

# A Guide to Buying Windows, Doors and Conservatories

This guide has been prepared by Anne Davis who for many years has been unhappy about the unprofessional and unscrupulous business practices used by some companies that have brought the whole industry into disrepute.

The following notes will hopefully alert you to some of the pitfalls encountered during the buying process. They will probably not cover every eventuality but should make you aware and alert to the idea that you must remain in control.

## How do I choose the right company?

Would you normally consider buying high value products from a person or company that:

- Knocks at the door canvassing for business?
- Makes unsolicited phone calls?
- Interrupts you in a shop or supermarket?

The answer to these questions is probably no – so there must be a more sensible route.

## How do you find the right company?

- Ask friends or family if they have had work done that they can recommend.
- Use companies who actually manufacture products.
- Use the Yellow Pages
- Check your local press for genuine companies.
- Use local firms that you can go and visit.

## When you have one or more companies in mind.

- Check that they have a business address.
- Can they offer references and customer testimonials?
- How long have they been in business?
- Are they FENSA registered?

## Make an appointment for a representative to call.

Points to watch for, the consultant/representative must be:

- Punctual
- Polite and well presented.
- The average job should only take half to three-quarters of an hour to assess there is no need for a representative to spend 4 or 5 hours in your home unless at your request.
- Gimmicks and discounts are sometimes used to induce you into making a quick decision – signing on the night is a classic!

The following DO NOT exist:

- Interest free credit - finance houses are not charities!
- Discounts – why is it that by signing on the night you can save 50% 40% 30% ???
- Discounts - do not mean a good deal?
- Buy one get one free - its not baked beans you are buying!
- Free / special offer – nothing in life is free!

Where practical, visit a showroom and ask to see any customer references that may be available.

Alternatively speak to other customers on the phone and ask specific questions such as:

- Did they turn up on time?
- Was the installation completed to your satisfaction?
- Did they leave the site clean and tidy?
- If there was a problem how quickly and efficiently was it rectified?
- Were the supporting staff in the company polite, courteous and helpful?
- Don't always expect perfect answers as any type of building or remodelling can have its problems or unforeseen challenges. It is a true test of a company, how quickly these problems can be resolved.

You have had a visit and you've got your quote – what next?

Assess your quote carefully! If you are using more than one company to give you a quote make sure that they are using comparable products and that they can show you a sample of the product to be used.

Has the representative taken into account all of the features you discussed together and shown it in the quote.

Make your decision in your own time when you have collected all the facts together. If a deposit is asked for, 10% of the contract value should be sufficient unless it is a conservatory when up to a third of the contract sum is not unusual.

**Read the contract carefully!**

I trust you will find the above helpful. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.