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Subject: My Thoughts on Being a Transformer Vendor

Posted by [bretldwig@yahoo.com](mailto:bretldwig@yahoo.com) on Mon, 01 Jan 2007 04:53:37 GMT

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For years I have kicked over going in the transformer business and I still might. But these are the issues as I see them: 1. I don't want to become an all around magnetics designer. I understand the basic concepts but the fact is it's a pretty arcane specialty. Such people exist, they can be hired if needed. You pay them by the hour or by the project. You own their work in the sense you have the only drawing and they agree not to give or sell the work to others, but, hey, anyone can tear a transformer down. As my great-grandmother used to say, that's just the way it is. Best defense is sell your product at a reasonable price, along with good service and customer relations. 2. I DEFINITELY do not want to sit and wind transformers. No offense ladies-that's women's work! They do it better than we can. (Until you get into large power distribution transformers with heavy bus bars and coils in the tens or hundreds of pounds.) I can set up a Gorman or a Universal and wind a simple item, but I'm never going to be good at it. Transformer winders, very good and experienced transformer winders, are affordable-it's hardly high paying work. If you don't believe me do a little digging and arrange a tour of a transformer plant if one is within range of you. 3. Things being what they are, people do not want new design transformers. They want old ones. My personal fetish is McIntosh, but that's another story. If you "clone" an old one from a recognized commercial amp or a catalog house part, it's going to be in demand vis-a-vis a new one. Many people want to build clones of known good amps: some people, astonishingly, have old amps they need a replacement part for. 4. "Intellectual Property". Is it wrong to copy and sell an old transformer? I don't know. Is it wrong to sell replacement bodies and necks for Fender guitars, aftermarket parts for Chevy engines or Ford rear ends, or aftermarket frames and slides for M1911 pistols? You can build "Fender" clone guitars from parts, Chevy engines, Ford rear ends, Colt pistols or AR-15 rifles....it's a long list. As long as integral features are not protected by patents, you did not misappropriate information from the designing company while working for them (trade secret), or cause people to wrongly think your product is made by or licensed from the originating company, (trade dress, logo, or trademark) you generally have a clear field. One thing's for damn sure: Don't tell me you are the only one that can make a transformer with such and such characteristics and let me catch you putting a pair of cylinder heads on your race car the manufacturers copied the dims and bolt patterns for without paying GM (if it's a Chevy, likewise Ford, Mopar, etc..) or even getting their permission. I f\*\*\*ing hate hypocrisy. Especially from people from Philly. 5. The kicker: capitalization. The thing that makes sense is getting an agreement with an existing winder that they will wind something only for you, at least for a while, or at least in a certain quantity. Transformer wind shops are not marketer-hucksters usually. That's why they aren't proactively winding a bunch of these things and advertising them.

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Subject: Re: My Thoughts on Being a Transformer Vendor

Posted by [Norris Wilson](#) on Mon, 01 Jan 2007 17:10:49 GMT

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Thanks for sharing your thoughts, many of them parallel mine. I would love to see some examples

of your handy work? Please list some of your transformers in the appropriate forum or for sale area? I for one have seen plenty of the sales hype associated with the mystic principles of audio related products. The products that are somehow suppose to elevate your aural experience to a state of nirvana. Obviously more complicated designs such as McIntosh transformers would be expected to cost a little more due to the cost of labor and materials, time is money. But, in the end. The smart consumers are going to purchase the best that they can afford that will be the bang for the buck. Most DIY constructors can usually see past the sales hype of products. And a high sticker price to something that seems to be just slightly above normal does not translate into sales. Norris Wilson

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Subject: Re: My Thoughts on Being a Transformer Vendor  
Posted by [Peter Parkmiller](#) on Tue, 02 Jan 2007 21:34:04 GMT  
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If you want to make some audio output transformers, Peerless aren't the ones to copy. The best designs from a cost-benefit ratio are the old Fisher and HH Scott units. The non-unity-coupled McIntosh MA230 wound by Endicott and Chicago Transformer is also a can't miss choice. I think the unity coupled McIntosh designs would be easier to wind than most people think, far easier than a Peerless or UTC or Freed top quality unit. But I don't think there's a market for them for two reasons, old Macs don't sound all that great, and most hobbyists are not experienced and persistent enough to make a Mc design work from scratch. Any of two dozen wiring mistakes give you a power oscillator that will tear itself up unless carefully brought up on a current limited bench supply. Hobbyists today have no test equipment and little discipline to do things in an orderly fashion. There's no question that DIY tube audio took off when the SET craze was brought to the US. The seminal article was Alan Douglas' "Tubes in Japan". Though Douglas correctly pointed out the deficiencies, the knowledge that thousands of people in supposedly sophisticated Japan were doing something was enough to light the fuse on this craze here. Steve Sailer is one writer who has gone some way in exploring the reasons why Japan is the fad capital of the world, but that's another matter entirely.

