

## Does Brand Matter?

The most common question homeowners ask when looking to purchase new heating and air conditioning equipment is, “What brand of equipment do you carry?” and of course, “How much?” We will save the latter question for another discussion. Our response to the brand question is usually, “We offer equipment from several manufacturers. Do you have a preference?” Eighty to ninety percent reply, “No, I just want a good one.” Overall, only a very small percentage of people want a particular brand. More often they specify a brand they do not want. Between our own informal research and other published studies, we have come to the following conclusions about brand and homeowner satisfaction.

The first conclusion is that the dealer you purchase from is by far the most important part of the equation. If you are going to have surgery, you are more concerned about the reputation of the doctor than what brand of scalpel he uses. Your *relationship* with the doctor may be of even greater importance than his/her skill level. If you trust him/her, you know he/she will use the correct tools for the job. When it comes to their home’s comfort system, too often people ignore the importance of their relationship with the HVAC contractor.

The second conclusion is that the efficiency level of equipment purchased is also very important. This includes whether it is a variable speed unit or Energy Star Certified. Almost all manufacturers make different levels of equipment. One of our manufacturers, Trane, makes eight different models of 90% gas furnaces, and each model comes in a variety of sizes. Our Lennox line has nine different series of air conditioners in every size. Customers who purchase the premium equipment from any mainline manufacturer tend to be much happier with their systems than those who purchase the basic equipment from the same manufacturer.

The final conclusion is that homeowners who are concerned about how a unit is installed are more satisfied with their end result. It doesn’t make sense to buy new tires and not have them properly balanced or aligned. It also doesn’t make sense to purchase a new heating and cooling system and not evaluate the duct system or address air flow issues. Even new equipment will perform poorly when matched with an inadequate duct system.

In closing, there are legitimate reasons to choose one brand of equipment over another. Each manufacturer has strengths and weaknesses. However, the dealer you buy from, the level of equipment you buy, and the way the equipment is installed, dictates how much you enjoy your new system far more than its brand.

If you would like more tips on purchasing new equipment, or servicing your existing equipment then give us a call or stop by our showroom at 1405 South Broadway.