9 MISTAKES MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS MAKE WHEN SELECTING A BIOMEDICAL SERVICE COMPANY AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

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FOREWORD

by John Youssef

Thanks for taking the time to read this report. It is my hope that by the time you finish reading this, you will understand the biggest problems people encounter when selecting a biomedical service provider and how to avoid them.

I’ve compiled this report from thousands of hours of personal experience and hundreds of client experiences that I have gained over decades working as a biomedical engineer. I collected so much material to go in this report, I had to scale it way back. If I included everything I wanted to warn everyone about, it wouldn’t be a report, it would have been a book.

So instead, I included the things that I consider the most important and the most pressing issues for dentists.

“These are the mistakes I see nearly every day that cost some companies tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. “

How to avoid the constant worry about what could happen if potentially life critical equipment were to fail and the financial consequences that might arise if it did.

I haven’t included even a tenth of what I wanted to put in this report. All I ask is that before you choose your biomedical service provider, you consider the issues I raise in this report. If after you do this, and you have remaining questions, all I ask is that you simply get in touch with me. I promise not to try and do the hard sell on you or push you away from your existing service provider - but I also promise to give you a straight analysis on what you are getting. If it’s a great deal, I’ll tell you, if it’s not, I’ll tell you that too.

I look forward to hearing from you and I hope you enjoy the report!
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INTRODUCTION

Let’s face it. You’re a medical professional. You may work in a hospital, a medical centre or day surgery, a dental or physiotherapy practice or an ambulance service. You may even be another biomedical engineer or represent a supplier of medical equipment.

One thing’s for certain. Your hourly charge out rate is high and the impact of downtime of critical equipment costs you money. You need a service partner you can trust. You want to be certain that they get the job done efficiently and with a minimum of fuss. You want to be confident that your equipment is repaired and maintained in accordance with best practice procedures and follows the manufacturers documented procedures. Your patients expect that of you. They want to feel safe while in your care. They know that’s your duty of care to them.

Making a mistake when choosing a biomedical service provider, even a small mistake, something seemingly trivial could cost you tens, even hundreds of thousands of dollars at some point in the future. With that kind of money on the line, it’s worth taking a little extra time to be diligent in your decision making process.

Now, I’m not saying this report is going to eliminate these risks totally, or even that it will ensure you make the best decision possible. What I am saying is that if you read this entire report cover to cover at least once, you will have enough information to make the best buying decision possible.

If the thought of making a costly $100,000 mistake doesn’t literally make you sick, then I guess this report isn’t for you. Just toss it in the bin and go about your day. If it does, then keep reading; I promise to be as brief as possible and cover every major topic I can think of.
MISTAKE NO. 1 – Choosing a service provider who is not a service agent for the majority of major brands of medical equipment available in Australia

Maintaining relationships with multiple service providers is an expensive business that adds to overheads and eats administrative time. The major manufacturers actively seek out the premier biomedical service providers because they want to be confident that their reputation is protected and your investment in their equipment is protected.

For most medical professionals, the most critical pieces of equipment in their practice are the medical devices used for clinical analysis and treatment of their patients and their autoclave for sterilising surgical instruments. Without these, you simply can’t operate. When you have several practices, you probably have installed a number of brands over the years. To minimise the downtime when things go wrong, you need to partner with a service provider who has been appointed by the major manufacturers of medical devices and autoclave equipment. This lets you cut costs by having one company validate and service all of your medical equipment, minimises call out fees, and the amount of billable hours required to keep all your devices and autoclaves in first class working order. You also save by ensuring parts are sourced from the manufacturer without additional and costly margins being applied. Downtime is minimised as you are less likely to have to wait days for parts to arrive.

Make sure you select a service provider who can demonstrate the majority of manufacturers in Australia have entrusted them to protect their most valuable assets, their brand and reputation. If your service provider measures up against the manufacturer’s requirements, the chances are that they will look after you and provide the service levels you expect.
MISTAKE NO. 2 - Choosing a service provider who can’t afford to keep an extensive inventory of spare parts

Maintaining a comprehensive range of spare parts for a range of medical devices and autoclaves requires a significant capital investment. You’d be surprised how many technicians scrimp in this area. This means that the technician is often scratching around in the back of his van looking for any part that might get you out of trouble. We’ve even seen repairs that used rubber bands and araldite because the correct manufacturer’s parts were not available. Some technicians will even fit a used part they took out of somebody else’s machine yesterday. If it didn’t work yesterday, how long will it work for you today?

