

# Why I Love America So Much...

By Bob Deitrick, CEO

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*I have visited many countries from around the world and have always been impressed with the cultures, beauty, and people of other nations. I have traveled to both Canada and Mexico when they have celebrated their respective founding days as well. We celebrated our special day in America as we celebrated our country's founding on July 4<sup>th</sup> just last week.*

*I have often talked about why I love my country, and I suspect the list may indeed be endless. In honor of our great nation, here are my 10 reasons why I love the United States of America:*

*Freedom – My father and many of our clients and friends fought to defend our freedom. Our freedom gives us the right to do what we want to do, within reason, without fear of government intimidation.*

*Courage – I have always loved our courageous, entrepreneurial system of government. I've personally experienced the highs and lows of our system – having lived through the recessions of 1991 and 2008/09 which were the worst for my practice. These periods taught me to save, persevere, and hunker down when I needed to. I learned that courage, hard work and tenacity were the values I could count on in America to get my business back on track. My mother used to say, "where there is a will, there's a way." That expression of my mothers has always been compelling to me.*

*Most of you have not met my mother, Veneda Deitrick. My mother grew up in a small town north of Charlottesville, Virginia named Dyke (yes, it is still called Dyke). She lived among the poorest of the Appalachian poor. Veneda grew up in a two-bedroom shack on the side of a mountain with no running water and an outhouse. She brushed her teeth with a twig she had converted into a toothbrush, and she literally fed the chickens before hiking a mile to school each day. Unlike most of the Appalachian poor, she persevered. Veneda did exceptionally well in school and earned a scholarship to Berea College in Kentucky, where she worked her way through college. After graduating, she met my father working at an old Hot Shoppes, of the original Marriott chain, in Northern Virginia. My dad would often recall that she filled his coffee cup over 25 times the first time they met. He returned (of course who wouldn't with that kind of service) and they had their first date and went on to be married for 53 years. I always loved and admired my mother because she had every reason to be crusty and unhappy with the hand dealt to her. Despite that, she loved life, enjoyed everyone she ever met and never knew a stranger. Only in America can one create a story like that of Veneda's. Veneda makes me proud everyday to be an American...*

*Diversity – Every nation, race, color, and finally, sexual orientation is represented in America. Despite what some have said and continue to argue, diversity has, sans question, made our country much*

*stronger. America is incredibly great because we are the great melting pot. Our diversity makes us superior and stronger than any other nation on the planet. Period.*

*Entrepreneurship and Risk – America was founded with risk-takers whom I applaud today. It was men like John Adams, George Washington, Martin Luther King, John Glenn and Ronald Reagan as well as our great women like Susan B. Anthony, Rosa Parks, Grace Hopper and Sally Ride - among dozens of others, who have inspired our nation to become the greatest nation on this earth. Did you know that over 72% of the world's greatest inventions since the Industrial Revolution have originated in America!*

*Tenacity – My favorite word I suspect. Derived from the Latin and the French verb “tenir” - which literally means to hold on and not let go. Throughout our history, Americans have shown great tenacity and have always held the desire to succeed as paramount – no matter what the cost.*

*Patriotism – I love our country. A dear friend and client of mine asked me recently, “why do you fly your flag in front of your home and at Snowshoe?” I turned to him and said, unequivocally, it is simple. “I love my country.” And it is literally as simple as that.*

*Volunteerism and Valor – When there is hardship and tragedy in the world, Americans are among the first to drop what they are doing to assist - always. We often argue about our politics, but when there is trouble at home or abroad, Americans come together. On September 10, 1965, the day after Hurricane Betsy plowed through southeastern Louisiana, President Lyndon Johnson flew to New Orleans. He went directly to the people and neighborhoods where evacuees were gathered all over the city. There was no electricity, so LBJ took a flashlight, shined it into his face and bawled into a megaphone, “My name is Lyndon Baines Johnson. I am your president. I am here to make sure you have the help you need.” And that's exactly what he did. LBJ saw what was needed, and without hesitation, put the entire weight of the federal government behind the effort to bring aid to the people and to supply whatever was necessary to begin the clean-up and rebuilding process. That moment of LBJ's showed great valor and guts. Few presidents have done anything quite like that.*

*Beauty – I've traveled throughout our country and around the world. I can't land on a “most beautiful” as America has it all. Great Mountains, deserts, beaches, lakes, rivers, plains, and marshes.*

*Opportunity – It's still true. We are not perfect in America and there will always be room for improvement. However, if one is willing to work hard and persevere through personal setback, as each of us has had to do from time to time, one can achieve great success in America.*

*Our Economy – Our economy has many imperfections, but we have much to be thankful for. Our notion of being poor in America is considered rich relative to most parts of the world. I am not trying to be flippant having said that, but I've seen how folks live in Jamaica and Mexico and other parts of the world. We are imperfect, yet we are the best alternative the world has - without any doubt.*

*There is so much to admire in America. I feel fortunate to have been brought here by my ancestors in the mid-1600's, and despite our imperfections - I do indeed love this amazing country we call America.*

*God bless the United States of America! And God bless each of you as well. Have a terrific summer!*