

Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

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Be Realistic and Shop for Value

No matter what you are shopping for, there are always selection criteria that must be met. Nobody is willing to part with their money if they are not convinced that a purchase has value. That makes the advertising industry strong and creative. I'm sure before a multi-million dollar ad campaign is launched, many focus groups and test markets have been used. The job of a manufacturer is to bring a product to market that will make them a profit.

We as consumers want useful things that will last a long time. As the installer of complicated appliances, I want to use good quality equipment that will not require me to return to the scene of the installation to adjust or repair minor malfunctions caused by inferior manufacturing practices. Using metal that is too thin for cabinets of air conditioners and furnaces makes me exclude numerous brands. Assembling equipment with inferior hardware or using too few fasteners to make the units strong and free from shipping damage and rattles and vibration after installation excludes even more. What I am left with is a few brands that are made well and stand the test of time. The problem is that they are not the cheapest ones to purchase. I explain this regularly but I am not a paid salesperson so all I do is relate my experience and opinions to my potential customers. If they believe what I say, I may work for them. If they don't, I expect they will have someone else install another brand.

There is an old sign I have seen that says "Good, Fast, Cheap. Pick 2" and that is pretty accurate. Cheap is rarely a good criterion to use for selection of anything that needs to last. I would much rather save up for something and be sure it will last then to grab a cheap imitation and regret it. I have been a victim of my own greed though. I buy a specific brand of cordless tools and they work well. The batteries are expensive and there are Chinese imitations that work with these tools. I bought 2 to try and one did not work right out of the package. I contacted the seller and instead of asking me to return them, they sent me 2 more and did not even want the bad one back. Both of them worked but within a year only one of the 3 will recharge. I did it to myself so nobody else is to blame but never again.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

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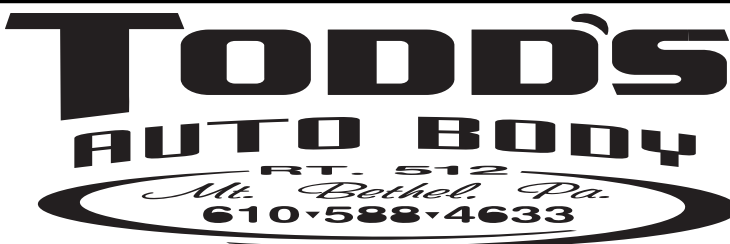
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