

“Are All DC Contactors Created Equal?”

An interesting discussion point that comes up time and time again with our customers is **contact voltage ratings**. Some manufacturers state carry voltages on their data sheets, some state switching voltages, but there are so many variables, **where do we start?**

The answer in all cases is “**how are you using the contactor?**” we ask this to ensure that we can give the customer the product that is going to be a perfect fit for their application. Not all contactors are created equal, even if the figures stated on the datasheets appear identical.

The rule of thumb is that we shouldn't take the manufacturers data sheets at face value, as we are not always comparing apples to apples. For example, if you have an 1000VDC application, you shouldn't automatically write-off a product because the datasheet states it is a 900VDC product, many of the products in the industry were tested to the stated levels because that's the level a particular application or industry demanded, it's **not the maximum performance of the product, it's all about how the product is being used.**

We will ask such questions as “will you be hot switching” which means, will you be closing the main contacts into a load, or opening the contacts to break out of a load, these cycles of “hot switching” or “making and breaking” loads can have a significant impact on the longevity of the contacts inside the switching device. Some contactors are designed to be ruggedised against this kind of use, however, if the application doesn't need to make or break large loads regularly, and perhaps needs that ability just in case of emergency, then the customer **will have more options open to them, perhaps smaller, lighter in weight and more cost-effective products.**

For this reason, having technical experts on hand to support engineers at the design stage is so important for a manufacturer. At **Altran Magnetics**, our technical sales team and engineers can help customers with testing, samples, 3d files, and additional data to support their designs. **We're here to help.**