, the impact of which promises to benefit the entire nation—no matter how the world around it changes.