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Subject: Re: My Thoughts on Being a Transformer Vendor  
Posted by [PakProtector](#) on Thu, 04 Jan 2007 20:45:54 GMT  
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Hey-Hey!!!, Looks like a good idea to me. On #5. I am sure that this can be arranged. I have indeed done it. On #4...that cesspool in Phila only flows one way. I stepped in it once and the stink still lingers. There are a few interesting benefits to acquiring construction details from a sample. One collects all the construction details. Since there was no way to protect the construction details, a lot were left off the prints. This was standard practice in many industries, and stuff like ISO900 and its ilk are doing wonders nullifying it. On #1, that is indeed true. What I discovered when I copied a transformer with Heyboer was that NC machinery is a very effective cost cutter. Let

alone the machine stacker...:) Besides, machines don't smoke too much pot and drop turns or some other foolishness. Anyway, what you propose sounds good to me. I'll help in any way I can. cheers, Douglas

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Subject: Re: My Thoughts on Being a Transformer Vendor  
Posted by [MQracing](#) on Mon, 08 Jan 2007 16:02:21 GMT  
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a poster exclaims;"Don't... let me catch you putting a pair of cylinder heads on your race car the manufacturers copied the dims and bolt patterns for without paying GM (if it's a Chevy, likewise Ford, Mopar, etc..) or even getting their permission. I f\*\*\*ing hate hypocrisy. Especially from people from Philly."My small block actually uses a pair of cast iron vortec heads due to the superior port geometries that they employ. These heads are produced by GM. Plus our sanctioning body does not allow the use of alum heads. My back up heads are a pair of cast iron GM double humpers. Just more useless dribble and venom from the maladjusted. And if ya want to know more about my sprint car engine... You'll first have to pay the standard teardown rate charged at our local dirt track venue.

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Subject: to the maladjusted  
Posted by [PakProtector](#) on Mon, 15 Jan 2007 11:51:07 GMT  
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thanks for sharing. The copies of my S271S are on the way. Good thing I didn't have to make them more expensive by speaking to Philadelphia...:) cheers, Douglas and there's more in the teardown pile too, all set to be published in a turn-by-turn fashion so everybody can see what's inside.

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Subject: Re: to Mikey, alleged transformer winder  
Posted by [bretldwig@yahoo.com](mailto:bretldwig@yahoo.com) on Sun, 28 Jan 2007 01:33:50 GMT  
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I could care less what's in your engine, Mikey. You got the point five by five. The bottom line is if you want to sell transformers you are going to have to do it on a price, performance, and consistency basis.

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Subject: Re: to Mikey, alleged transformer winder

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Posted by [PakProtector](#) on Sun, 11 Feb 2007 21:52:08 GMT

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Hey-Hey!!!,I've heard his alleged transformers. Allegedly copies of the Peerless 20-20 line. They cost nearly 4x what I got quoted for the same iron to be done on an NC winder and stacker. And that was for only 2 copies, and included the cost of the unwind!Seems only mikey can wind a copy of those outputs. There is a post elsewhere in which he describes his inability and failings( but only generally )about his efforts to unwind a dynaco output he wanted to make copies of. Seems that if he can't do it, it cannot be done at all...by anybody.What a load of marketing fertilizer....) When I described some of the details of the Peerless S265Q I first copied he claimed that since it didn't match is drawing, it couldn't be right. Seems to me that it is far more likely that his drawings are missing stuff, and not including any updates as the design and materials evolved....) Not that it matters, the information should be shared, not kept as some magical secret. Anybody who'd care about winding their own output is not going to spend MQ money on some piece of mikey's black magic and fertilizer.cheers,Douglas

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Subject: Re: My Thoughts on Being a Transformer Vendor

Posted by [bretldwig@yahoo.com](mailto:bretldwig@yahoo.com) on Sun, 11 Mar 2007 05:42:11 GMT

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I don't agree at all that old Macs do not sound that great. The 275 is about the only vintage amp that will drive some of the modern high end saloon speakers out there satisfactorily on sufficiently dynamic material. Although its actual 80 watts are not really sufficient for a lot of these slutboxes. It is not the best tube amp for Klipsches and other quite efficient speakers. But I think hobbyists could build them if they had the amp and used some commonsense checklist methods building it.

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