

You Can't Repeal The Laws of Quality

This is not an advertisement. It is a public interest article.



By Tom Lincir
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There are Laws of Nature that if disobeyed lead to catastrophe.

"There is no free lunch." "Money does not grow on trees." We're seeing the consequences of disobeying these laws in the current financial meltdown.

There are Laws of Quality as well, and if you try to ignore them, you suffer painful consequences. All the gurus who conduct the studies and publish them in prestigious journals come to the same conclusion time and again. Offer quality, promote quality, and charge for quality. If you cut quality to be more price competitive, you enter into what pilots call a death spiral. Obeying the Laws of Quality under intense price competition is why Ivanko is still here after over 40 years.

Law No. 1: There Is Always A Catch

Whenever someone tells you they have equal quality at a lower price, you should always ask yourself, "What's the catch." That's because there always is a catch, and the catch is always painful.

The people who ate "inexpensive" imported catfish that was raised in sewer water and laced with antibiotics found out what the catch was. The food companies who imported baby formula that turned out to be laced with melamine found out what the catch was.

The company who imported 3,500 "inexpensive" Olympic bars and saw the ends break off found out what the catch was.



The "catch" with welded "unbreakable" dumbbells is that they can break.

In welded dumbbells that are positioned as unbreakable, the catch is that they can break. The real reason dumbbell heads are attached to dumbbell handles by welding is because it is the cheapest way to do it. It stands to reason that if welding is the cheapest way to do it, 100% of that savings should be passed on to the consumer. Instead, they are advertised as a "new and improved" way of manufacturing, "built to last a lifetime," "unbreakable," "low maintenance," and other advertising spins to make them seem to be better and to keep from passing on the cost savings to you. The reality is that they can break, and when they do, no amount of "low maintenance" can help.

The best way (and more costly) is a mechanical connection such as threads, providing the threads are a perfect match, that they are sanitized before assembly, and assembled with a name-brand thread adhesive. They must be torqued to the maximum possible specifications, short of stretching the bolt. Other enhancements could include key-ways, splines, roll pins, and locking tapers, all of which could also be used in addition to the threads.

This is the way I learned in aerospace forty years ago,

and it is still the way IVANKO does it today. We offer this level of quality at a fair price, and there is no catch.

Law No. 2: Small is Not Beautiful

Whenever someone tells you small is beautiful, they're usually trying to sell you something that is smaller than what you want, and not as beautiful as something bigger. When schools or clubs want their logo on their dumbbells and plates, do you think they want it small or large? If you said large, then you understand why Ivanko wins the order time and again. That's also why we can't make them fast enough, and why our customers feel the difference is worth the wait.



The 8 most recent customers who wanted their logos to be bigger, not smaller.

Law No. 3: Less is Not More

Whenever someone tells you less is more, they're usually trying to sell you something that is less than you need at a price that's more than it's worth. Often something that costs 25% less should really cost 50% less. A customer showed us a urethane dumbbell that claimed to be as good as Ivanko for 25% less. When we cut it in half, we discovered that the urethane coating was 50% thinner. So we asked, "Where's the other 25%?"



Sometimes the only way to show that less is less is to cut the products in half.

Law No. 4: Cheaper Is Never "Just As Good"

Whenever someone comes up with a cheaper way to make a product, they always try to position the quality as equal to the more expensive way. Hard chrome is cheaper than stainless steel, yet the manufacturers of hard chrome Olympic bars tell you that hard chrome is the ultimate.

Some people thought we were crazy to make a stainless steel Olympic bar. They thought no one would want to pay the price. Yet every run of new bars sells out in a matter of days. And our now famous (or infamous) "roof tests" consistently show that hard chrome gets ugly when exposed to the elements while stainless steel shines up like new.

Even though hard chrome is not a great rust preventive, it is 75% the hardness of a diamond. We sometimes use hard chrome over a heat-treated stainless bar. Now you have the ultimate: a strong, hard, rust-resistant bar. This is one of the many options available from IVANKO.

