Multigenerational Home Climate Success Starts with Mini-Splits

Sponsored by: ***Fujitsu General***

Everyone, at some point in their life, has fought a life or death battle with housemates over the temperature of the heating or air conditioning for the household. It's either too hot or it's too cold and the thermostat is constantly being shifted around, resulting in a lot of wasted energy. This sort of thing is bad enough for both the environment and the peace of the household between roommates or nuclear families, but what happens when a family of four becomes a family of six or eight as elders move into the picture?

Multigenerational Households Face Tough Decisions

There's an increase in demand for properties that can simultaneously house multiple generations in separate, dedicated spaces. Unfortunately, that demand can't always be met, as some markets have more properties that are flexible enough for this type of lifestyle than others. That sometimes leaves buyers with hard choices.

Do they go for the five-bedroom house that is such an albatross that it may well be impossible to heat and cool? Considering the size of that monster, it's unlikely that one air conditioner and furnace is going to be running anywhere near peak efficiency.

The 64 million Americans now living in multigenerational households would be fast to point out that the problem isn't just with the equipment; it's also that grandparents and grandchildren may have drastically different needs when it comes to climate control. For example, older people may be less tolerant of overly warm spaces, forcing the rest of the household to dress accordingly to be comfortable.

RECENT POSTS

- Learn to Delegate (and Grow your Business)
- General Contractor VS Specialty Contractor
- Is There Still Money to Be Made Flipping Houses?
- 5 Ways Attending a Trade Show Can Help You and Your Business
- How Can Instagram Help Your Business?
- Should You Specialize?
- Why Do Workers Still Fall?
- When Business Is Booming, Should Spending Change?
- Commercial vs. Residential
- Dealing with Clients Who Want to Micromanage

Everyone, at some point in their life, has fought a life or death battle with housemates over the temperature of the heating or air conditioning for the household. It's either too hot or it's too cold and the thermostat is constantly being shifted around, resulting in a lot of wasted energy. This sort of thing is bad enough for both the environment and the peace of the household between roommates or nuclear families, but what happens when a family of four becomes a family of six or eight as elders move into the picture?

Multigenerational Households Face Tough Decisions

There's an increase in demand for properties that can simultaneously house multiple generations in separate, dedicated spaces. Unfortunately, that demand can't always be met, as some markets have more properties that are flexible enough for this type of lifestyle than others. That sometimes leaves buyers with hard choices.

Do they go for the five-bedroom house that is such an albatross that it may well be impossible to heat and cool? Considering the size of that monster, it's unlikely that one air conditioner and furnace is going to be running anywhere near peak efficiency.

The 64 million Americans now living in multigenerational households would be fast to point out that the problem isn't just with the equipment; it's also that grandparents and grandchildren may have drastically different needs when it comes to climate control. For example, older people may be less tolerant of overly warm spaces, forcing the rest of the household to dress accordingly to be comfortable.

The Demand for Multigenerational Homes is Only Increasing

According to the National Association of Realtors' 2018 Generational Trends Report, 13 percent of last year's buyers purchased a multigenerational home. Buyers between ages 53 and 62 were the most likely to do so, with 20 percent of the cohort making a multigenerational purchase. The most common reason, not surprisingly, was to take care of aging parents (22 percent of buyers cited this reason)

These multigenerational households have been on the upswing since 1980, when just 12 percent of homes carried that label. Since then, partially due to the longer-term effects of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, multigenerational housing has come back in a big way. Today, 20 percent of Americans – 64 million – live in multigenerational homes – already just inches away from the record 21% in 1950.

But What About Energy Efficiency?

Obviously, all these big families need a big energy budget to keep super-sized homes comfortable for their inhabitants. In fact, heating and cooling costs were the most important concern among environmental features included in the Generational Trends Report. Energy efficiency and indoor air quality are on buyers' wish lists across the board, with half of home buyers willing to invest $1,000 to $9,999 to realize a $1,000 annual savings on their utility bills and over a third willing to spend more than $10,000 for the same amount of savings, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

Whether greening up to save power, to save money or to do their part to save the environment, buyers across the spectrum are seeking more green housing upgrades and options. Multigenerational households, especially, need these kinds of solutions to help balance the cost of so many people under one roof and the amount of climate control that's realistic in a budget-conscious household.

