

The well known saying "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" is attributed to Charles Caleb Colton, and if Pastor Colton was right then I guess at least one company out there thinks my conversion tachometers are "the best".

So, why would I say that my tach conversions are "the best"? Well, when "the best" tachometer shop out there buys your product, disassembles it and tries to imitate it – right down to calling one of your suppliers to order your custom parts – you have to believe that your product is better than theirs. Reverse engineering is one thing, copying is another.

This all started just after New Years when I received an email asking about converting a 1970 Mustang Tach. I thought it was a little hinky because the name on the email account and the name the person was signing were different. I recognized the name on the account, it was the same as the owner of a well known instrument restoration shop, and it seemed odd that he would try to hide his identity from me so I decided to sleep on it before replying.

I decided that I would see what he needed and responded as I would to any other potential customer. As it turned out he had a tachometer and an ammeter from a 1970 Mustang that he wanted me to convert. We exchanged a few emails (in which he continued to use his fictitious name) and I quoted him a price and payment options and he said he would send the instruments and a cashiers check.

Now, you may be wondering why I would agree to do this - especially after reading the bad-mouthing and nasty comments this person posted on his website and public Mustang forums regarding tach conversions and his competitors in general over the years. My reasoning was thus:

I have been doing this for more than 7 years, have established a good reputation and am not a competitor since we did completely different things. In fact, I have sent people to him that were looking for repair, not conversion.

I can (and do) convert the tachometers that he is turning away due to a lack of parts.

Maybe he was embarrassed to be outsourcing a job? I had gotten a couple of tachs that he had 'converted' from dissatisfied customers, so I figured maybe he was looking for a source for conversions and we could have a working relationship that benefited both of us.

Last but not least I was raised a Christian and taught to live life by the golden rule. I figured that someone that quotes scripture on his website must hold the same beliefs and I would hope that if I was in a bind and needed a service he provides he wouldn't turn me away as 'the competition'.

So the gauges arrive and sure enough, the return address is his shop address and the cashiers check has his name (not his email alias) as the sender. I called his shop and spoke to him, just so he was clear on what changes I was going to make and that he was okay with them. While I had him on the phone I asked about the alias and he told me that was just what people call him. Okay. I also offered to save the OEM movements that I remove from the tachometers I convert, rather than send them to the recycling center. He told me which ones he would be interested in. I started sorting and saving movements.

I converted the gauges and sent them back to him. A few days later he sends me an email saying that he got the gauges and that I did a "nice job". He also said he had another Mustang tach he would be sending me for conversion. Pretty high praise from someone that is supposed to be "the best" in the business!

Fast forward to the third week of February. I have not received the second tach, but that's not unusual and I was out of parts for a few weeks anyway. Then out of the blue I get a phone call from one of my suppliers; they wanted to let me know that ##### from #&# ##### had called

them trying to order tachometer movements using MY part number. Of course they refused to sell them to him. I guess he didn't know that I used to work there and that manufacturers don't sell their customer's designs. I don't think he expected them to contact me about it either. My initial reaction was to be pissed – I worked hard to create a movement that fits and moves like the OEM assembly. That he would buy one just to disassemble it to steal my hard work shows what kind of person he is. Then I was disappointed. Disappointed that someone that presents himself as an honest, God fearing man would be so devious. Sadly, if he had called me about buying some movements from me I would have considered it....

I guess the moral of the story should be something like “Trust no one”, but I can't do that. I prefer Ronald Reagan's philosophy of “Trust, but verify”. I do supply tachometers to other resellers and if you want to be sure that you are getting “the best” tach conversion call or email me. I will be happy to tell you whether you are getting an RCCI tachometer or 'something else'.