

Bevel Cut November, 2018

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Fake News

Over time, I've become a woodworking mail junkie. I get electronic mail and snail mail (catalogs and brochures) from a zillion woodworking tool vendors, including Incra, Harbor Freight, Highland, Infinity, Lee Valley, MLCS, Rockler, Woodcraft, Woodworker's Supply, Woodpeckers. They fill the time in two ways – the most important is educational: telling me what's available (oh wow – I didn't know they made a tool for that); they are also good fillers for random day dreaming.

On the other hand, the catalogs and special offers constantly repeat two of the most irritating fake news messages:

- a. Front and back pages filled with “new products” that aren't even close to being new. I honestly don't know why the vendors do this. Maybe they don't care about their credibility, or maybe they think the reader began woodworking last week and doesn't realize that the universal fence clamp has been around since the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod. There indeed does seem to be a shortage of innovation in our industry. I wrote about this a year ago when researching a miter saw and handheld router and found tool reviews for the exact same saw and router that were ten years old. Finding such tools in the “new products” section of a sales piece didn't make me proud.
- b. Sales prices that aren't sales prices. They are every day prices. If you're not knowledgeable you're likely to make a purchase decision before the sale ends, probably before you really need the item, only to find out the sale never really ends. I'm convinced that at least two of the major vendors we all deal with have a library of about 20 sale items and put 8-10 of them on sale every month and just rotate the inventory through the “on sale” pages. Can I offer you some Java gel stain? Or maybe a ten inch sliding compound miter saw for \$89.99?