Other times where poorly supported machines are out in the field, parts may even need to be custom manufactured, significantly adding to down time and repair costs.

Nobody ever thinks to question a potential service provider about his spare parts inventory levels people tell me that the equipment cost is secondary to reliable service and a rapid response if an autoclave or medical device goes down. Make sure you don’t make this mistake and ask some probing questions about spare parts inventory levels when selecting a service provider.
MISTAKE NO. 3 – Choosing a Service provider who does not have an extensive holding of loan equipment.

When you have a busy surgery, you need to have confidence that if a machine cannot be repaired promptly that your service provider backs up his service with an extensive holding of loan equipment. Using a service provider who does not provide this additional level of support exposes you to a significantly enhanced risk of suffering economic loss due to extended downtime if, for some reason, your machine needs to be taken back to the workshop for repair. Another time you may need to depend on loan equipment is when your machine is deemed uneconomic to repair and there may be a delay in obtaining a replacement machine.

Receiving loan equipment lets you continue to provide surgical procedures under these circumstances so that economic losses due to equipment malfunction are eliminated. Ask any potential service provider you are considering to appoint, questions about how many devices they have available for loan. By doing this, you can easily avoid making this mistake.
MISTAKE NO. 4 - Not leveraging economies of scale by failing to negotiate group discounts and priority service arrangements for multiple sites.

Let's face it. People generally never even think about service arrangements on their autoclave and other medical equipment until something breaks down. When you are in a crisis, facing the stress of downtime, and a looming patient backlog, this is not the time to be making decisions about who services your equipment. As a result, service arrangements in a large network of surgeries are often developed on an ad-hoc, as needed basis. When faced with urgent call outs, fees become inflated and that leads to increased servicing costs.

By choosing a major service provider who recognises the value of your network, you can negotiate a group discount by committing to an annual service/maintenance contract for all of your surgeries in the eastern states (NSW, VIC and QLD). Not all service providers have this level of geographic coverage.

Another benefit of negotiating a single corporate service contract is that you will also receive priority service. This means that when you have an equipment failure and need urgent technical support, you are not left waiting in a queue of scheduled service calls waiting your turn. Instead, your call will be escalated to the top of the queue. This means that the very next available technician will be dispatched to your call.

So by avoiding this mistake and selecting an appropriately qualified service provider with extensive geographic coverage, you not only reduce costs but you also reduce the amount of downtime experienced across the network. This in turn leads to increased profits to your group.
MISTAKE NO. 5 – Not choosing a service provider who provides online access automated and self-serve reporting.

In this connected world, you need a service provider who provides you with a client portal that enables you to log jobs, see lists of equipment your service provider is managing for you. If your service provider can’t provide this to you, then walk away and look for another company.

When you have a large number of affiliate or branch offices, you have an even greater demand for information as there are an increasing number of stakeholders that need to be kept informed about service priorities and maintenance schedules. In this case, you need to ensure that your biomedical service provider can provide automated scheduled reporting that is customised to meet your requirements and access to an online system that allows you to produce ad-hoc reports as required so that you always have the information you need at your fingertips to answer the questions that arise across your network.
MISTAKE NO. 6 - Not understanding the requirements of the various Australian Standards that apply to the maintenance and servicing of medical equipment.

The Australian Standards requires that all medical equipment must undertake routine testing by a qualified biomedical technician during its service life, in order to ensure its continued safety and performance. This is quite a complex area so I have prepared a table that will help you understand what standards are applicable in your particular circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Standard Title</th>
<th>Medical Centres, Day Surgeries and Hospitals</th>
<th>Dental Practices</th>
<th>Physiotherapy Practices</th>
<th>Pre-Post Hospital, Occupational health, Life Saving organisations, medical education, industrial, homecare markets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS3003</td>
<td>Electrical installations - Patient treatment areas of hospitals and medical and dental practices</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS3551</td>
<td>Management programs for medical equipment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS3840</td>
<td>Pressure regulators for use with medical gases - Pressure regulators and pressure regulators with flow-metering devices</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS3760</td>
<td>In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS48157</td>
<td>Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilizing reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Australian Standards applicable to various medical facilities
Many people don’t realise there are so many standards that could apply to their medical facility and simply test medical equipment in their routine electrical test and tag program under AS 3760. This is NOT sufficient to be compliant when servicing your medical equipment. To comply with the standards relevant in our circumstances, the technician you appoint must have received appropriate training and have access to the necessary specialist biomedical test equipment and follow the manufacturer's test procedures using properly calibrated test equipment.

