



Some Customers Prefer to Buy American Products

A few months ago in this space, I wrote about the hot-button topic of American manufacturers moving overseas to produce their products. In looking at this complex issue, I thought it was important to identify if consumers care. Because, at the end of the day, if homeowners do not value American-made products, there is no real reason for contractors, distributors, or even manufacturers to value them. It is simple supply and demand.

The question I posed to our contractor audience was if HVAC consumers would pay more for a product simply because it was manufactured in the U.S. Maybe it was not the best question, because being made in the U.S. does not automatically mean it needs to cost more to a consumer. There are a lot of other factors that go into the final price of an air conditioner. The Goodman and Amana brands are quite proud that all their products are designed, engineered, and assembled in the U.S., and I think most

contractors would agree these brands offer great value to customers in the HVAC marketplace.

But, that is the question we posed to our readers at www.achrnews.com last month. Suffice to say, I was surprised by the results. Maybe I am cynical by nature, but, if everything was equal — efficiency level, warranty, quality of contractor, etc. — I believed most people made product decisions based on money. I thought buying U.S.-made products was a bit of an antiquated notion. And when anecdotally speaking to a few contractors, they reaffirmed my opinion.

That does not seem to be the case with our readers and their customers. While it is important to point out this is an online survey and is unscientific, 52 percent of respondents said their customers generally want American-made products, even when they cost more. The results also showed 24 percent say their customers want American-made products only when they cost the same, and the remaining 24 percent don't care

if equipment is made in America or not. This might vary depending on the region and demographics of a company's customer base, but it did make me reevaluate my position.

SELLING HVAC

What does this mean for the average HVAC contractor? Well, every little piece of information can help while a contractor or its employees are selling at the kitchen table. Now, before there is a flood of contractors going out and purchasing a bunch of "Make America Great Again" hats, remember that 48 percent said their customers would not pay more for a product made in America or did not care where the product was made. Still, if half of a contractor's customer base might be willing to pay a little more for something, that is important information worth consideration. In certain situations, it is an opportunity to possibly differentiate an HVAC company from its competition.

This is what can make the dif-

ference between a good salesperson and a great one. The great ones can read the situation and identify what is important to the customer. The same way a salesperson finds out if price, comfort, energy efficiency, brand, or look of the product are important to the homeowner, he or she should bluntly ask if the customer prefers to buy American-made equipment. With the looming presidential election, this topic carries top-of-mind awareness. Although, I strongly advise contractors to avoid discussing politics with customers.

It's becoming a strange, global economy. Some manufacturers with foreign names are producing products in the U.S. Some companies that were founded in this country are making products overseas. A big chunk of the industry is doing both.

It is the job of the contractor to figure out if this is important to the customer. And, once that determination has been made, it's the contractor's job to give them what they want. 

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FEATURED PRODUCT

Portacool LLC's Jetstream Series of portable evaporative coolers features designs engineered

to generate significant airflow and provide cooling options for a variety of hot working environments. The series is equipped

with KUUL Comfort™ evaporative media to provide maximum cooling comfort. Available in four sizes, these coolers are designed to cool 1,125- to 5,625-square-foot areas. The series also features a liquid-level indicator with an automatic pump shut-off, and a large drain allows for effective cleaning. For more information on these portable evaporative coolers or our other featured products, visit <http://bit.ly/FeaturedHVACProduct>.



China (7 percent). In 2015, U.S. imports of air conditioning, heating, and refrigeration equipment totaled \$15.44 billion, which was \$204 million (1 percent) higher than the year before. From 2007 to 2015, U.S.

imports showed mixed dynamics. A significant drop in 2009 was followed by steady growth over the next six years with a deceleration in 2015. There was an annual increase of 11.7 percent throughout the period, since imports started an upward trend. To read more about the global commercial and industrial market growth, visit <http://bit.ly/HVACBreakingNews>.

REGULATORY UPDATE

The Department of Energy (DOE) published a *Federal Register* notice of proposed rulemaking pertaining to energy conservation standards for portable air conditioners, 81 FR 38398 (June 13). The DOE will also host a public meeting Wednesday, July 20, in Washington, District of Columbia. All notices,



public comments, public meeting transcripts, and supporting documents associated with this rulemaking are included in Docket No. EERE-2013-BT-STD-0033. For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/2013-BT-STD-0033>.

EXTRA EDITION

Bob and Tim were on their last service call of the day. It was an apartment house with a heat pump and the weather was warm during the day and cool at night. The tenant had just moved into this apartment and was reporting the unit was too breezy. Bob and Tim started to take a look around the room with the unit operating. Sure enough, along the outside wall in the living room, there was a cool breeze when the air conditioning was running. Bob and Tim looked over the rest of the system while the homeowner was doing her chores. "There is a breeze on this outside wall," Tim said. "If this were cold weather, you would think that breeze would be warm and feel good. However, the weather is hot and the breeze is cool." Interested in reading more? Visit <http://bit.ly/ExtraEdition>.

