

## **Born in the USA OR Coming to America**

### ***Harris Poll Finds Buying American Still Valued in Increasingly Global Marketplace***

**New York, N.Y. – March 6, 2013** – At a time when many of the companies thought of as being American as apple pie actually outsource a growing portion of their production abroad, “buying American” has never been a more confusing proposition. Is a product manufactured overseas by a U.S. company more American than an Asian product manufactured in the United States? What about the parts being used to produce these competing products? **The Harris Poll**, conducted by Harris Interactive, set out to address what factors contribute to the perception of a product as “American” in an online survey of 2,176 U.S. adults between December 12 and 18, 2012.

“What many consumers don’t know is that companies very traditionally seen as American, from GE to John Deere to Levi Strauss, outsource varying portions of their operations overseas, so it takes a lot of attention and research to determine if you’re buying American and what that specifically means to you,” said Mike de Vere, President of the Harris Poll. “Even the big three automakers – Ford, General Motors and Chrysler – two of whom were thought of as the most American brands in our findings, increasingly have cars in which parts are produced abroad, while Japanese automakers Toyota and Honda have upped U.S. production.”

#### **American Made**

Being manufactured in the United States is clearly the top factor in being considered an “American” product, with three-fourths of Americans (75%) agreeing that “A product needs to be manufactured within the U.S. for me to consider it ‘American’.” This puts domestic manufacture ahead of the importance of being from a U.S. company, being made from American parts, or being American designed.

- Roughly half of U.S. adults agree that “A product needs to be made by a U.S. company for me to consider it ‘American’” (52%) and that “A product needs to be made from parts produced in the U.S. for me to consider it ‘American’” (47%).
- Only one-fourth of Americans (25%) agree that “A product needs to be designed by an American for me to consider it ‘American’.”

The majority of Americans indicate feeling that it is either “very important” or “important” to “buy American” for the product types tested, with the strongest such feelings expressed for major appliances (75%), furniture (74%), clothing (72%), small appliances (71%), and automobiles (70%).

- Perceived importance of buying American products increases with age across all categories; 18-35 year olds place the least importance on the practice, those 48 and older place the most.
- Additionally, women are more likely than men to indicate that it is either “very important” or “important” to buy American in most categories.

## **A Nation Not So Divided**

In what may come as a surprise, Republicans and Democrats seem to have some common ground on the subject. Their importance ratings to “buy American” are either similar or identical, and are stronger than those of independents, across several categories. Top examples of this include:

- Automobiles (75% Republicans, 74% Democrats, 64% Independents);
- Home electronics (71%-71%-60%); and
- Personal electronics (71%-71%-60%).

## **Job Security**

When asked to rate the importance of a series of motivations for buying American, over seven in ten U.S. adults rate each tested reason either “very important” or “important.” Drilling down into the “very important” ratings uncovers more diverse results. The clear frontrunner for this measure is “keeping jobs in America,” with two-thirds (66%) of U.S. adults rating it “very important.” The majority also assign top importance levels to “supporting American companies” (56%), while half do so for “safety concerns with products assembled/produced outside of the U.S.” (49%).

- On the other end of the spectrum, “Decreasing environmental impact since products don’t need to travel as far” receives the lowest “very important” rating (32%).
- Women and older adults are again more likely to rate the tested reasons “very important.”

## **America Loves a Ford**

When asked directly, and without any prompting as to brand names, place of manufacture or other factors, to name the company they perceive as most “American\*,” U.S. adults’ minds go first to the auto industry, with two of Detroit’s big three topping the list.

- Ford (15%) is the top mention by a wide margin.
- Combined (9%) mentions of General Motors / GM (5%) and GM-owned Chevrolet (4%) are next strongest.
- Other well-known companies to make the list included the golden arches and America’s top-selling soda brand.
  - McDonald’s (4%)
  - Coca-Cola (4%)
  - Walmart (3%)

**TABLE 1a**  
**IMPORTANCE OF BUYING AMERICAN, BY PRODUCT TYPE – by Generation & Gender**  
**[Summary of combined “Very important” and “Important” ratings]**

“Which of the following best describes how important you feel it is to ‘buy American’ for each of these types of products?  
 Even if you do not typically make purchases in a particular product category, we’d like to know your opinion.”

