

Good Bye Wouxun

After announcing my decision to stop selling Wouxun radios and explaining why, my honesty and integrity have come into question on some internet forums. My announcement was made to customers in my customer database by an email that asked that no contents of the email be published. This request was not heeded, so I will qualify my statements and decisions about my dealing with Wouxun of China. **If you are interested, read on. If not, please surf on to another web page.**

Four or five years ago I discovered the Wouxun dual band radio and began to import them into the US. At the time, Wouxun told me I was the first and only customer in the US to order 100-500 radios per order. I repeatedly requested some kind of agreement giving me sole distributorship for their products in the US. They would never agree to do this. I continued to sell their products and in my opinion (and I don't care what your's is) I did more to promote their product, and make it a common name in the US radio industry, than any other person in this country.

After a short time, I was averaging sales of about 300-500 radios per month. My relationship with Wouxun China, continued fine until they produced their first dual band mobile radio. I looked at this radio, operated this radio and suggested changes/improvements to this radio (which they ignored) when I visited China. This was long (two years) before the radio went into production. When Wouxun announced the release of the radio, I had collected 3734 names of interested, potential customers for this radio. The release date for this radio dragged on for about two years. They finally released ten samples to interested dealers and of course I bought my ten. **THEY WERE ALL RETURNED TO ME BECAUSE OF VARIOUS DEFECTS.** I returned all these radios back to China at my expense. (And to this day have never been reimbursed) After such a disastrous showing, I knew I was not interested in selling this radio.

I'll back up a second and tell you that early on, I registered the domain name www.wouxun.us for my business of selling Wouxun radios. During a visit to China, I visited both TYT and Anytone companies among others. Since TYT had a single band mobile (220 MHZ) I decided to sell a few. The radio had not been on my web site for more than a day before Wouxun China started giving me grief for selling other brands on a "wouxun" web site. They would tell me I would "ruin their US business". They threatened to "take back the domain name with lawsuit". I'm not the type person to take kindly to threats but to calm the waters, I registered the domain name ImportCommunications.com. This still did not satisfy them so I finally told them in so many words I didn't give a rat's rump what they thought about my web site and they would not tell me how to run my business. The downhill run was beginning.

So after the dud of a mobile radio made it's debut, I knew I wasn't interested in selling them. For the previous two years, I'd get email after email asking "when will you have the mobile". I put a small picture of the radio on my front web page. I controlled myself and didn't describe it as the dud it really was, I simply stated "I would not be selling this radio because samples did not meet my expectations" or some similar plain-Jane comment. Even though by that time I had blocked China from being able to view my web site, boy did that comment tick them off. It seemed (to me at least) that perhaps some other sellers of the Wouxun products were sending captures of my web site to Wouxun in China. Because by this time other Wouxun sellers (and they all were the "biggest dealers") were coming out of the woodwork.

I believe the time frame for this was about two years ago. Wouxun did not like the "bad words" I had

on my web site and said I was “ruining their US business”. They demanded I take down the picture and comment or they would not sell me any more radios. That’s the LAST correspondence or business I have had directly with Wouxun China. They have never sent me an email since then.

For the past two years, I have bought radios directly from Wouxun China under an assumed name. I will not disclose the exact details but if anyone wants to wager a little money that this is not true, I’ll take all bets.

Wouxun has always had problems with their dual band HT radios. The biggest problem for me was a “memory loss” problem. This problem would occur suddenly for no known reason. Such a radio would boot up speaking Chinese and the memory channels would no longer show a channel name, it would only show the channel number. Sometimes, the channels would totally disappear from the programming. Reprogramming the radio by computer would restore the English and channel names but this would not last long. Sometimes it would last a day or week but more often it would reoccur with the next off/on cycle.

Wouxun has known about this problem for a long time and it still exists. It has happened to all of the various versions of their dual band HT I have sold. This problem has existed since the first KG-UV2D radios they branded for me three to four years ago. This problem has happened to KG-UV6D radios delivered to me in 2013 (my last order received).

Wouxun’s warranty policy is their radios are warranted for eighteen months. They expect the warranty to be handled by the dealer selling the radio. My business would accept a defective radio and give the customer a brand new replacement. As broken radios began to pile up, I was not able to get Wouxun to give any compensation for the warranted ones. They did not want radios shipped to them because of some kind of import duty they had to pay. At least this was the story they presented (I have the email if you want to see it). On one trip to China, I took a whole suitcase full of broken radios. While I was in China, they repaired them and I brought them home. There are two problems with this from my view. Number one is that I gave my customer a new radio and what I got in return was a refurbished, but used radio. The second problem came when I started using these refurbished radios as replacements for defective radios that continued to come in. I discovered quickly that some of these refurbished radios would quickly develop the “memory loss” problem. I don’t know if they originally had that specific problem or not but my guess is that some did.