In most circumstances, the standards require that medical equipment and autoclaves undergo acceptance and validation testing before new equipment is released for clinical use. Acceptance testing encompasses a set of administrative and technical processes that must be performed. During acceptance testing, a preventative maintenance schedule is developed for the equipment that defines service intervals according to prescribed criteria that are designed to reduce the probability of failure or degradation in performance of the equipment.

Standards compliance is particularly important in today’s litigious society where the chain of responsibility comes under critical examination in the case of a workplace incident involving medical equipment. Typically in these cases, the first matter to be examined is standards compliance. If this cannot be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt, the owner of the equipment in question faces significant exposure to litigation and adverse findings.

If you are working within an ISO9001 Quality Assurance framework, failure to comply with the relevant standards can result in a Non-Conformance. This may result in significant expense to rectify if there is a backlog of equipment to test at one time if an unsatisfactory compliance audit is received.

Don’t make this mistake, ensure that your service technicians are fully aware of the requirements of the various standards and can demonstrate to your satisfaction that they have the necessary training and test equipment that demonstrates this. If in doubt, ask them about how they comply with the standard. If you are not satisfied with their answers, don’t engage them and seek an alternative complying service provider.
MISTAKE NO. 7 - Choosing a service provider who is not fully insured

Inadequate insurances held by a contractor could leave you exposed to litigation if a workplace incident occurs. You could become liable in the case of an incident. There are additional underwriting risks insurers face when providing liability insurance to medical service engineers so ordinary public liability cover is not sufficient. Service providers need to take out specific insurances. Make sure the service provider you select holds specialist Medical Equipment Product & Public Liability insurance with at least $20 million cover. You should also ensure that your service provider holds Work Cover Insurance for all employees. Ask to see a copy of their current insurance policies to avoid making this mistake.
MISTAKE NO. 8 - Choosing a service provider who does not have ISO9001 Quality Assurance and other industry accreditation

Almost all medical companies in Australia face some sort of accreditation process. By choosing a biomedical service provider who has a quality assurance system in place gives you the peace of mind that you have end to end quality assurance systems that won’t be undone by dealing with a non-accredited service provider. Make sure the service provider you choose has current ISO 9001 accreditation so that you know that they will be speaking your language when it comes to conformance with your expectations. Dealing with a professional biomedical service company committed to a culture of continuous improvement.

Another important emerging requirement is IPro LIVE vendor accreditation. This new accreditation process for vendors is widespread in Victoria and gaining traction in NSW and other states. Save yourself any future accreditation hassles and choose a biomedical service company that is serious about quality and committed to maintaining the accreditations that the industry is increasingly demanding.
MISTAKE NO. 9 - Choosing a service provider who cannot service all of the equipment used in your medical facility

In this age of technology, there is an increasing number of medical electronic devices that require maintenance. The more items that a single medical service provider can test for you while their technician on site, the easier it becomes to keep your facility in tip top operating condition. Here is a sample list of equipment that you may have in your facility to prompt you:

- Audiometers
- Autoclaves
- Blood Pressure Monitors
- Cardiac Lasers
- Defibrillators
- Electrocardiographs
- ESU generators
- Examination Lamps
- Heart/ Lung Machines
- Holter Recorders
- Hyfrecators
- Imaging Ultrasound
- Intensive Care Beds
- Interferential
- Medical Gas Regulators, Flowmeters
- Nebulisers
- Patient treatment areas
- Pulse Oximeters
- Resuscitation Manikins
- Simulation Manikin
- Sphygmomanometers
- Spirometers
- Stress Testing Equipment
- Suction Units
- Traction Units
- Treatment tables
- Ultrasound Therapy

Choosing the Right Service Provider

How can you tell if one company is any better or any worse, or any different from another? How do you know whom to contract without being an expert yourself? This section will help you answer those questions – and ultimately save you time, money, headaches and hassle by showing you how to find the right biomedical service provider for your medical facility whether you are a dentist, doctor, physiotherapist or work in a hospital or day surgery.
Getting Estimates

Perhaps the most tempting way to choose a contractor or company is based on price. When comparing estimates, just make sure you fully understand how they differ. The price will vary based on the services offered, the capability of the service provider, the amount they invest in training of their service technicians, the guarantees and warranty provided and the experience of the company. Make sure you understand what the services on offer are and review the warranty information carefully. Don’t automatically choose the lowest bidder. Upon close examination, you may find that higher prices are justified.

