

Frequently Asked Questions

By: Jordan M. Gartenhaus

©Copyright 2007 Custom Performance Engineering, Inc.

- ***Hey cp-e™, why is your exhaust system for the Mazda CX-7 so darn expensive compared to your competitors?!***

That's a great question that deserves an honest answer. We put forth a great effort to keep our prices as low as possible, but we can only do so much and still stay profitable. The vast majority (maybe all of them?) of our competitors choose to outsource their manufacturing projects to China. This keeps their overall prices lower because Chinese labor is so cheap (about 1/10th of that of a US worker), and they don't have to buy or maintain any manufacturing equipment since it's all made out of house. With cheap labor and no machine equipment to buy, it's no wonder why their products are less expensive!

The other reason is because often times our competitors will arbitrarily "delete" features that were present on the stock exhaust (hangers or flex pipes are the most common examples), or they'll cut corners where they think it won't be noticed. For instance, our competitors route their exhaust pipe below the differential. They do this because there is much more room for the mufflers and associated bends, which makes designing and manufacturing the system a whole lot easier. Although this routing method will work...you lose 3"-4" of precious ground clearance back there! We on the other hand didn't take the easy way out and were able to package the entire exhaust system just like the stock exhaust. Accomplishing this required a lot more effort on our part, but we felt that it was worth the extra work. Some companies think they can sneak the small details by you to save a few bucks, so we urge you to scrutinize over the details before you spend your hard earned money on an exhaust system!

- ***"So why don't you (cp-e™) just outsource your stuff to China too?!"***

Well, two reasons: First, we take pride in the fact that we're one of the few remaining manufacturers in the United States. What we do is a dying art, and we love what we do partially because we're so good at it. So we'll do whatever it takes to keep our business in the United States, and our boxes will continue to wear our "Made in the USA" designation with pride.

Secondly, it's no surprise that Chinese quality control can leave a lot to be desired, especially after hearing about imported Chinese toys containing lead! The people who design cp-e™ products are either mechanical or electrical engineers, so you can rest assured that bona-fide professionals are building and inspecting your performance parts. We never just slap things together; instead we test and obsess over empirical data in an effort to make even marginal improvements over a current design. Moreover, we scrutinize over every detail before our parts go out the door. We test, test, and re-test products before they leave our facility to ensure that your part fits and works the way we say it will.

- ***"Are you trying to convince me to buy your exhaust system based on the fact that you produce your parts in the United States?"***

Absolutely not! Our customers are educated adults that can make up their own minds as to which exhaust system they enjoy the most. However, we feel that our prices are justified, and being the transparent company that we are, we wanted to explain why our prices are higher than our competition. We know that we make the highest quality exhaust systems for the MazdaSPEED vehicles, but we wanted to explain to our customers why we're so convinced of this fact. If you've ever owned a cp-e™ product, you're probably already intimately familiar with how well designed and built our products really are.

- *“But your other catback exhaust systems don’t cost as much as your CX-7 exhaust. What gives?”*

The CX-7 exhaust is very different from the SPEED vehicles. Specifically, fitting our large oval mufflers into the car was no easy feat. We gauge our labor cost partially by how many cut and welds we have to make for each exhaust system. Although it may sound trivial, cutting and welding stainless steel is no walk in the park as it requires a cut, debur, and then a weld which can take as long as 30 minutes depending on the placement and type of weld. If you consider that we manufacture these products by hand, and in quantity that time really adds up quickly. And if you consider that our SPEED6 exhaust system requires 10 cuts, whereas our CX-7 exhaust requires 22, the difference in labor costs start to make sense. Just take a look at the rear muffler section. Although it’s absolutely gorgeous, that particular piece requires an extraordinary amount of labor.

In addition to the labor rate, we use only the finest components in our exhaust systems, which means they are not cheap! The mufflers and tips are easily the most expensive components in our CX-7 exhaust. Since the CX-7 exhaust uses two of the most expensive part of the exhaust, it’s no wonder that this exhaust is more expensive then our other systems.