My next attempt at trying to keep from losing so much money because of warranty issues was this. Wouxun China didn’t want defects shipped to them and acted like they didn’t want to take my word that a radio was defective. I offered to saw each defective radio in half and send them a photograph of the serial number on that half of the radio. They would not do this. If I would bring them on a trip to China, they would repair them, that’s all they ever offered except to send me replacement chips to install in the radios. I tried this but it did not work. I had a person skilled in surface mount stuff to install the replacement chips in two radios. This did not fix the problem. I wouldn’t waste my time after that.

I attempted to purchase just the body of a radio to use for warranty replacement. Wouxun would only discount about \$3 - \$4 off the price for just a body. This certainly was not the answer.

I’m going to get off the subject for just a moment. All the time this was going on, Wouxun kept harping at me to RAISE the selling price of my radios. Competition from shops in Hong Kong has

forced the selling price of radios down but Wouxun does not understand this. Several things bring this unfair competition about. First, the HK shops pay a lesser price than we sellers in the US. I know this for a fact because some HK shop owners I know personally and visit when I'm in China. Secondly, they pay less freight to have the radios shipped to their location. My average DHL shipping costs for a HT radio is \$7.00. Thirdly, and the one I hate the most, is their outgoing shipping. Chinese sellers use a Chinese shipping system known as ePacket which allows them to ship a radio (marked as a toy) to the US for about \$2 USD. When it reaches the US, our US Postal Service delivers it to your door at NO extra costs. My average outgoing postage on a radio is about \$10 if I do not insure it. I'm at a \$10 - \$12 disadvantage right off the bat, but Wouxun wants me to RAISE my selling price.

Back to the warranty issue. Since Wouxun has no statement against the sharing of the contents of their emails, I will copy and paste some below. I don't have all of the probably thousands of emails I exchanged with Wouxun China but I do have a few.

My decision to not support or sell the Wouxun radio is not based solely on the fact Wouxun has an uncorrected defect that has been around for years. I am also tired of losing money supporting their warranty out of my pocket.

Ed Griffin

www.Wouxun.US / www.ImportCommunications.com

What causes the memory loss problem?

I have not asked permission to publicize the name of the person giving me this information. I will tell you that this person writes programming software for programming radios. I know that MANY of you have used this software. When I told him that Wouxun blamed aftermarket software on this memory loss problem he explained the reason for the problem. This is the answer that I believe to be true. No one has provided me an answer that seems to be more reasonable.

> comments are from me the other comments are from the software person

Date: Mon, 11 Mar 2013 10:44:20 -0700

From: xxxxxx

To: Ed Griffin <info@importcommunications.com>

Subject: Re: wouxun

1. > So this problem has been a big one for me because even before I had a
> falling-out with the factory, they would not replace radios with the
> problem. I've lost a lot of money replacing them on my own.

Wow, that's a bummer. It is nice to know you're doing the right thing for your customers though.

> Your comment about "wearing out the flash" has me intrigued. Can you
> explain this to someone that knows very little about the magic that
> you do? Is there a way to recover these radios, short of replacing
> the part? I have at least 200 bad ones.

Flash memory is memory that keeps its contents when powered off, like an SD card that you use in a camera. Regular memory (DRAM)

requires power to keep its contents, which is why your computer has to boot up each time you power it on.

All flash memory is rated at a certain number of write cycles. That means after a certain number of writes, it will "die", meaning it can't be written to any more. The actual time and number of cycles it takes to kill the flash depends on both the access patterns and the quality of the flash. For example, a cheap SD card may be rated for only 1000 cycles before it dies. The new (very expensive) solid state disks use flash memory as well, but very very nice memory, and are rated for millions of writes.

I expect that the flash used in these radios is, like everything else, as cheap as it can possibly be, which means it is probably rated for very few writes. If they designed the radio to be reprogrammed once a year or so for LMR type situations, the average ham may wear it out in a month, as you can imagine.

Another thing to consider is that the radio itself writes to the flash for certain things, such as tuning the VFO. That is extra hard on the flash because it's a repeated write to the same cell over and over again.

The death of a flash device is a mechanical/chemical thing, and can't be reversed aside from replacing the device altogether. If they sent you new flash chips and you wanted to have some SMT technician replace them, it is possible that you might be able to recover the dead radios. However, it's unlikely to be cost effective, I think, as the equipment and skills required for that kind of soldering aren't cheap. Further, most devices like that would need a low-level initialization of the flash before the radio can "boot up" from it. Not sure if they'd do that for you before sending them or not.

Date: Mon, 11 Mar 2013 11:20:18 -0700

From: xxx

To: Ed Griffin <info@importcommunications.com>

Subject: Re: wouxun

1. > Also... I think it strange that this memory loss problem has not
> shown up in the Baofeng or TYT radios, that I am aware of.....

Yes, and given that they are all extremely similar from the programming and microcontroller side, it _has_ to be something different that wouxun is doing. Such as using an extra-cheap flash chip :)