

10 Questions to Ask a Real Estate Agent

How to Interview Your Agent



Many consumers interview potential real estate agents before deciding on whom to hire. Just as you are sizing up the potential for a good fit, rest assured that the real estate agent will likely be interviewing you, too. Be wary of agents who don't ask you questions and probe for your motivation. You wouldn't work with just any agent off the street, and good agents are just as selective about their clients, too.

1. How Long Have You Been in the Business?

2. What is Your Philosophy and Method on pricing?

3. What is Your Marketing Plan or Strategy for My Needs?

- How will you search for my new home?
- How many homes will I likely see before I find a home I want to buy?
- How do you handle multiple offers?
- Do you present offers yourself?

- Specifically, how will you sell my home?
- Where and how often do you advertise?
- Will you show me a sample flyer?
- How do you market online?

4. Do You Have References?

5. What Are the Top Three Things That Separate You From Your Competition?

A good agent won't hesitate to answer this question and will be ready to fire off why they are best suited for the job. Everyone has their own standards, but most consumers say they are looking for agents who say they are:

- Honest and trustworthy
- Assertive
- Excellent negotiators
- Available by phone or e-mail
- Good communicators & Friendly
- Analytical
- Able to maintain a good sense of humor under trying circumstances

6. May I Review Documents Beforehand That I Will Be Asked to Sign?

A sign of a good real estate agent is a professional who makes forms available to you for preview before you are required to sign them. If at all possible, ask for these documents upfront.

As a buyer, ask for copies of the following:

- Buyer's Broker Agreement (is it exclusive or non-exclusive?)
- Agency Disclosures
- Purchase Agreement
- Buyer Disclosures

As a seller, ask to see:

- Agency Disclosure
- Listing Agreement
- Seller Disclosures

7. How Will You Help Me Find Other Professionals?

Let the real estate agent explain to you who they work with and why they choose those professionals. Your agent should be able to supply you with a written list of referring vendors such as mortgage brokers, home inspectors and title companies.

8. How Much Do You Charge?

Don't ask if the fee is negotiable. All real estate fees are negotiable. Typically, real estate agents charge a percentage, from 1% to 4% to represent one side of a transaction: a seller or a buyer. A listing agent may charge, for example, 3.5% for themselves and another 3.5% for the buyer's agent, for a total of 7%.

9. What Kind of Guarantee Do You Offer?

If you sign a listing or buying agreement with the agent and later find that you are unhappy with the arrangement, will the agent let you cancel the agreement? Will the agent stand behind their service to you? What is their company's policy about canceled agreements? Has anybody ever canceled an agreement with them before?

10. What Haven't I Asked You That I Need to Know?

Pay close attention to how the real estate agent answers this question because there is always something you need to know, always. You want an agent to take their time with you -- to make sure you feel comfortable and secure with their knowledge and experience. They should know how to listen and how to counsel you, how to ask the right questions to find out what they need to know to better serve you.

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