

Buy American Mention of the Week

Charlie Wilson was right

By Roger Simmermaker

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You've probably heard the expression *What have you done for me lately?* Well, when it comes to our economy and specifically to American companies in the automobile industry, that's actually an important question to ask too.

An even more relevant question is, *What have you done for me in the last 100 years?* American companies have been building automobiles in America for over a century now. The answer to both questions actually is quite a bit, because American automakers like General Motors helped build the middle class in this country.

That's part of the reason why I believe that we should always patronize American-owned companies like GM when buying a new car or truck. The popular phrase coined by Charlie Wilson, *What is good for the country is good for General Motors, and vice versa* still holds true today, despite an aggressive increase in new factories being built in the U.S. by foreign owned automakers. Most likely, the day will never dawn when Americans can take Charlie Wilson's quote and replace General Motors with any foreign automaker. Why? As conservative syndicated columnist Charley Reese wrote in his review of my book *How Americans Can Buy American (First Edition)*, *Toyota, public-relations efforts notwithstanding, has its primary loyalty to Japan, as it should. If conditions arise in which Toyota must choose between what's in the best interests of its American subsidiaries and what's in the best interests of Japan, it will choose Japan.*

Americans have many, many reasons to support a home-team company like GM. When they do, they're contributing more to their country's prosperity than if they bought an automobile from a foreign automaker, regardless of where it was built.

Purchasing from an American company like General Motors supports 77,000 workers and over 500,000 retirees in the United States, whereas Toyota employs about half of the workers that GM employs. And retirees? Since Toyota's first plant wasn't built in the U.S. until 1987, it has a fraction of U.S. retirees as compared to GM.

Although it is true that foreign companies are investing in American factories, so is GM. In 2011, GM announced that it would invest \$2 billion in seventeen U.S. plants, committing \$6.9 billion to expand or advance operations in a dozen states since June 2009. In 2009, GM began building the Buick LaCrosse (formerly made in Canada) in Kansas City, Kansas. In 2011, production of the Chevrolet Aveo (now called the Sonic) moved from South Korea to Michigan. In May of 2012, GM announced it would move production of the Chevrolet Impala and Equinox from Canada to the United States. GM is building new models in America too: the new Chevrolet Cruze in Ohio and the new Buick Verano in Michigan, along with the Chevrolet Sonic. The new 2013 Malibu Eco is being built in Kansas City, Kansas.

GM is not just building new models in America. Many of the models are winning awards. J.D. Power & Associates noted in 2012 that the Buick Enclave, the Cadillac Escalade, the

Chevrolet Malibu, and the GMC Sierra all received the top award in their segments in initial quality.

According to a 2012 www.cars.com article, *Detroit automakers build a majority of the nameplates with high domestic content*. So when you buy an American brand car or truck from General Motors (Chevrolet, Buick, GMC, Cadillac) there's a good chance that you are employing more Americans in the automotive parts industry in addition to actual GM autoworkers, making it a real win-win situation for American workers.

Maybe that's why a June 2012 www.cars.com survey found that 23 percent of Americans polled said that they would only consider an American manufacturer when making a new car or truck purchase. Maybe that's why GM still has the number one market share in both the U.S. and the world. And maybe that's why Charlie Wilson was right!

Roger Simmermaker is the author of *How Americans Can Buy American* and *My Company 'Tis of Thee: 50 Patriotic American Companies American Consumers Should Know About*, and writes "Buy American Mention of the Week" articles for wnd.com and his website www.howtobuyamerican.com. Roger has a degree in Electronics Engineering Technology, is president of his local Machinists Union, has been a frequent guest on Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC, and has been quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and *Business Week* among many other publications.