
Finding The Best Agent

23 questions to help home sellers select the best real estate agent.

1. Is real estate your full-time career?

You don't want to use someone who is doing this only part-time or as a hobby.

2. How long have you been a real estate professional?

Having many years experience will ensure they are not learning the business at your expense.

3. How many homes have you sold?

Experience is important when it comes to real estate . . . you don't want someone who is selling their first home!

4. May I see some letters of referral?

They should be happy to provide these for you.

5. Do you represent mostly buyers or sellers?

Buyer or seller agents have different business skills. You'll come out way ahead by finding an agent who focuses on listing and selling homes.

6. How much do you charge for your services?

Real estate commissions are negotiable depending on where your home is located, what type of property you're selling and the services offered by the agent. Expect to pay more for a highly skilled, seasoned agent who executes a powerful, detailed market plan.

7. How do you plan to market my house?

Chose an agent who presents a solid written marketing plan to sell your home. Avoid someone who just puts up a for sale sign, throws it on the MLS and waits for it to sell.



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8. May I see examples of your marketing materials?

You'll get a good idea about the quality of their work by seeing examples of their property flyers, online ads, web site presentations, virtual tours, "just listed" postcards etc.

9. What is your online marketing strategy?

A savvy agent has a specific plan to promote your home online. They know the majority of buyers use the Internet to search for homes and they know how to capture a buyer's attention online.

10. What other professionals do you partner with?

A top agent is well-connected with a team of people such as a preferred mortgage broker, a home stager, title and escrow agents as well as inspection and home repair specialists.

11. How will we communicate and how often?

This all comes down to personal preference. If you prefer to communicate by e-mail and your agent prefers the phone or is not responsive, he will not be a good fit for you. Weekly contact should be a minimum.

12. Will I have time to review documents before signing them?

Selling a home can be stressful. Your perfect agent will provide adequate time for you to review important documents so you do not have to rush through the process.



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13. Do you use electronic signatures?

The answer to this question gauges how tech-savvy an agent is. Time and money are saved with e-signatures because you eliminate the need to print, fax, scan and mail documents. Also, you'll retain a complete audit trail of signed documents.

14. What is your average sale-to-list price ratio?

This is just one measurement of a listing agent's performance. Remember that this ratio can be adversely affected by sellers who set unrealistic prices.

15. How many days does it take you to sell a home?

A good listing agent knows this number by heart. It's more important to understand what strategies the agent uses, rather than just selecting one with the fewest average days on market. After all, anyone can sell a home quickly with a below-market list price . . . leaving money on the table for the seller.

16. What percentage of your escrows actually close?

In today's market, about 15 percent of escrows fall through. Usually it's a case of poor transaction management. Experience really does count here!

17. What makes you stand out above other listing agents?

A lot can be gleaned from an agent's answer to this question and how they answer truly sets them apart from others. It's a great way to see what they bring to the table.

18. What are the drawbacks of my home?

This question will assess if an agent has experience and a keen eye and whether they are honest. A strong agent can pick out credible flaws in your property, which the buyer may object to, and you may have to overcome to sell your property.

19. Tell me about your home staging/enhancement program.

The best agents work closely with a home stager and have great enhancement tips to maximize your sales price.



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20. What kind of guarantee do you offer?

Will the prospective agent let you cancel a listing agreement if things don't go well? If he will not release you from a listing agreement prior to its expiration, then you should not use that agent.

21. What type of market are we in?

This question tests a real estate agent's market knowledge. The smart agent answers this beyond a simple "sellers market" or "buyers market". Instead, they will lay out a pricing strategy that is in line with current market conditions.

22. Will we deal with you or an assistant?

If the prospective listing agent has a team, you may never see him after signing the listing agreement. You may prefer working with someone who stays in close contact with his clients.

23. How do we find out what buyers think of our home?

You want to choose someone who is on top of every showing and has a system for getting feedback from every showing. That way you can make the adjustments to over-come buyer objections.

Summary: Selling a home is a big endeavor and you want to choose the best real estate agent to help you be successful. *Thank you for including me in the interview process.*



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