

Invyr

Panda Switch In Review

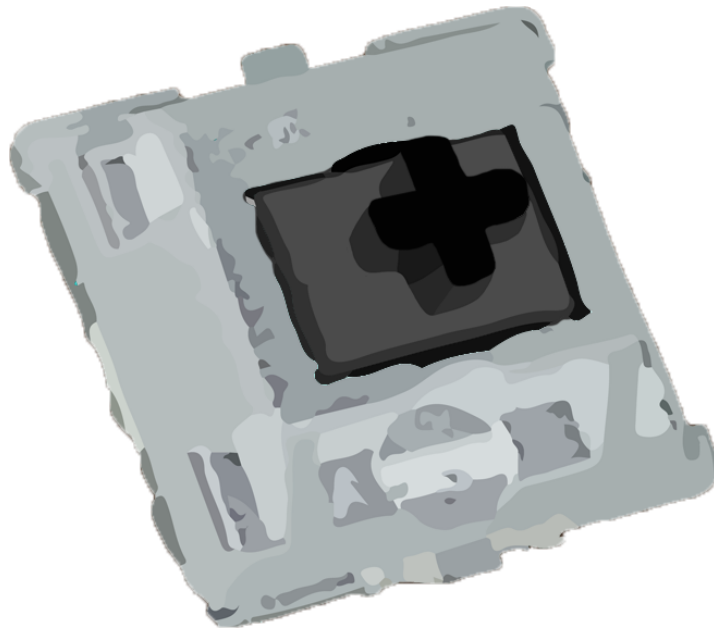


Illustration Thanks to OutragedPudding

Introduction

Greetings, in this review I will be talking about the experience of running a large scale group buy and the challenges and difficulties I have faced. I would also like to touch on how I would like to go forward from this stage and how I can make improvements on both the business and switch.

Opening Up

Now that everything has been shipped, I think it is an important moment to give insight into the group buy and switch development process.

Development

The idea for the switch first surfaced around July 2016 and when through three significant stages

1. Looking for a manufacturer

This took the shortest amount of time for the switch, in essence we reached out to every company we could find who would be willing to co-operate. Even getting a response from a manufacturer would be a 50% chance, let alone finding one that was willing to work with low production sizes.

2. Prototyping with Manufacturer

Working with manufacturer can be a difficult task, especially if the only mandarin you know is “I do not speak mandarin” and you can't even guess at cantonese. The process for working was pretty much asking the engineers to meet my requirements.

3. Final Production

Running a group buy

This was my first time running a significant group buy with large numbers and it was certainly a... discouraging experience. Honestly it is so much harder than it would seem on the surface and every little snag can potentially delay the group buy even more. A groupbuy is a bit of a logistical nightmare, at least from what I have experienced. It literally caused me some sleepless nights and crying myself to sleep, *so for anyone else looking to run a GB definitely accept that it can really take its toll on you.* In the next area I will cover some of these issues.

Problems, hooks and snags

Size of the group buy

The sheer unexpected size that the group buy ended up being was very unexpected, at least for me. I was expecting around 80 orders at best, but ended up with over 200, which completely changed the dynamics of shipping and export.

Manufacturing Troubles

With the creation of the switch there has been some significant issues that have been identified with the manufacturer. QC is definitely the largest issue. Although I specifically asked for extra lubrication, some of the switches ended up bone dry, even after being assured that they had all been quality checked (*If anyone has this issue, feel free to send me a PM and I will do my best to accommodate you*).

Design Problems

Besides for the aforementioned QC issues, there were also issues with the housing (Also referred to as casing) not being adequate. The stems were quite fine, however once put in the nylon housing it affected the stem significantly in a negative fashion.

Communication

This by far was my biggest personal issue. I find that personally when I am finding myself stressed out I tend to close myself in and not talk to anyone, the exact opposite of what I should be doing in those circumstances. During the groupbuy a family emergency came up and I sort of just went into lockdown mode and didn't really communicate to you guys what was going on.

I also need to improve on shipping notifications so people don't randomly just have their items arrive at their door.

Solutions

Packing

To increase the speed at which my customers receive their items i need to change up my packing system. At the moment I am getting shipments of switches in bags of 250 then dividing them up into 110 packs, *pretty inefficient*. To solve this issue I am currently speaking to my manufacturers about having them pack into custom packaging that I will supply to them.

GB Preparations

In the future I think that i need to be way more prepared to run a groupbuy and have 100% certainty that everything is ready. A plan B also needs to be devised before the start of the GB just incase things do tend to go wrong. This includes proper organisation of proxies with a protocol so that people are aware when their shipment is on the way.

Manufacturing

This is an issue that I am really torn on, I feel like my manufacturer could work given a bit of a QC improvement and more hands on by me, but at this current moment I am not sure I want to continue to work with them. I have been chatting to some other manufacturers and I think I might see if they would be willing to co-operate with me.

Design

I have some pretty significant and radical changes that I want to introduce to the switches in a round 2 of some sort. I will touch on that a bit further down.

Communication

Honestly I don't trust myself in the future to keep constant communication with the community, every time I get a message I get so anxious that I wanna throw up. Therefore I think that it might be in my interest to have someone else manage the community. I **want** to communicate with you guys more but I really don't think that I am capable, which only really leads to one conclusion: Get someone else to do it.

The Future

R2. I think that's the only way that I can improve and for this one I believe that some fairly radical changes are needed to spice things up and really bring the superlinear to life.

Currently I have been experimenting with different materials for the stem that have produced absolutely fantastic results, even in the panda housing. I think I have found the best material for it and I am currently in talks at the moment. I am also looking to have my own lubricant, springs and housing made to the best of quality that i can possibly get.

I have also been experimenting with clicky switches, but that's quite some time away.

I really don't want to say too much just because at this stage things can change really quickly.

In Closing

With a bit of a troubled development and production I think that I am still happy with the pandas, at least as a learning experience. I think it is to be expected that things will always get off to a rocky start but I really hope to refine that down to a nice smooth road. It's **not** as if I wish for things to go wrong, I am doing everything I can to produce the product that I envisioned, believe me if I could just give everyone it I would love to but unfortunately it's just not how the world runs. I think the future is definitely brighter than the past now that I have had the appropriate experience.