

★ PROUD TO BE AN ★ AMERICAN (VACUUM)

Independent vacuum retailers across the country are reporting a change in the attitude of Americans. Now more than ever, the Made in America message is resonating with shoppers.

With toxic toys and poisoned pet food coming from China, many consumers, driven by fear, started paying closer attention to the country of origin on products they

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purchased. As the economy soured and manufacturing job losses began to skyrocket, there was more public discussion about the dangers of the ever-widening trade

deficit and the lack of goods still made here at home.

Then President Obama, who had proclaimed "Buy American" at numerous campaign stops, was ushered into office as millions of people looked on with a rejuvenated sense of pride in our country.

This "perfect storm" of events, has changed the climate in America. The segment of the population concerned with seeking out American made products is growing rapidly. And vacuum retailers who have positioned themselves correctly, are enjoying riding the new wave of pocketbook patriotism sweeping across the country.

For example, Terry Nybakke of Nybakke Vacuum Shop, a Riccar retailer in Bloomington, IL reports, "We make a major statement by using Riccar's American Built Vacuum Sale banner and the American flag behind our Riccar display. I've noticed, when presented a choice, my customers prefer to buy an American made vacuum. Given the growing importance of the Made in the USA message to consumers, it's now a part of our sales pitch, something we include along with the other features and benefits."

And the same holds true down in Dallas, TX where Simplicity retailer Phillip Evans of All Vac believes, "The declining job

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market is definitely encouraging more people to buy American. I've seen attitudes go that way and I think we'll see more of that in the coming months."

In 2008, Tacony Corporation created a special white upright model with red and blue graphics designed to draw attention to the fact that Simplicity and Riccar's upright vacuums are made right here in America. The patriotic message teamed with a hot retail price point of \$199 on a regularly priced \$399 machine, have made these vacuums very popular.

According to Sandy Berkshire, of Stuart's House of Vacs in Billings, MT, "With the stimulus package and all the talk about American made products, people are really excited about helping the economy, and the \$199 Riccar piece has really helped, too. It's not only American made but also gives customers an opportunity to support a small business where they thought all our products were expensive. It's brought people into the store that might have stayed away from us thinking we were too expensive."

Due to the surge in patriotism and the success of the \$199 patriotic Riccar and Simplicity uprights, a new American-themed upright with a metal brushroll and a rug/floor selector, will soon be made with American pride at Tacony Manufacturing in St. James, Missouri. This model, a \$499 value, will boast an attractive retail of only \$299!

John Kaido, Tacony's Senior Vice President of Home Floor Care, commented, "We're hearing from more and more dealers that given the current atmosphere in our country they are sure glad they have something that's Made in the USA to sell to their customers. Building vacuums in the US has become a unique differentiator, and more importantly something a growing number of consumers are seeking out." In 2008, less than 7% of all vacuums sold to clean American



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homes, rolled off production lines in US factories. This is a statistic the Simplicity, Riccar and Vac Pros divisions at Tacony Corporation are all working hard to change.

Kaido continued, "In 2009 we'll be expanding production at our factory in St. James beyond Riccar and Simplicity upright vacuums. We are launching the first Made in the USA Fuller Brush vacuum, an 8 pound upright, the Speedy Maid. Plus, I'm thrilled to announce we are in the process of moving production of our full size canisters and full size power

nozzles to our facility in St. James as well."

While the seemingly constant drumbeat of lay-offs, factory closings and general troubled economic news can be depressing, the silver lining is that many Americans are looking for tangible things they can do to help turn things around. As a result, the words "Made in America" are more powerful than ever!