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When your silicone sealant won't harden

I had a horrible experience with some GE silicone sealant. I used it to seal the windshield on my van. The stuff never hardened.



After I sent the following tongue-in-cheek letter to GE. One of their engineers called to tell me that silicone needed oxygen to harden.

It's not that it dries out, its that it reacts with the oxygen in the air and then hardens.

So he said that the tube was so air tight it couldn't get any oxygen in it. In retrospect, this makes no sense. Maybe I just forgot what he told me. If anyone really knows why a batch of silicon won't harden, let me know. Back in 1999, I sent this letter:

GE Corporate
3135 Easton Tnpg
Fairfield, CT 06430-5163
United States

Dear Mr. GE President:

I hope your name is Bill because that's the name of my Editor and the President of the United States as well as the Secretary of State of California so I could use the same salutation for all of you and I guess I could look General Electric up on the Web and get your name but the fact of the matter is I'm a little pressed for time and I've got this hot job due for Hewlett Packard and its almost 9:00 PM and I just got back from the gym and my Samoan pal Etene is here and he's picking on his guitar picking and singing everything from Samoan love songs to Desperado so you can understand I'm dying to go see Lorrie and talk about setting up a studio session with the three of us and no disrespect or anything but with my crummy dial up modem it just takes too long to get any useful information from a big corporate framed-up Java'd-out website like I'm sure you got.



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So anyway ---wow Etene just started The Boxer. This is the most beautiful thing you ever heard and I'll send you a CD if you want to hear some really good music--- but anyway this is a complaint since I bought this big construction worker size tube of Silicone sealant and OK OK it's been on my shelf for a couple of years not to mention how long it was on the shelf at Orchard Supply Hardware which is this really righteous place who I know would give me my money back or a new tube since they're really cool people and if you want drop a note and I'll tell you the Fluorescent Ballast Story which could show everybody the right way to treat customers but since I tend to go on tangents and stuff I won't tell you about it unless you really want to hear it so drop me a line if you do.

Like I was saying I've got this big tube of GE Silicone Sealant with the Orchard Supply Hardware price tag still on and I can tell you it was \$4.49 back when I bought it but the real problem is the stuff don't harden up and that's one failure mode I never expected since any Russian schoolchild knows that silicone usually just hardens up in the tube and you got to throw it away and get a new one. What was so insidious about this tube was that the stuff looked just fine so I paid my buddy Dan whose a little down on this luck right now to seal up the windshield on my '74 Chevy van which has been leaking due to the rust it musta picked up at the beach.



You can imagine our dismay as Dan had to scrape all the "Silicone-Like-Substance" out of the windshield seal and then we bought another tube and everything and Dan got things pretty ship shape which just comes naturally since he used to race flat trackers and he always does every job like its race time and his life is riding on the balance. All I got to say Mr. President is that I think you should send us a case or two of this stuff not to mention the 150 bucks I paid Dan to seal up the windshield. But what is really important to me is that you get this stuff down to the boys in the lab and get some kinda report since this is some mutant batch of silicone that instead of hardening in the tube it just never hardens if you don't use it right away and who ever heard of such a thing. When you get the lab report please send it along and I'll put it on my web site so everyone can be warned and know how to not screw up like I did.

Thanks
Paul Rako
US Citizen
4-9-99

PS: Well, I was right about you're web site. It took a half an hour just to get your address, much less your name. I notice you're in Fairfield. Did you ever hear of this really righteous acappella gospel music group called the Fairfield Four? Oddly enough there are five of them. Still, I bet GE has more Vice Presidents then the Fairfield Four has singers. Let me know if you like the blues and gospel because then I'll send you a copy.