

R&M WHAT IS THE VALUE OF “QUALITY”?

Every purchaser is interested in quality. However, whether the product or service in question indeed provides the maximum value for the customer can only be determined by paying closer attention.

Quality is one of the most used (and sometimes misused) terms to describe cabling systems. This shows how important quality is for the customer. Usually, price and quality are the most important criteria for a purchaser in differentiating among various proposals. Although the term “value” best expresses a balanced price/quality ratio, it is used much less frequently than “quality”.

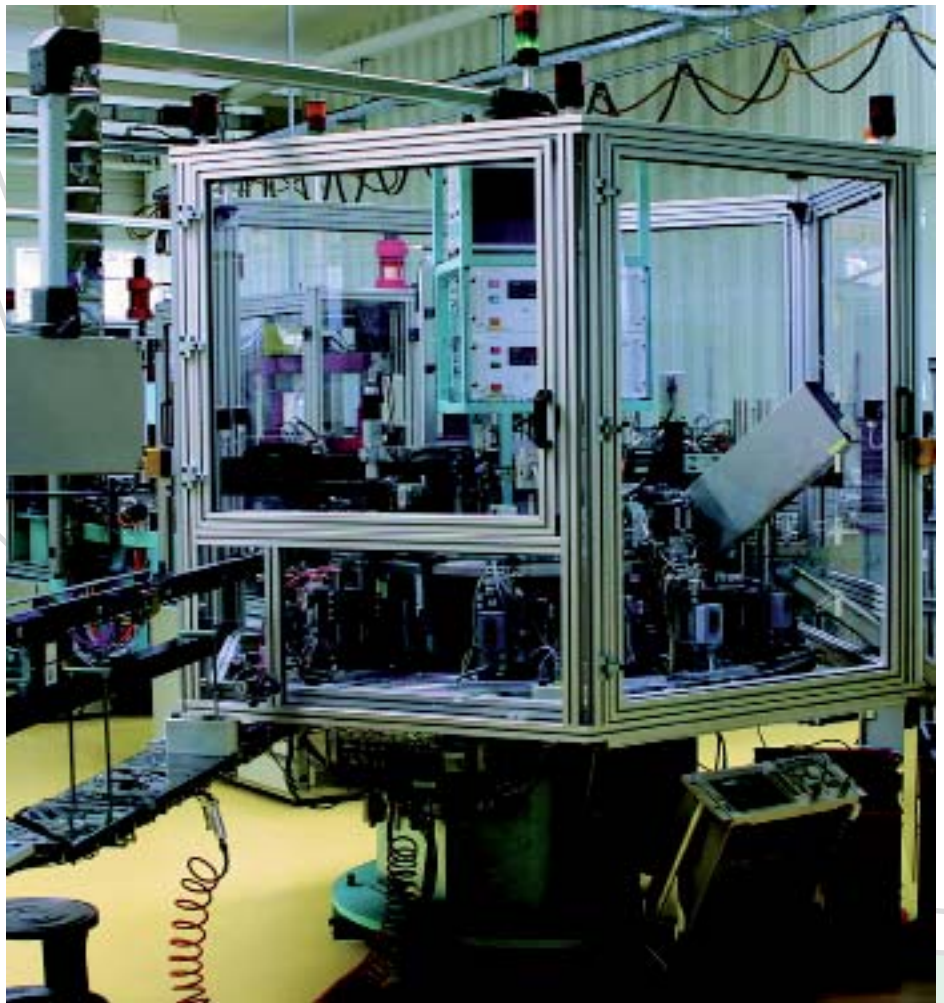
Every vendor claims quality characteristics for his/her products or services. However, to really judge quality, closer attention must be paid, particularly in the area of structured cabling systems, quality can only be considered as the sum of many different aspects, which include the following:

- the right choice of components
- planning
- installation
- and administration

Therefore, the quality evaluation of a cabling system requires understanding various aspects, which are usually handled by different specialists.

Proper criteria evaluation

The consultant or planner must properly evaluate the technical criteria, which are defined in the specifications, to make the right choice for components or systems. This problem arises in every installation project. In this selection process, price is the decisive criterion in most cases. In principle, nothing can be said against this provided that the technical specifications are fully met. Admittedly, the terms describing the performance of the components do not always conform to the standards; there are several possible reasons for this: lack of honesty on the part of the vendor, lack of knowledge on the part of the customer or blind trust in a well-known brand. In one of the R&M White Papers¹, the criteria for the definition of



R&M Production Quality: Manufacturing and testing according to the highest quality criteria

quality according to test results, as well as different components evaluation, are well described. The analysis provides an overview of the various quality criteria that are usually limited to transmission performance but that should extend also to other evaluation such as:

- mechanical specifications
- environmental specifications
- reliability performance

Careful selection pays

Investigations conducted by R&M have demonstrated that patch cables and connection modules from different manufacturers are significantly different with respect to reliability, durability and operation. Therefore, the careful selection of a manufacturer at the point of decision for a cabling system pays.

The planning method of the cabling system is also of fundamental importance to obtain the maximum of what the customer can expect from the system. The planner must guarantee full functionality and interoperability with the components available on the market even without having precise specifications from the customer.

It is also important to consider that there are constant changes of the cabling rules and standards and that not all planners are up to date. Comprehensive knowledge and constant updating are a must in order to be able to offer the customer maximum quality.

In other words, the task of the consultant does not end with the careful component selection or the planning of the network.

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In fact, the quality of the system also depends significantly on the installation. This requires appropriate technical knowledge, as well as adhering to specific rules and technologies.

For example, connection module performance plays a role in the performance of the entire cabling system. Good test results alone are insufficient, because if the wiring of the module is complicated and cumbersome, the installation becomes uneconomical. On this basis it is meaningful to pay close attention to the installation process and to take it into account in the overall evaluation of the connection module.

In addition, the given network environment must be considered since a building and its existing infrastructure can affect network cabling in an adverse manner.

Therefore, the competency of the installer today may not be limited to the information technology but must include other communication installations such as security systems in a building. This requires an overall view of the task and precision in implementation. Today, an installer is faced with many different types of buildings, cable systems and technologies. He must be able to assess the effects on the correct data cabling functioning.

The focus is time and again on people

The quality of a cabling system is the result of a complex interplay of various elements. Its evaluation cannot be concluded after completion of an installation or tests. In fact, the network quality is demonstrated over its entire service life. This makes day-to-day maintenance more and more important for the producer, as well as for the user. Particularly important are specifications and recognition systems (labels, instructions, designs, databases, online mapping) as well as active error prevention (security systems). However, what is most important is extensive technical knowledge, as well as complete know-how of correct operational steps and procedures.



Service Quality: The R&M warranty program



Service Quality: The R&M QPP program

1 Cat. 6 modules and patch cables:
Competition Comparison
(Edition 1.0/May 2005/TP061.736)
<http://www.rdm.com/381/629/630/664/670/10567.asp>

2 QPP Information:
<http://www.rdm.com/381/629/630/664/676/678.asp>

Col B Browitt

Manager - Enterprise Cabling Solutions
Madison Technologies

Phone. 03 9387 1933

