

How to select your air conditioning service provider

WE APPRECIATE THAT IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO SELECT THE RIGHT COMPANY FOR YOUR AIR CONDITIONING NEEDS, SO HERE ARE A FEW FACTORS THAT YOU MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER;

SERVICE PROVIDER V. CONTRACTOR

It is difficult to be all things to all people, this is why individuals and companies specialise in one particular area. Service providers specialise in providing an on-going service to their clients, whereas contractors specialise in one-off sales and installations. Generally speaking, you can expect a contractor to be better at installations than a service provider, and vice versa. Both types of companies have an important role to play, depending on your requirements.

EXPERIENCE

Experience is important, but in our opinion longevity alone is no great claim to fame (and we've been around for a long time). It really depends on the company; some are progressive and client focussed and others have been around for so long they take their clients for granted. A certain amount of trading time is important – if the company has been trading successfully for some time they are probably doing something right, and are likely to be around for a long time yet.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA COVERED

Some local companies – typically the very small ones – concentrate on serving their local area and are reluctant to travel too far. Others – typically the service providers – serve clients throughout the wider metropolitan area. As their service technicians travel from job to job, the location of their head office is often irrelevant.

A few large service providers have interstate branches, which might be of benefit to you if you own or manage properties throughout the country.

SERVICE RESPONSE TIME

This is an important factor, but a difficult one to gauge. Our experience is that most service providers (and contractors) promise the world when it comes to breakdown response times, but all too often let their clients down when it comes time to perform. Perhaps the best way to determine just how well a service provider will respond is to try them, or (if you can) get in touch with one of their existing clients and ask them for their experience.

EXPERTISE AND COMPETENCE

This is crucial in your selection, although I appreciate it is often difficult to assess. We are reluctant to advise that you should look for a company specialising in service and maintenance – if these are your needs – lest we be accused of self-promotion. However in this case there's no other way to present this topic; a company specialising in this area employs technicians who perform so many repairs - day in day out - that they become very good at it. A service technician possesses very different skills to an installer. Of course, the reverse also applies.

PRICE

Most people appreciate that to perform a good service you need competent, well trained employees – and inevitably this costs a little more. Generally speaking it follows that the cheapest will rarely be the best. Be careful of selecting on the basis of hourly rates alone; a cheaper rate might end up costing a lot more if the service provider is not technically competent, or will keep you waiting a long time for service. Of course both service providers and contractors need to be competitive; if you feel that you are being overcharged, or you are not happy with the work being done, then you should look elsewhere.

LICENCES, INSURANCES AND OH&S

These are very important issues to consider. If it were our choice, we would only deal with a company that is fully licenced and insured. Not only does this provide peace of mind, but it is also an indication of the competence of the company you will deal with.

Similarly, Occupational Health and Safety is a serious issue and the company you choose should have systems and procedures in place to ensure a safe working environment for all.