

Has The BBC Turned Trader Website Directories InsideOut?

Simon Swift, Business Development Executive at Certass talks about a recent InsideOut Yorkshire and Lincolnshire programme that exposed a couple of 'find a trader' website directories for not carrying out appropriate checks on companies listed on their site

In January, the BBC's Inside-Out Yorkshire and Lincolnshire programme featured a piece that saw a presenter successfully apply to, and be listed on, My-Builder and RatedPeople websites without any experience, or ability.

The experiment was initiated by complaints from two people in separate areas of the country who had been stung by 'rogue traders', employed after the homeowners found them listed on sites that offer details of 'trusted tradespeople' for carrying out home improvements.

It was quite shocking to watch the BBC presenter successfully apply and be listed, simply by setting up an email address and telephone number and false business premises, without any experience or ability. I'm sure the item on the programme has put doubt in lot of homeowners' minds about how they use and trust these 'trusted tradesmen' directory sites in the future. It's particularly interesting that the websites were being advertised using celebrity endorsement from well-know household names from home improvement shows.

Trust is earned, not bought

Many of these sites will list a

trader in exchange for a monthly fee but offer no guarantees on the ability of the company or their experience. Even some reviews were found to be false, with traders creating their own to build credibility on their profiles. As the genuine trader who was interviewed on the show said: "Trust is something to be earned, not bought."

Helping consumers choose wisely

As champions of local installers across the building fabric industry, the BBC's findings in this investigation are really disappointing – especially as we have seen increasing professionalism over the years from genuine traders who deserve to win work from homeowners because they'll do a great job.

The only feedback from the culprit websites was for homeowners to do their own research on traders before handing over any cash or giving the go ahead on work. The message is clear to homeowners, make sure that you choose a tradesperson who's certified. That's where third-party certification schemes like CQ-Assured can really make installers stand out from the crowd.

Our workmanship quality assurance scheme has been de-

signed to give consumers complete confidence when choosing a contractor. Unlike the 'find a trader' directories, at Certass, we audit our members' work so that homeowners can be assured that our members will do a great job on their home improvement.

Added benefits for installers

We check important things like insurance and the qualifications of your team on a regular basis, so you can show homeowners who approach you that you are certified by a trusted third party.

If you're more of an all-round home improvement company, our service is ideal, because our schemes cover the whole building fabric industry including conservatory warm roofs, cavity clearance, extensions and roofline as well as glazing installation.

Not only that, but membership also gives you access to discounted employers and public liability insurance, discounted MTC cards for your team and even access to 0% finance for your customers.

It's easy to apply online and we offer friendly technical and marketing support too. **f**

Find out more at certass.co.uk