Base: U.S. Adults

	Total	Generation				Gender	
		Echo Boomers (18-35)	Gen. X (36-47)	Baby Boomers (48-66)	Matures (67+)	Males	Females
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Major appliances (refrigerator, washing machine, etc.)	<b>75</b>	57	74	86	85	71	79
Furniture	<b>74</b>	54	76	86	84	71	78
Clothing	<b>72</b>	56	76	80	80	67	77
Small appliances (microwave, vacuum, etc.)	<b>71</b>	53	72	81	81	66	76
Automobiles	<b>70</b>	58	72	76	75	65	74
Sports/exercise equipment (bike, running shoes, etc.)	<b>66</b>	50	70	76	71	64	69
Home electronics (TV, blu-ray player, etc.)	<b>66</b>	49	69	74	76	60	72
Personal electronics (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc.)	<b>66</b>	46	69	76	76	61	71
Jewelry	<b>63</b>	47	67	69	70	58	67
Motorcycles	<b>59</b>	46	62	67	61	58	61
Novelty/gift items	<b>59</b>	45	64	66	61	51	66

Note: Multiple response question

**TABLE 1b**  
**IMPORTANCE OF BUYING AMERICAN, BY PRODUCT TYPE – by Metro Status & Political Affiliation**  
**[Summary of combined “Very important” and “Important” ratings]**

“Which of the following best describes how important you feel it is to ‘buy American’ for each of these types of products?  
 Even if you do not typically make purchases in a particular product category, we’d like to know your opinion.”

Base: U.S. Adults

	Total	Metro Status			Political Party		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Major appliances (refrigerator, washing machine, etc.)	<b>75</b>	72	74	81	81	76	75
Furniture	<b>74</b>	71	73	80	79	75	75
Clothing	<b>72</b>	70	72	75	73	75	73
Small appliances (microwave, vacuum, etc.)	<b>71</b>	72	68	77	76	74	69
Automobiles	<b>70</b>	71	67	74	75	74	64
Sports/exercise equipment (bike, running shoes, etc.)	<b>66</b>	64	65	72	73	65	67
Home electronics (TV, blu- ray player, etc.)	<b>66</b>	69	63	71	71	71	60
Personal electronics (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc.)	<b>66</b>	66	64	69	71	71	60
Jewelry	<b>63</b>	62	60	69	68	65	59
Motorcycles	<b>59</b>	55	58	66	63	60	59
Novelty/gift items	<b>59</b>	57	56	66	61	61	57

Note: Multiple response question

**TABLE 2**  
**FACTORS INFLUENCING DESIRE TO BUY AMERICAN – by Generation, Gender & Metro Status**  
**[Summary of “Very important” & combined “Very important” and “Important” ratings]**

“In terms of buying American products, how important are each of the following to your purchase decision?”

Base: U.S. Adults

	Total	Generation				Gender		Metro Status		
		Echo Boomers (18-35)	Gen. X (36-47)	Baby Boomers (48-66)	Matures (67+)	Males	Females	Urban	Sub-urban	Rural
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Keeping jobs in America	<b>90</b>	82	90	94	95	87	93	88	90	92
	<b>66</b>	53	57	76	78	59	72	61	65	72
Supporting American companies	<b>87</b>	76	88	93	94	84	90	84	87	92
	<b>56</b>	40	55	61	71	49	62	50	56	60
Safety concerns with products assembled/produced outside of the U.S.	<b>82</b>	71	84	85	93	78	86	81	81	86
	<b>49</b>	36	42	56	68	42	56	49	48	51
Quality concerns with products assembled/produced outside of the U.S.	<b>83</b>	73	85	85	91	80	85	81	82	84
	<b>45</b>	36	37	49	61	40	50	45	42	51
Patriotism	<b>76</b>	59	78	82	87	74	77	69	74	85
	<b>45</b>	33	38	51	60	42	47	40	45	49
Human rights issues with products assembled/produced outside of the U.S.	<b>76</b>	65	80	79	84	68	83	77	75	76
	<b>39</b>	33	33	43	50	30	48	40	39	39
Decreasing environmental impact since products don't need to travel as far	<b>71</b>	62	73	75	76	64	77	70	70	74
	<b>32</b>	24	30	36	40	25	38	30	31	36

