

Ken Hodge, R&D Manager, Brand-Rex Limited, comments on

**‘ . . . the scurrilous behaviour of mix and match vendors
who now pervade the structured wiring cable market’.**

There are a number of companies competing within the structured cabling market who have developed a position by taking advantage of the fact that although international standards (for design and manufacture of products through to field testing) do exist, the market is not regulated. For these companies the statements of conformance with standards and maintenance of those approvals with independent test houses are only statements on fliers, there is no more depth or understanding than the words printed on these glossy fliers.

Exacerbating the situation the independent test houses that operate in the market, who are often referenced by those companies as approving their products, do not have the resources to police the market and weed out companies who misrepresent them. The current lack of regulation in the industry allows those companies to make claims and statements in the market, which cannot be legally contested. See footnote for links to Delta s and 3P Testing s current list of approved companies and products¹. This situation allows less scrupulous companies to go to market claiming that their solutions are compliant with international standards and verified by independent test laboratories without performing the work, paying for that work or assuring the performance or ongoing quality. Such operations are knowingly misrepresenting the performance and quality of their products to the market.

What this means is that more opportunistically minded operations can cobble together mix and match product sets from various sources, changing those sources at their whim and need, stock a set of items and then compete for business in the market on an apparent equal footing with true quality conscious and responsible original manufacturers.

In the field the installer who uses product sets from mix and match badging houses may realise a lower price initially compared to that from true high quality suppliers but often sees higher levels of installation rework to make products pass any field testing that is conducted. The increased costs at installation easily offset the original premium.

The owner of the network may then be handed a warranty which is based exclusively on a limited set of field tests on the permanent link which may, or may not, be 100% analysed and use patchcords which are not from assembly houses who carry maintained business system procedures or third party approvals and whose performance must be suspect. The whole job is then suspect and the warranty worthless.

Such operations offer high quality, competitively priced systems , but the real interpretation is low cost questionable quality , **Full Stop!**

Compare such operations with 'Brand-Rex, who as a true high quality manufacturer of goods, design and manufacture products in ISO9001 and 14001 approved facilities, not only understand and implement the international standards but actively participate in the developing of them and rigorously test all products to assure conformance and ongoing compliance with all regulations, directives and standards. The product sets are also approved with third party test houses with those approvals maintained by regular visits to the manufacturing facility. This means that the certificates of performance assure the ongoing quality and are not just a one off/one sample golden set passed to the test house (which is another dubious practice of the mix and match vendors). The company also operates the largest structured cabling installation training operation in the UK, with numerous accredited installers and provide a thorough and proven warranty scheme. The system warranty offers the network owner the security and peace of mind that a quality system has been installed (without ✱ passes to cloud judgements) and allows such additional advantages as system overlengths to be approved where required (provided electrical results pass scrutiny of the examiner and meet the criteria demanded). The system warranty is provided on the basis that high quality Brand-Rex products, with full traceability to original manufacture, have been installed by trained and certified installers, that links have been 100% tested and results scrutinised and patchcords completing the system are quality items from a high quality manufacturer.

In short high quality, original manufacturer companies like Brand-Rex invest a great deal in assuring the quality and performance of the products not just from day one but for the whole life of the product and also strictly conform to legislation and standardisation requirements. Whereas, mix and match vendors do not have any control over the business operations of the original manufacturers they source from, or product performance and quality, cannot substantiate any claims made on the quality or performance of the product and system, and knowingly misrepresent the products to the customer by making false claims about conformance to standards and independent approvals.

If you want high quality products, which are robust to installation and offer some flexibility in cabling system architecture, that are third party approved and carry a maintained approval, have an assured performance over the life of the product and meet all regulations for fire safety and low voltage directives etc, then you should purchase from a responsible, original manufacturer, such as Brand-Rex and not an over-opportunistic vendor.

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¹For details of currently approved companies and products view the websites of the leading third party independent test houses Delta and 3P Testing. www.delta.de and www.3ptest.de