

best car care pros

The Search For The Right Mechanic

By Tresa Erickson

Have you ever had to look for a plumber, a physician or some other professional? If you have, then you know how time consuming it can be. Sometimes it takes several weeks to find just the right professional for you. The same can be said of finding the right professional for your vehicle. It can take some time to find a good mechanic.

As with the search for any professional, the best place to start is with recommendations from friends, family and coworkers. Stay away from any mechanics who have a bad reputation. When you have a list of potential candidates, stop in for a visit and take note of the following:

- Appearance. Is the shop generally neat and orderly? How new is the equipment? Is it in good condition?
- Specialties. What type of vehicles does the mechanic service? Is yours one of them? What type of repairs do they specialize in?
- Skills. What are the mechanic's qualifications? Do you see any trade school diplomas or certificates of advanced coursework hanging up? Do they answer clients' questions in layman's terms?
- Policies. What are the rates for parts, labor and service?

Does the mechanic offer repair estimates or work guarantees? What type of payment methods do they accept?

- Staff. Is the staff courteous? Are they willing to answer questions? Do you see any civil, community or customer service awards hanging on the walls?

These are just some of the areas you should concentrate on as you check out each of the mechanics on your list. Once you have studied and are satisfied with the mechanic's performance in each of the areas, schedule an appointment with the ones remaining on your list for a small service like an oil change. That way, you can get a feel for their work without shelling out a ton of money. If the mechanic takes too long, charges too much or worse, does shoddy work, you can cross them off your list.

Once you have narrowed your list to a select few, stop in for a visit again and clarify any remaining issues you may be concerned about. At this point, choosing the right mechanic may just be a matter of personal preference, that is, deciding which mechanic you like and get along with the best.

It may take some time, but finding the right mechanic will pay off big the next time your vehicle breaks down and needs a major repair. Start looking today!

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