

The Vernon Advocate

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Has HP become a Boeing Lookalike by Putting Profits Above Quality, Honesty and Customer Service?

While HP Inc. (formally Hewlett Packard) is not killing its customers and trying to cover it up as did Boeing after crashes of the Boeing 737 Max jets in 2018 and 2019 that killed 346 people HP appears to have adopted the same operating model as Boeing by reducing their commitment to honesty, integrity, quality and customer service to increase profits.

Consumers would not generally be aware of HP's dark side when exposed to the company's public relations campaign alleging "integrity" as a top value while pursuing an ongoing campaign of dishonesty that has produced thousands of customer complaints and class action lawsuits. HP appears to prefer to settle these law suits that allege a lack of quality and dishonest and deceitful practices by settlement of the cases and paying multi-million dollar in restitution, as did Boeing, rather than defend their policies in court, face a trial and the publicity, accountability and rewards for damages that might come from a jury trial.

Little is made public about HP's practices. One of the few HP acknowledgements can be found in the HP 2021 Annual report under ITEM 3. Legal Proceedings on page 26 which stated "Information with respect to this item may be found in Note 14, "Litigation and Contingencies" hidden at the end of the Annual Report.

The Note simply states "Mobile Emergency Housing Corp., et al. v. HP, Inc. (United States). In December 2020, HP was named in a putative nationwide consumer class action pending in federal court in California. The complaint alleges a variety of claims, including state consumer protection, unfair business claims and other unlawful acts. Plaintiffs seek compensatory damages, restitution, injunctive relief against alleged unfair business practices, and other relief. The case is active and discovery has commenced."

Unlike Boeing there is little evidence that HP has any intention of changing its policy to restore a commitment to quality and customer service. HP did issue a public apology in 2016 and an opportunity for customers to replace the Dynamic Security firmware alleged to be at the heart of HP's strategy to punish customers who elected to use non-HP print cartridges by creating printer problems that otherwise did not exist, but the apology was disingenuous with HP continuing its past practices and withdrawing the opportunity for customers to replace the damaging Dynamic Security firmware.

The facts experienced by long time Hewlett Packard/HP, Inc. supporter and customer Dr. John T. Whiting provide a different picture of HP than presented by the company's PR department. Dr. Whiting's research, motivated by his own personal experience with his HP 8035 Printer's failure to copy or scan and his three month efforts to seek corrective support from HP's Customer Support department. This led him to engage in a lengthy effort to correct the problem using HP Customer Support, and when this failed he attempted to escalate his problem to HP's top management. His efforts brought to light the facts reported in a comprehensive case study of HP's policies and failures.

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Dr. Whiting's personal experience regarding HP's alleged commitment to integrity, quality and service lead him to conclude that HP's carefully crafted PR image was not the reality that he and thousands of customers were experiencing in their efforts to get HP to stand behind the quality of their printers and provide the needed support when their products failed.

HP's mission statement states "We earn customer respect and loyalty by consistently providing the highest quality and value." The HP statement from HP's President, Enrique Lores, Message from our CEO, states "One of our greatest strengths as a company is the uncompromising integrity that underpins everything we do." However Dr. Whiting's research reveals that HP is not practicing the integrity, honesty or values they promised in their PR statements.

The reality discovered by Dr. Whiting's research revealed that there are thousands of customers who would challenge HP's commitment to integrity, quality and customer service. They have expressed their dissatisfaction on HP's website, HP forums and through what appears to be ongoing class action law suites with their cause of action based on the lack of quality, fraud, misrepresentation, and false promises. Rather than defend the integrity of their policies in court HP, like Boeing has elected to avoid the public attention and prospect of loss by settling the suits for millions of dollars.

A comment made on the HP's website by a dissatisfied customer, Joel Robbins in May 26, 2021 is representative of the true feelings of the ignored dissatisfied customers. Robbins states, "you cheated me out of a \$429.00 refund. the escalated team in New Mexico are morons. CALL ME PLEASE 951/514/7835. There is no indication that HP ever responded Mr. Robbins request for a call.

