

Buy American Mention of the Week

"American-made" vs. "Buy American"

By Roger Simmermaker

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I always get a puzzled look when I ask people (usually when giving a speech) how many like to buy American-made products whenever possible, and then follow up that question by asking how many like to 'Buy American.' Most folks assume I just asked the same question two different ways.

There is a difference, however, between buying 'American-made' and 'Buying American' and it's probably bigger than most would imagine.

'American-made' means exactly what it says and nothing more, which is to say that a product was made in America, regardless of ownership or parts content. 'Buying American' is a much broader term, however, which means that a product was made in the USA by an American-owned company with a high domestic parts-content within that product. So American-made is good, but Buy American is better...much better!

Perhaps the easiest example is to compare a Toyota made in the United States to a Ford made in the United States. Toyota is a foreign-owned company that uses fewer domestic (American) parts than Ford does (based on fleet-wide averages). When you buy an American-made Toyota, after the workers are paid to assemble the car or truck (which usually takes 20 hours or less), the profits go back to Japan to reward foreign owners, foreign investors, and foreign stockholders. And the taxes on those profits are paid to a foreign treasury instead of the United States Treasury.

Ford, for example (and GM as well) has more American plants than Toyota too so it is actually easier to find that American-made Ford than it is an American-made Toyota.

But the comparison of 'American-made' and 'Buy American' certainly isn't limited to big-ticket items like automobiles. We can start right in the supermarket where we spend more of our time and probably more of our money.

For example, Clorox and Lysol are both disinfectants that are made in America for about the same price, but only one of them (Clorox) is American-owned. Lysol, which was sold off by Kodak in 1995, is owned by the British. Irish Spring and Jergens are both made in America, too, but Jergens is based in Japan. That means that a Jergens bar of soap made in America is still a Japanese brand of soap just like a Toyota made in America is still a Japanese car.

Both Prego and Ragu are made in the USA, but Prego is the only one owned by an American company. Prego is owned by U.S.-based Campbell Soup Company, but Ragu is owned by Unilever, which is a joint venture between England and The Netherlands. Unilever owns familiar brands like Lever 2000 (bath soap), Degree and Axe (deodorants), Lipton, Q-Tips, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter and Country Crock margarine, and Hellmann's/Best Foods mayonnaise.

Instead of the above Unilever brands, try American-owned Arrid Extra Dry (deodorant), Arizona (tea), CVS cotton swabs (less-expensive than Q-tips), Land-O-Lakes (butter and margarine) and Kraft mayonnaise. All of these American-owned products are made in the USA just like the foreign-owned Unilever ones, and will do just as well for about the same price.

And perhaps the best example of all? Swiss Miss is American owned, but Carnation is owned by the Swiss!

My book [*How Americans Can Buy American*](#) lists over 20,000 American and foreign products and services like the ones listed above, so we can make smart decisions on a multitude of choices and truly 'Buy American' in the purest sense of the term.

Since American-owned companies pay about twice as many taxes to the U.S. Treasury compared to foreign-owned companies, you can literally double the amount of tax revenue you send to American coffers not by spending more, but by using the money you are already spending anyway.

The importance of doubling the revenue we send to the U.S. Treasury without spending an extra dime becomes more clear when we realize over 80 percent of all federal spending goes to Social Security, Medicare, education, national defense, roads, parks, and bridges, and interest on the national debt. We have to be able to pay for the things that 'We the People' have demanded with the use of our tax dollars. Anything less would be an unfunded mandate upon Washington, DC (and ultimately ourselves).

Also, we have to think that every time we see a foreign company buy our land, our factories, or our existing American companies, we have to wonder if we helped to fund that acquisition with our past support of buying their products. We can't always stop foreign-owned companies from buying our American-owned companies, land, and factories, but we can stop sending them the money with which to do it.

In short, it's easier to 'Buy American' instead of just buying 'American made' than most people might think, and unless we have some type of strong brand loyalty in a particular area, any brand will do at about the same price. So let's vote with our dollars and 'Buy American' where we can and when we can, so we can keep jobs, profits, and tax revenue within our national borders where they should be.

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*, *New York Times*, and *Business Week* among many other publications.