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BCI Burke unwavering in its commitment to quality and "Made in USA" practices

A recent study by Archstone Consulting found that 90 percent of the American manufacturing companies they surveyed are starting to move outsourced operations back to the United States -- or at least thinking about it. (You can read about the study [here](#).)

We say "Bravo," but we won't participate in this trend. Why? Because we never outsourced our manufacturing operations in the first place. BCI Burke has always believed the best playgrounds are built by American workers, using American parts and materials. That's why we continue to qualify for the "Made in the USA" label.

During the 1980s and 1990s, when the economy was growing rapidly and international trade was booming, many manufacturers rushed to open plants in countries where they could get cheaper labor. Many of them got what they paid for, with shoddy work from underpaid and unskilled laborers. Others shunned domestic suppliers for cheaper steel from abroad. And there was a virtual stampede to outsource customer service and support.

Now, that trend may be reversing itself. Recently, one major company announced that it's changed its mind and is moving 5,000 outsourced jobs back into the United States.



With the U.S. unemployment rate now at 9.4 percent, we think our practices are more important than ever. We're proud of our record and the quality of our products. When you call our service department at 1-800-356-2070, you'll reach someone right here in our factory in Fond du Lac, Wis. When you call our number for [representatives](#), 1-800-266-1250, you'll be connected directly to the Burke representative who serves your area.

Many of our customers are governments whose revenue comes from city, county, state and federal tax dollars. For them, "buying American" is not only good politics, but it's often a requirement. Others serve children in locations throughout the United States, and supporting the American economy is important to their long-term success.

Ironically, in the rush to export jobs and import materials, a lot of companies made the same mistake that people make when they buy cheap products: They didn't consider the long term total cost of ownership, which is the product's true cost.

The study mentioned above cites increased transportation costs, a weak dollar, and rising wages around the world as factors in making the true cost of foreign labor higher than it appeared. We hear similar comments from customers who have found that Burke's quality, superior service and non-prorated [Generations Warranty™](#) make Burke playgrounds the best in terms of total cost of ownership.

And you have our promise that our commitment to American labor, great quality and excellent service will never change.

ShadePlay Canopies: Protection from the sun

Summer is the time where kids get more active outdoors and play in the sun. But while they are playing, it's important that they also protect their skin from the sun's harmful UV rays.

With more than 1.2 million people diagnosed with skin cancer in the United States alone, protecting the skin -- especially children's skin -- is a big concern. In fact one blistering sunburn can double a child's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.

So while kids play on BCI Burke playgrounds, our [ShadePlay Canopies](#) allow them to have fun without parents or supervisors worrying about the amount of sun they're getting.

Our ShadePlay Canopies help protect kids with 6 to 15 times more shade coverage than average playground roofs. Plus the canopies have up to 97 percent UV screening protection and help the play equipment surfaces to stay cooler to the touch.

And if severe weather strikes, ShadePlay Canopies have quick-release fastening mechanisms that allow the canopy to be easily removed.

In addition to adding ShadePlay Canopies to your playgrounds, here are some other tips that can protect kids and yourself during the summer heat:

- Avoid peak hours when UV rays are most harmful
- Check UV, heat, and air quality indexes
- Wear cover-up clothing
- Drink plenty of water
- Stay in the shade

A great playground is a timeless resource

By Tim Ahern

Aah, summer! The kids (and teachers) are out of school, and that means one thing -- family vacations. This can be a special time when parents and children bond and create memories in a way that just isn't possible during the day-to-day school year routine.

And for many families, it means a trip to Orlando, which is pretty much the center of the universe for theme parks, with Disney, Epcot, Universal Studios, Sea World and a number of others.

I love theme parks, because they let the entire family share new experiences, enjoy some great rides, and maybe even learn some new things along the way. But invariably, the vacation comes to an end, as people have to get back to work and school.

And after experiencing the magnificent theme parks, some might question whether the playground at the school or park can possibly hold the appeal it once did.

The answer is simple: In my experience, they appreciate their local playground even more. Especially when it's equipped with challenging, stimulating events that exercise young bodies while the children's imaginations soar. And those are the kinds of playgrounds we seek to create at BCI Burke.

Children -- like adults -- respond to what is around them, without comparing it to some distant memory or idea.

Consider the experience many of us have had, traveling and dining on occasion in fine restaurants. We might make a trip to



New York City, where we can visit the Statue of Liberty and enjoy the cuisine of the Twenty-One Club and the Russian Tea Room. But when we return home, most of us are ready for some familiar sights and good home cooking. We don't try to duplicate last week's Beef Wellington. We take satisfaction in the simpler, healthier foods that make up our day-to-day diet. In fact, I think we appreciate them more than ever.

For kids, returning to the familiar surroundings of their playground is very similar. For all the glitz of a big theme park, you won't find much that will compare to the exhilaration of traversing an overhead ladder for the first time. And on a well-designed playground, the child will find activities that transcend the plastic and metal of the equipment.

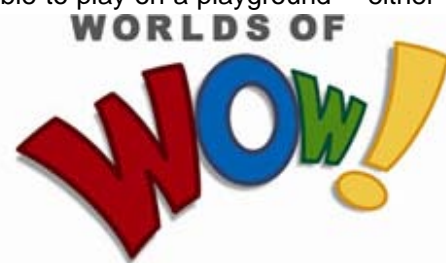
A tunnel becomes a cave, or a rocket. A platform is the deck of a pirate ship. A swing is an airplane. As long as there are challenges for young bodies and opportunities for the creative mind to work, a good playground will always be a place to which the child is eager to return.

Because BCI Burke playgrounds are quality-made, they'll be there for generations.

Local partnership expands nationally

After partnering with BCI Burke rep firm, Child's Play Inc., for the past three years, Reagan Hillier, president of [Worlds of Wow](#) knew he wanted to expand the partnership and help kids across the country be able to play on a playground -- either indoors or out.

"We worked together with Child's Play President, Jay Robertson, on several projects and quickly realized there was a personal and professional synergy in working together. We sought to expand the partnership on a national level in order to provide a true turnkey service for clients of both companies," said Mr. Hillier.



Mr. Hillier's company is the industry leader in providing customized indoor modular play attractions, soft sculpted foam play features, and original themed environments. They provide a true "one-stop shop" for their clients for all types of facilities. (See examples [here](#).)

Under the partnership agreement, Worlds of Wow will refer prospective customers seeking outdoor playgrounds to BCI Burke. Burke will refer those seeking indoor playgrounds to Worlds of Wow.

"This mutually beneficial relationship is a natural fit for us because our specialty is indoor play areas and Burke focuses on the outdoors. By partnering together, we provide a one-stop-shop for customers on all aspects of play," he said. For more information on Worlds of Wow, check out the company's [photo blog](#).