Can 10 Million People Be Wrong?

By MARCK SCHMIT, Manager, Strategic Partnerships, SelectUSA

Last month Hasbro Inc. missed a golden opportunity to immortalize the importance of our country's manufacturing sector … especially with the renaissance the sector is currently experiencing. Hasbro ran a Facebook-driven poll to *elect* a new game icon to be included in all new editions of the game Monopoly, an All-American game if there ever was one. After all, the American edition is considered the "standard", and its design was originally based on the streets of Atlantic City, New Jersey. The cartoon sophisticate logo of Mr. Monopoly is built on the image of industrialists past.

Monopoly's Facebook page boasts 10 million fans. Over 10 million people from more than 120 countries voted to replace the iconic iron (introduced in 1935 with the first iteration of the game) with a cat in 2013. The competition included robots, a guitar, a diamond ring and a helicopter. Fans are encouraged on Monopoly's Facebook page to "say good bye to the iron" with posts and comments. One fan suggested Hasbro skip the cat and instead replace the iron with a Jeep and then I started thinking. Can 10 million people be wrong? I'm sure this is a question we've all mulled over from time to time. The number may vary, but I'm sure we've all had doubts about the will of the masses… especially when the masses, of course, are not in agreement with me. Otherwise, all 10 million of those people are genius incarnate.

Monopoly could have (maybe even should have) used the following ideas to cash-in

on the current manufacturing mania and capture the spirit of the times, much like the original lantern and man-on-horseback tokens did in their day. There could have been a theme to the vote and the pieces selected, and that theme could have been manufacturing and American ingenuity (what better for a game based on capitalism?). What about…

1. A gear — My own organization's "Make it in America" logo is predicated on gears. What's more foundational to manufacturing than the transmission of motion from one shaft to another?
2. A Robot — Yes, I know they were an option, but they still fit my theme. The speed, repeatability, and efficiency of robots in manufacturing [1]allow companies to increase productivity, reduce costs, and keep jobs in the United States.
3. A polysilicon wafer — Did you know that the United States is integral to the global solar industry supply chain? The U.S. is a significant net exporter of solar products. Hooray!

You can't fault garden tool manufacturer Ames Tru Temper for manufacturing's poor showing in the poll. The storied PA-based company lobbied hard to keep manufacturing and specifically their product, the wheelbarrow, on the game board. Ames True Temper Inc. located in Camp Hill, PA even created a series of online videos supporting the tool/game piece's survival. Simple. Eloquent. Genius. The wheelbarrow stayed.

Maybe if manufacturing companies got involved the robot, the guitar, the ring or the helicopter would have made the cut instead of the cat. A cat. Really?

Alas the masses have spoken. And the masses, this time, got it wrong.

What's your take? Please feel free to comment below! See the original article at nistmep.blogs *[2].*

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