



## Tips for Choosing the Right Home Technology Specialist

*We all love that technology can make our lives more convenient, but it's important to know that something simple and elegant on the outside often hides a lot of underlying complexity. Avoid AV people and companies who over-promise and under deliver by following some of these tips.*

### 1. Verify they have a valid C-7 License.

In the state of California, if you hire someone to do home improvement in excess of \$500 they must have a valid contractor's license. For the installation, maintenance and service of low-voltage systems, they must have a valid C-7 license. You can check a license on the CSLB site: <https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicense/CheckLicense.aspx>

### 2. They belong to CEDIA.

CEDIA (Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association) is the international trade association for the low-voltage systems industry. CEDIA is not only an education provider but they also provide certifications for Electronic Systems Contractors. You can search CEDIA professionals in your area on the CEDIA site: <http://www.cedia.org/find-a-edia-professional>

### 3. Verify they are insured and bonded.

Any company you consider should have insurance, including workman's compensation and liability. Should they damage the property or be injured on the job site you will want to limit your liability by confirming they are properly insured. If in doubt, consult with your insurance agent and lawyers to determine your liability when hiring someone who is uninsured and unlicensed.

### 4. Verify they have a Seller's Permit.

In the state of California, you must have a business license and seller's permit to resale merchandise. Beyond being illegal, a "business" (using the term loosely here) that does not have a seller's permit is buying the merchandise in their name which means when they resale it to the end user, the end user becomes the 2nd owner and factory warranty only applies to the original purchaser. If you're concerned about a company it wouldn't hurt to research them through Better Business Bureau (<http://sanjose.bbb.org/BusinessFind.aspx?Source>)



## **5. They are an Authorized Dealer.**

Many manufacturers' warranties are void when sold through unauthorized channels (i.e. online). You should have confidence that the equipment will be covered should it ever fail. Authorized dealers also have a relationship with the manufacturer which means they are better trained on the product and the company which makes them better prepared to advise, install & program the product. To find out if a company is an authorized dealer you can go directly to the manufacturer's website and search the dealer locator.

## **6. They are reputable.**

Do they come highly recommended? Can they provide a list of references? Do they have online reviews? These are just a few ways to measure a company's reputation and determine if they'll make a good partner on your next project.

## **7. They have the right attitude.**

Are they friendly? Professional? Helpful? Do they answer their phone? If they have all the qualifications but terrible customer service that simply won't work either. Because they will service your client's systems long after the project is complete you want to be confident they will take care of them. If they don't, this could reflect poorly on your company.

A final word, **ALWAYS TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!** The items above are just a few basic red flags designed to protect you but nothing does that better than your gut feeling.