

AMERICA...Our Entrepreneurial Spirit

By Bud Coggins

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As a lad of five years, the first life-changing event I faced was December 7, 1941 when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt announced to the Nation on radio (no TV then) that the Japanese Empire had staged an unprovoked air attack on our naval base Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. Many American military lives were lost and our entry into WWII was declared. Growing up in wartime, I learned very early in life what the "American Spirit" was all about. At my young age, it was difficult to understand why our young men and women had to die in a distant land. I eventually came to understand that they were sacrificing their lives so that I could grow up safe and secure in a country that values freedom, independence and the opportunity to make choices.

History will record, as it has throughout my life, that as tragic and despicable the events of September 11, 2001 were, the determination, will and resolve of the American people will prevail. We will always remember the heroes who inspired us to move on with a renewed sense of importance in our personal and professional lives. The accounts of unselfish heroism will require a separate book from the collection of history books.

The same characteristics that define our American spirit also define our entrepreneurial spirit.

While the magnitude pales in comparison to terrorism, we entrepreneurs face daily challenges that test our will and resolve; yet, we overcome, learn and grow as we continue our "journey of success." The entrepreneurial spirit of our country continues to make us the greatest nation on earth and provides us the freedom to pursue our passion for independence and make a difference in the lives of others.

According to Webster's Dictionary the definition of entrepreneur is [a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk.] Christopher Columbus set the foundation for entrepreneurism, at great risk, by pursuing his vision of a different world. Much later, the Pilgrims risked their lives to create a society free to worship and free of oppression.

Often times, we forget the so-called "giants" of industry also began as entrepreneurial ventures fueled by a vision to create a better world. Our history books portray the likes of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, the Vanderbilt's, and many others.

With the combination of a cooling economy and the world-changing events of September 11th, this is an important time to pause, reflect and review the current status of your business. Although many uncertainties lie ahead, we must adjust our thinking and plan various scenarios to cope with and survive this new world we now live in.

One attitude adjustment many companies need to make is how they view their customers (internal and external). When you demonstrate to your customers that you value their business in good times, they are more likely to stay with you in bad times. Everyone wins in customer-focused environment.

Depending upon the markets served, some organizations will have to slightly alter the way business is conducted, others may need to make radical changes. Either way, every ounce of creativity and innovative thinking we can muster is required. Huge egos and attitudes of self interest can not continue. Leadership is paramount to success. President George W. Bush and New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani have demonstrated exceptional leadership in their respective positions.

Like many times before, I am uncertain about the immediate future but I have NO doubts that the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in America will prevail. Entrepreneurs have many new challenges to face, yet if we open our heart, eyes, ears, mind; renew our passion and determination that got us here; and make the necessary adjustments to attain the success we strive for...just like America, we will continue to live, work and thrive in "the land of the free and home of the brave."

"Coach Bud" Coggins provides 40 years experience to help his clients attain the two goals of marketing...to retain and obtain customers. He can be reached at [mailto:..bcoggins@cogginsmarketing](mailto:bcoggins@cogginsmarketing) or visit <http://www.cogginsmarketing.com>

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