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WHAT ARE WE REALLY BUYING.. A NAME, REPUTATION OR A PRODUCT.. ADAM WORSFOLD ONIX DNA

Posted on 31 December 2014 by The Editor

It is no dark secret that I am involved in producing a new product range. I have been busy lately but had some time to spare to share some of my thoughts... Whilst working on our new range, I have been faced with some dilemmas and have met with some challenges. Many are related to the fact I am doing this in 2011/12 and due to the way the world is changing in what people expect of what they buy, its been an interesting time. I will try not to mention what they try to sell me by way of components, a challenge all of its own.

When deciding what the market wants and what will sell, a company must fight ideals, profits and saleability as part of the equation. The reality is everyone must find a compromise, not just with everything they buy but with who they buy it from, and who makes it.

When you buy a brand name do you buy it because of past experience with the brand? Do you buy it for its history? Or for the service they might give you in the event of failure of the product? Do you buy it on price? Or for what the product actually is and does? These days do you know what you are really buying? More than this do you know who really makes it and what they use to make it with? This being a direct relation to how long it will last and work the way it should.

A brand that is made in China is often not really that brand at all, it is in reality buying a product sold under a brand name. It might be designed by a western company, but

is the designer specs and design adhered too? Buying quality HIFI made by a subcontractor creates a certainty if it's "Made in China" that the name on the front is not the manufacturer.

Ask yourself this, is a subcontractor going to lose his reputation if he cuts corners? Profits or reputation is his choice, but let's not forget he does not have a reputation... Tough Choice!! Can the brand owner check a 100% of everything that is shipped? Does it pay to repack and re-handle a 100%? Does the brand owner look inside to see if a premium quality Burr Brown DAC is used under the glued on heat sink, or does he pay the supplier and hope he is upstanding? Do you the buyer even know if corners have been cut with the product you buy? You listened to the sample and inspected it but maybe that was from another batch? Do you know if it has changed?

All the above sounds like a dig at China but it's a sad reality that outsourcing of many things to China has led to the buyer being sold stuff that in reality is not what it says or pretends to be. Equally sad is cost and profits making China thrive, this alone driving the compromise. Ethics plays a role too.

I am proud of our standards and I am proud of the control of what WE will make, and what parts go to make the sum of the whole. I am however getting increasingly frustrated at large, as well as small brands that shifted to China having never passed any costs to the buyer, in all areas of our lives of what we buy. In reality selling us a Brand name on a product that is nothing to do with how the name or how its reputation was built, and in some cases these products have nothing to do with Brand at all. In others just maintaining the brand by way of rights with no integrity of the brands reputation or past or knowledge of how it got that reputation.

Some of the HIFI industry is doing the same from top end Amps to cables the "Made in China " really means " UNBRANDED " but the product and price does not reflect this. Why do we continue to pay for this?

Its time a Brand meant what it used to, and its time the buyer realised this, a brand is not some unit Made in China in a factory run by a business man that cares only for cost and not the reputation of the things he makes. It's time we the buyers really took note of who really makes what we buy, as after all it's our money. Its time the company that puts a name on the front stands by that name and proves that it is really part of the reputation it has earned, not a standalone subcontractor making stuff for multiple brands and a knock down cost with disregard for quality, ethics or materials used.

It's time the buyer realised how easy it is for contractors to change at the detriment of quality on each batch (hiding behind "specification subject to change") of anything he makes for other people. Its time people stood up and complained about this. I am.

In the mean time just dwell on this, suitcases made for a well known brand with plastic handles that cause cancer while holding them, solder used that contains lead (but certificates that say it does not), aluminium cases that have certificates that say

lead free but actually have 2% to make them heavier. (aluminium is sold on weight), capacitors with plastic sleeves that emit toxic fumes when soldered, who knows how bad they are inside. All this without the knowledge of the brand owner and all to save cost.

A PCB board that has copper tracks that is not a 100% copper but the certificate says it is. Transistors labelled as a brand and type they are not (fake components). Wire that has toxic plastic coatings even though the COC (Certificate of Conformity) says that's its toxic free, but when burnt is cacogenic. Etc Etc Etc ... All to shave off cost and in most cases miniscule levels of cost .. Low level ethics pure and simple

The list can go on and on and on, and its really nothing new but its getting worse by the day and I will let you comment on that.

