

Obsolescence: Run Over

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By: Yaima Cabezas / CubaSi

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If it seems to you that before devices lasted longer, that, in addition, it was visibly superior in resistance, with stronger materials, you are right, but it's not by chance, it's not that suddenly all home electric appliances producers, for example, fell in a crisis and they can't obtain first class raw material, nor did they forget how to offer quality, no. On top of it they didn't agree on that either. Each on their own thought one day that if the mixer lasts less, we will throw it away faster to buy a new one. It's all simple math, it results in more profit for companies, which equals consumerism. This phenomenon has a name: planned obsolescence.

It doesn't matter if we've been careful with its handling and maintenance. It's a completely irresponsible measure, abusive with the users that we deposit, besides the money, the certainty that, at the moment of purchasing an appliance, we are buying the guarantee of using it for a long time. It's no longer enough, not even, to look for a respectful brand in the market thinking that because of its prestige we'll have a better appliance.

This is not a new concept, for years people have been talking about the issue and denouncing the world's large conglomerates so that, from the factory, they stop planning the useful life of a product, but instead fall under their own weight, either due to natural wear and tear of its mechanisms, or thousands of causes. In addition, it's not only that it generates more domestic expenses, it's also an environmental problem because all that defective equipment goes to the trash and pollutes our planet because it's not recycled properly.

Planned obsolescence is cruel. It's a macabre initiative that the industry itself determines when an article will become obsolete, and will leave us with a useless brick or with major

malfunctions. It shows a lack of ethics, consideration and respect towards consumers, who many times cannot even repair or replace the defective part and are forced to buy a new one.

What's worrying is not noticing that the article was broken in a suspicious manner, believing that we were jinxed, that we were "unlucky", that perhaps we used it incorrectly. The last thing we think about is that it came from the factory with an expiration time because it was meticulously traced in laboratories.

This is not just the case of the appliance industry, cosmetic products also break down faster, even clothing is less resistant; it also happens a lot in the automotive world, where repair is difficult due to the lack of spare parts and their own inefficient design.

It's intentionally. On purpose. Looking at how advanced the world is, and the high rate of technological development around, it doesn't make sense that my blender, for example, had a motor with poor winding and lasted little more than the storage period. It's too much. When us consumers buy an item, we place in it the confidence that it will be useful for a certain amount of time, then we can focus our economic efforts on other objectives, especially since our finances are difficult to sustain, although this should be the case for everyone regardless their income levels, it's called respect for the user.

We must demand that the market ensure quality and guarantee in its offers. There are plenty of examples. Manufacturers could, at least, use better materials in their productions and think of designs that allow replacement and repair, as in the case of mobile phones that can't be pried open to check the defective part or to change the battery. Likewise, that everything industrial has adequate expiration dates so that it lasts much longer.

Will it be an utopia?

**Translated by Amikal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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