AML White Paper

Was Your Technology **Born in the U.S.A.?**

When evaluating technology for your company, it's important to not only look at the product itself, but to also evaluate the company behind that product.

Every day, we pick up electronic devices or tools or gadgets and don't think twice about where the product was made — or by whom. As consumers, we have been conditioned to the reality that very little of what we use in our day-to-day lives is actually made domestically. We're the beneficiary of lower prices mainly due to the fact that the products we are buying are being produced in countries with economies that can simply offer a lower cost of production — lower salaries, lower overheads, etc. It's something that most consumers don't give a second thought to anymore. In many cases, the same can be said for commercial or industrial consumers. Every day, companies buy tools, equipment, or devices with little or no consideration for where the product was produced. Why shouldn't they? The product looks good, works well — so what's the problem? The problem is that, as a society, we have not only become accustomed to the fact that most products are foreign-made, but we've also become accepting of the direct and indirect shortcomings that come with these "off shore" products. And it's not just the manufacturing of the product that has left the country.

More and more, engineering has gone off shore as well. In some cases, even break-fix repair services are being done outside the United States.

"Can You Hear Me Now?"

The Challenges Of Foreign Support

Any time a commercial or industrial user needs to roll out new technology to their stores, warehouses, plants, etc., there is always some degree of trepidation about things going smoothly — and they almost always don't. It doesn't matter if the rollout is 100 widgets, 1,000 gadgets, or 10,000 wiz-bangs, there will always be issues. There will always be problems that need to be solved and questions that need to be answered. How do these issues get resolved in the fastest way possible? Go to where the knowledge base is — right to the horse's mouth. The fact is that the knowledge base is wherever the product was conceived. It's genesis. Wherever the engineer or engineers are that developed it. Go there, and you will find all the answers. That's a problem when the engineering group is 7,000 miles away and 14 hours ahead. Oh sure, the local company that sold the product has well trained technicians that will solve the problem soon — tomorrow, maybe — after they get an email back from "over there". The fact is, there is no way that a well trained tech support group, tethered to an engineering center in some far-away land, can be as efficient as a North American-based group. There are fewer time zone issues, no language barriers, and simply put, better service when the core knowledge base is here in North America. As consumers, we often experience this frustration ourselves when we call for help on a purchase and we end up speaking with a call center on the other side

of the world, struggle to understand them, and then get frustrated when we realize they are following a script on a computer screen and that they don't really know the product at all.

Large Orders Hold Up Your Technology Deployment

Another downside to offshore manufacturing is that in order to drive the costs down, products have to be built in large quantities. Then these large quantities have to be put on cargo ships, which are in transit for a few weeks. Products then sit in customs, then get put on trucks, then sit in warehouses — get the drift? There's a lot of product sitting between here and there. What happens if something comes up and that product needs to be re-worked? Maybe a defective component was identified or the firmware needs to be updated. That's a lot of inventory that is suddenly unavailable. What if the plant experiences a part shortage or quality problem? There should be enough product in the pipeline to continue supply until the problem is resolved, right? What if the pipeline is drained before the problem is resolved and now that pipeline has to be "re-filled" before you can get your product? How long does it take to get the product out of the plant, back onto those ships, across the ocean, out of customs — see where we're going here? But, what if the product was made in the U.S., in smaller batches, and there were no ships, no customs clearance, and a much shorter pipeline? It can't be that simple, can it?

Domestic Companies CAN Compete On Price

Do you think domestic companies can't compete on price? Think again. The old adage that domestic companies can't compete on price is quickly fading. U.S. manufacturers have simply had to find a way to compete in order to stay in business, or succumb to the pressure and move operations offshore. The U.S. automotive industry is a good example of this. Two of the "big three" had to take government bailouts, but one didn't, and in the end, they all had to learn how to compete on all levels with foreign competition. Take another look at Made-in-America products and you might be surprised how competitive they are.

There's No Place Like Home

At the end of the day, there's one upside to buying American that simply can't be disputed — buying domestic product helps our domestic economy. It provides jobs for U.S. workers, and most likely generates business for other U.S. vendors, both of which pumps money into the U.S. economy. Whatever argument might be made for or against the other pros and cons, this one is hard to dispute. In conclusion, there's more to a purchase than just the physical product. Commercial and industrial consumers should spend more time asking questions about the product — and the company behind the product.

About AML

AML is a Dallas-based manufacturer of handheld, vehicle mounted, and stationary data collection devices and kiosks, including the KDT series of mini-kiosks that feature barcode scanning, superior visual images, network connectivity, and a variety of user interface options for enhancing the in-store customer experience.

All AML products are engineered, manufactured, and serviced in Dallas, Texas. To speak with a sales representative, call **800-648-4452**, or contact us at ***sales@amltd.com***.