

Dollars vs. Dimes

There is an old saying, sometimes attributed to Mark Twain, that *history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes*. We see the truth of this wisdom played out almost daily at Glenair. Now the last thing I would ever want to do is lecture our customers on how they ought to run their businesses. Life is complex, and there are countless variables at play in every important decision. But there is a pattern in certain decisions—a rhyme if you will—that deserves some attention. I am talking about the tendency at big OEMs to focus so intently on the price of an item that they wind up booby-trapping their own technology with a built-in weakness.

This issue of *QwikConnect* is all about sealing, about protecting essential electronic equipment from water ingress due to an inadvertent leak in the interconnect system. There is no mystery as to why this is important: Nothing could be more mission-critical than protecting electrical circuits and equipment electronics from moisture damage. And yet it is a common, almost daily, occurrence at Glenair to receive requests for technical assistance on leak-path problems that could have easily been avoided with just a little more attention to sealing requirements—and yes, some additional up-front cost.

Glenair interconnect technologies are designed for use in high-performance applications, from oil rigs to Navy ships to jumbo jets. And we get to see the full range of environmental stress factors that put working systems out of commission: The high heat and caustic chemicals in a railroad locomotive that destroy inferior jacketing materials; the vibration and shock stresses that beat an under-built cable assembly to bits; the relentless, corrosive effects of salt spray on materials that have no business on the weather deck of a navy ship; the unexpected flood that brings an electrical grid to its knees over the cost of a shrink-boot... the list goes on and on.

Currently, we are engaged with a major OEM to design a sealed, over-molded cable assembly as a replacement for a light-duty sensor cable responsible for numerous Aircraft-on-Ground (AOG) incidents. Another customer is recalling and retrofitting a small battlefield device due to leakage that could have been prevented easily with a higher grade of back-potting.

We fully understand the competitive pressures that drive OEMs to prioritize near-term cost savings over long-term durability—even if in our view they are “stepping over dollars to pick up dimes.” But as I said at the start, history doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes. Sometimes it’s poetry, other times it’s just a painful lesson everyone involved wishes they could have avoided. I would encourage the Glenair team to study the technologies and processes detailed in this issue of *QwikConnect*, and in turn, to encourage our customers to take *proactive measures* to prevent environmental damage in mission-critical interconnect systems before it has an opportunity to occur. In our experience, this approach not only saves money in the long-term but also results in better customer satisfaction in the user communities we all serve.

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