Note: Multiple response question

**TABLE 3**  
**FACTORS IN CONSIDERING A PRODUCT TO BE “AMERICAN” – by Generation, Gender & Metro Status**  
 “Which of the following statements do you agree with?”

Base: U.S. Adults

	Total	Generation				Gender		Metro Status		
		Echo Boomers (18-35)	Gen. X (36-47)	Baby Boomers (48-66)	Matures (67+)	Males	Females	Urban	Sub-urban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A product needs to be <b>manufactured within the U.S.</b> for me to consider it “American”	<b>75</b>	69	72	81	79	71	79	70	78	76
A product needs to be <b>made by a U.S. company</b> for me to consider it “American”	<b>52</b>	50	46	54	56	48	55	50	51	55
A product needs to be <b>made from parts produced in the U.S.</b> for me to consider it “American”	<b>47</b>	48	45	46	51	48	47	50	45	50
A product needs to be <b>designed by an American</b> for me to consider it “American”	<b>25</b>	27	22	23	25	23	26	24	24	27
Not at all sure	<b>9</b>	14	9	6	7	11	8	10	8	10

Note: Multiple response question

**TABLE 4**  
**COMPANY PERCEIVED AS MOST “AMERICAN” – by Region & Age & Gender**  
 “What company do you consider to be the most ‘American’?”

Base: \*U.S. Adults

	Total	Region				Age				Gender	
		Northeast	Midwest	South	West	18-34	35-44	54-54	55+	Males	Females
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Ford	<b>15</b>	17	18	12	16	16	20	13	13	17	14
GM + Chevrolet [NET]	<b>9</b>	8	11	8	11	8	9	13	7	9	9
General Motors / GM	<b>5</b>	4	6	4	6	5	5	6	4	6	4
Chevrolet	<b>4</b>	4	4	5	5	3	4	7	4	4	5
McDonald’s	<b>4</b>	3	3	4	5	4	6	5	2	6	2
Coca-Cola	<b>4</b>	3	2	5	4	3	4	5	4	4	4
Walmart	<b>3</b>	3	3	4	3	6	2	3	2	3	4
Harley-Davidson	<b>1</b>	2	3	1	1	*	2	2	2	2	1
Apple	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
General Electric / GE	<b>1</b>	2	2	1	1	1	2	*	1	1	1
Johnson & Johnson	<b>1</b>	*	2	1	2	*	*	1	2	1	1
Microsoft	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	1	1	*	*	2	1	*
Pepsi	<b>1</b>	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1	1
Procter & Gamble	<b>1</b>	2	*	1	-	-	*	1	2	*	1
Kraft	<b>1</b>	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	-	*	1
Levi Strauss	<b>1</b>	1	1	*	1	*	1	2	*	1	1
Disney / Walt Disney	<b>1</b>	1	*	1	*	*	1	*	1	1	*
IBM	<b>1</b>	*	*	1	*	*	*	*	1	1	*
Other	<b>8</b>	8	7	8	8	10	6	7	7	9	7
None	<b>9</b>	7	8	9	10	7	8	9	10	6	11
Don’t know	<b>15</b>	16	14	18	12	12	14	16	18	7	22
Declined to answer	<b>5</b>	7	5	6	4	7	7	6	3	5	6

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

## Methodology

This **Harris Poll**\* was conducted online within the United States between December 12 and 18, 2012 among 2,176 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

\*Data for "What company do you consider to be most 'American'" question was conducted online within the United States between January 2 and 4, 2012 among 2,126 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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