What to look for in a Service Provider

In choosing a biomedical service provider, you pretty much just want to consider the points we’ve already covered. First and foremost, consider the reputation of the service provider. How long have they been in business and are they considered to be honest, and held in high regard in their industry? Are they regularly involved and support industry associations such as the Society for Medical and Biological Engineering?

Can they demonstrate that they have received the appropriate training from the manufacturers of equipment you have installed in your facility? Ask them to produce evidence of this. If they can’t then, the chances are that they are not well regarded in the industry.

One way to benchmark a service provider’s reputation in the industry is to ask if they carry out acceptance testing on new equipment on behalf of manufacturers of medical equipment. Acceptance testing is a set of processes, both administrative and technical that must be performed before new medical equipment is released for clinical use. Manufacturers are careful to preserve their reputation in the industry so will only pick the best biomedical service providers to partner with in this way.

Can the service provider provide written testimonials? Any reputable business accumulates these from happy customers without even trying so if a service provider is unable to provide written testimonials, the chances are he’s trying to hide something.

Also, can they demonstrate that their test equipment has been tested by an accredited calibration company within the last 12 months? Ask for a copy of the test certificate. This is critically important because if a service provider is unable to provide this crucial evidence, your equipment is not going to be serviced in accordance with the Australian Standards and you won’t have the confidence that your equipment will perform in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications. It is not sufficient to just do normal electrical testing.

The Bottom Line

To ensure a hassle free experience with the servicing of your medical equipment, you should do some detective work on any service provider you’re considering to contract. Use the checklist provided as a guide. Taking the time to complete the checklist can save you thousands of dollars… LITERALLY!
Service Provider Evaluation

CHECKLIST

For your convenience we’ve develop this checklist of all the questions you’ll want to ask before appointing any service provider to maintain your medical equipment.

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<th>Service Provider B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Service provider is an authorised service agent for the medical devices and the major autoclave brands available in Australia.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Service Provider has the resources to keep an extensive inventory of spare parts in stock.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Service provider has an extensive holding of loan equipment in a number of states.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Service provider fully understands the requirements of the various standards and how they apply to the servicing of the medical equipment used in your facility.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Service provider holds Workcover insurance and specialist Medical Equipment Product &amp; Public Liability insurance with at least $20 million cover and can provide evidence on request.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Service Provider Holds: ISO9001 Quality Assurance accreditation and; vendor accreditation.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Service Provider Holds  iPro LIVE vendor accreditation.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Does service provider service all of the equipment used in your medical facility including gas regulators and patient treatment areas.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Years in business</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Strong supporter of industry associations such as the Society for Medical and Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Provide Photographs of repair facilities, personnel etc.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Can provide written testimonials on request?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Conducts acceptance testing for medical equipment manufacturers.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Can demonstrate they are trained by the major manufacturers to service the equipment in your facility</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Can demonstrate test equipment tested by an accredited calibration company in the last 12 months.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions? Need more information Call 1300 488 324
CONCLUSION

I hope you found this report what I imagined it would be when I sat down to write it. Informative, educational and easy to read. Most of all, I hope it has provided you with a framework that will save you from making a costly mistake when choosing a service provider.

I know I can’t have possibly answered every question you may have in this report. I started my business U-Tech Medical over twenty years ago because I believed there was a lack of choice in biomedical service providers and that customers were putting up with poor and inconsistent service. I am just as passionate about improving service levels in the industry today as I was when I started out in 1994. Today I have a team of about 30 people helping me in my personal mission to bring ethics and accountability to this important industry I am so passionate about, so I’d like to make two offers to you.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Offer No. 1 - If there’s any further questions you have about selecting a biomedical service provider, call us and me or one of my team will give you 30 minutes of our time to answer your questions without trying to sell you something. Call us today and let us help you navigate this process with ease.

Offer No. 2 - Sample our service for free! If you are not a current customer and you have a medical equipment servicing issue, book a service call with any of my state offices, mention this report and I’ll personally cover the labour cost of an initial service call up to a maximum of 2 hours. For businesses with multiple sites, we will cover the first 3 autoclave services under this program. All I ask is that you pay for any parts or consumables that are required to get your biomedical equipment up to the manufacturers’ standard. I want you to experience how it feels to deal with a premier biomedical service company who really cares about their customers.