Another customer complaint against HP published on Amazon.com October 4, 2022, from "Diane", who gave HP a 1.0 out of 5 star rating stating "Worst printer ever", and "Has never printed right, I have used so much ink replacing cartridges because it wasn't printing right with lines running through it. Horrible".

Another customer, "Dream Catcher", stated on August 3, 2022, "DO NOT PURCHASE HP INSTANT INK",. "Don't buy the HP Instant!!!! I had to switch WiFi networks, and all he'll broke loose! the printer no longer recognize the ink that was in it. The error said that "Cartridge cannot be used until printer is enrolled in HP Instant ink". Basically you CAN'T USE THE PRINTER. I contacted support, and we spent 1.5 hours trying to fix this. They ended up sending me new ink. But guess what? After printing like 5 pages, the error came back."

A YouTube video contributor stated "HP used to be synonymous with that's the printer you wanted was HP." "Everything you read about them now is that they are pretty much junk!" This YouTube was viewed by 83,785 viewers with 251 Likes and 0 Dislikes. It reflects the sentiments of thousands of customers who hoped to find help on HP forums and were only to discover that help was not available and that there were thousands, like them, who shared their frustration and lack of respect and support from HP in resolving their problem.

These are but a sample of the thousands of customer complaints about HP printers and Customer Support that HP management chooses to ignore and pretend do not exist while claiming a commitment to integrity and quality products and service.

Dr. John T. Whiting's experience motivated him to research HP's practices based on his personal documented experience with HP's Customer Service and top management. What he discovered from his study of related cases of dissatisfied customers became the basis for his writing of a case study entitled "The Problems Caused by HP's Policy of Using Firmware to Block Customer Use of 3rd Party Desk Jet Ink Cartridges and Gain a Monopoly on the Sale of HP Cartridges by Causing its Printers to Fail When Non-HP Cartridges are Used" which he shared with top management including HP's President, Enrique Lores in August using a contact e-mail address supplied by an administrator/receptionist at HP Headquarters.

The information was provided privately and in confidence in the hope that President Lores and his fellow decision makers would recognize the need to study the problem and consider making changes, but like Boeing's top managers, Lores and his colleagues elected to ignore this courtesy in the hope that it would somehow go away.

However, the problem to Dr. Whiting and the thousands of other HP customers the problems with HP's abdication of quality and customer service in favor of greed is not going away, but is likely to continue and get worse for HP as it ultimately did for Boeing unless HP decision makers take the voluntary steps to correct the problems.

In the absence of any response or contact from HP Dr. Whiting has decided to transform his case study into a book that will establish a record for the public to review in the hope that public awareness and pressure will cause HP to change their policy.

This will be Dr. Whiting's second book exposing the lack of quality based decision making by top managers in a Fortune 500 company. His book entitled "The Day Computer Associates Mismanagement Lost \$Billions!"¹ exposed how CA's top managers threw away a multi-billion opportunity through managerial ignorance. Regrettably this is a condition that is likely to be repeated by HP unless they abandon their predisposition for greed and profits and look at the destruction their existing policies are having on their reputation and eventually their bottom line.

While the outrage that eventually caused the public to learn of Boeing's disregard for quality and customers was fueled by the fact that 346 of their customers lost and law suit discovery revealed the truth about Boeings attempts to cover-up the true cause as compromising quality at the expense of the lives of its customers, it is Dr. Whiting's hope that public awareness of HP's deception and efforts to present a false image of integrity will result in HP reverting back to being a company that truly reflected its avowed commitment to integrity, quality products, respect for its customers and customer service. At that time HP will truly deserve the respect that is now only a product of their PR illusion.

Written by: Dr. John T. Whiting

¹ The Day Computer Associates Mismanagement Lost \$Billions! Is available at Amazon.com and other book outlets: <https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Dr-John-T-Whiting/dp/B09GJMCHV6>