Introducing the Ductless Mini-Split System

Ductless mini-split systems function a lot like your typical heat pump or air conditioner, with refrigerant running through copper tubing that feeds from an outdoor compressor into the home. But from there, the tubing goes straight into an individual air handling unit mounted on an exterior wall in the room, rather than snaking into a basement or attic to the typical a-coil that you'd find inside a central air handler. In addition. as the name would imply, there are no ducts to add to these inefficiencies.

Mini-split systems are currently the most energy-efficient heating and cooling product on the market, providing as much as a 25 percent savings on energy bills. Adding best practices for thermostat efficiency into the mix can save an additional 10 percent. So in a perfect world, ductless mini-split systems can save those green-minded homeowners over a third of the energy costs over a traditional central heating and air system.

What are the Best Uses for Ductless Mini-Split Systems?

Mini-splits can be the ideal whole-home solution, particularly when multi-zone temperature control can yield significant gains in comfort and energy savings. Like many HVAC products, ductless mini-split systems are better suited for some situations over others. These highly adaptable systems are really the chameleons of the HVAC world, but you'll find they are a perfect match for:

- **Where no system previously existed**. If existing ductwork needs replacement (or was never installed), mini-split systems can enable the addition of multi-zone climate control with a significant reduction in cost and the disruption that would be involved in retrofitting a home.

- **Detached housing**. Ductless mini-split systems are great for small spaces, especially if they've never had ductwork installed. Rather than dealing with the mess of adding central heat and air to a small, older home that sits behind the main house, ductless mini-splits make it easy to improve climate control.

- **In-laws quarters**. Adding a couple of small rooms and a bathroom onto the main home was once a great solution for giving an elder their privacy while keeping them close for care purposes. Those days are back; instead of relying on inefficient window air conditioners and baseboard heaters, ductless mini-splits are much less obtrusive and can be integrated into the space with ease.

- **Houses with long duct runs**. Long ductwork screams energy loss, no matter how you approach it. The longer the ductwork, the more energy will be lost, both due to small openings along the way where cooled or heated air can escape and general loss through the metal duct to the immediate environment. Ductless mini-splits don't have ducts, there's no loss of energy or limitation on how far apart they can be.

- **Multi-level homes without zoned climate control**. Zoned climate control is one of the best things that ever happened to multi-level homes, but it hasn't really been a common practice for very long. There are lots of homes that have been heated and cooled with one furnace, sometimes in the basement or tucked away in a closet under the stairs. But there's a big problem with that approach since climate control is in no way uniform in this setup.

  In the summer, for example, the top level could be brutally hot while the lowest level is too cold. With each room having its own thermostat, the climate control of each individual zone can be managed independently, according to the desired comfort level.

Of course, this isn't an exhaustive list of the places where your customers may find ductless mini-splits useful, whether they're part of a multigenerational household or not. Sometimes they just want to cool their workshop or studio as efficiently as possible – or save energy in seldom-used areas of the home – these setups are great for that, too!

Ductless Mini-Split Systems from Fujitsu

Fujitsu is a leader in ductless mini-split technology in North America and around the world. While these systems have gained a huge following in Asia, where homes are generally smaller, their use in North America is growing rapidly and is projected to enjoy an annual growth rate of 14% through 2020. With wifi and smart-home technologies, such as voice-control options, as well as the freedom to cool or heat individual spaces as needed, these tiny units bring a lot to the table.

You can read more about the entire Fujitsu climate control product line, including our thermostat war-preventing ductless mini-split systems on the **Fujitsu General** site or call us at 1-888-888-3424 to find out more about becoming a **Fujitsu Elite Contractor**.

Sponsored by: ***Fujitsu General***
Cooling and Heating Solutions for Residential or Commercial. Air Conditioning Systems, Products, Services, Support and Company information.

https://www.contractortalk.com/articles/2019/04/multigenerational-home-climate-success-starts-with-mini-splits/