The Ivanko Roof Test

A chrome plate on the left and a stainless steel plate on the right were left on our roof for 6 months.



Before polishing, the chrome plate was badly corroded, while the stainless steel plate was O.K.



After polishing, the stainless steel plate looks like new, but the chrome plate is still discolored and pock marked.

Law No. 5: Buy Once

A mistake club owners sometimes make is to try to "get away with" a cheaper product, telling themselves that if it doesn't hold up, they can always buy another one. The problem with this strategy is two-fold.

First, club members can usually tell a cheap product when they see it. A bent Olympic bar in the weight area, for example, can negate the investment in quality equipment and surroundings in the rest of the club. It's like finding a greasy spoon in a 5 star restaurant, a turn-off that is easily avoided by spending a little more for equipment that will hold up a whole lot better.

The second problem is that by the time you replace



A bent Olympic bar in the weight area can negate the investment in quality equipment and surroundings throughout the rest of the club.



Ivanko's Stainless Steel Olympic bar is designed and manufactured to be a bar that you only have to buy once.

the distressed equipment a few times, you've spent more than you would have if your bought right in the first place.

This is exactly why we created the Stainless Steel Olympic bar. We were tired of hearing about Olympic bars becoming bent after a few months of use. So we started experimenting with increasingly higher PSI tensile strengths. While most manufacturers make their Olympic bars 120,000 – 150,000 PSI, we found through experience that making bars over 200,000 PSI eliminates 99% of customer complaints about bent bars.

We were also tired of seeing Olympic bars get ugly over time, so we decided to make ours from stainless steel that would never rust, discolor, chip, or peel.

The result is an Olympic bar that you only need to buy once. It may cost 2-3 times the price of the bars you've been using, but in a short time it overtakes the cheaper alternatives in cumulative savings.

That's a main reason why each successive manufacturing run sells out in a matter of days. And every time your members enter the strength training area, they get the same quality signal they appreciate everywhere else in the club.

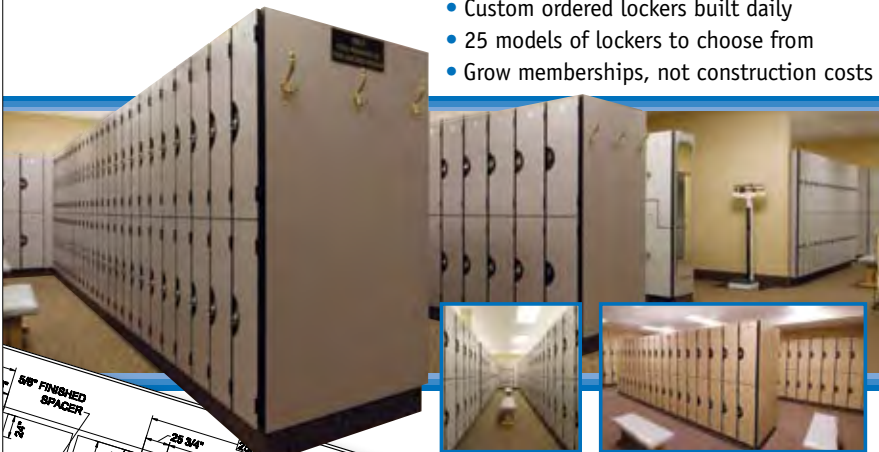
The Siren voices are out there. They're calling out, "Small is beautiful." "Less is more." "Cheaper is just as good." "You're only paying for the name." You have to strap yourself to the mast and resist them. You can't repeal the Laws of Quality.

Ivanko Barbell Company was founded by Tom Lincir in 1967, and it is the leading provider of professional and commercial grade barbell and dumbbell products worldwide. Your comments or questions are welcome. Write Tom Lincir at Ivanko Barbell Company, P.O. Box 1470, San Pedro, CA U.S.A. 90733. Or phone (310) 514-1155. fax (310) 514-1363, or email tom@ivankobarbell.com.

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