

Don't sell your property until you've read...

17 CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK A REALTOR® BEFORE YOU LIST

Selling real estate involves many critical and personal decisions. However, one of the most important decisions is the first decision you need to make... a decision that impacts your entire sale:

Which real estate agent should you work with?

Unfortunately, many people make this decision based on the idea that all real estate agents are basically the same. They sign with the first agent to come along, only to realize too late that they should have shopped around. This special report is designed to help you avoid that mistake by equipping you with information on what to look for in selecting your agent.

Start by asking your friends and family for the names of agents they know. Look around for the ads and marketing materials of active agents in the area. Once you've compiled a list of several names, use this guide to help you determine which agent is best for you.

This Special Report

Is Compliments of

The RUBLE Team

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Question 1

“Would you send some information to me about yourself?”

You can often get a good idea of which agents are most professional and most committed by looking at their personal marketing materials – brochures, direct mail, listing presentation book, etc. Call each name on your list and ask them to send any information they can before you actually meet with them for a listing presentation. When you get the personal brochure or other materials, look them over and determine your initial impression of this person.

Are the materials they presented professional? If not, ask yourself, “If they don’t properly market themselves, how will they market my home?”

Also, keep track of how quickly and efficiently they respond to your request for information. Are they helpful and friendly? Or just pushy and hungry for a listing? Does this seem like someone you’d be interested in talking with? If they aren’t organized and professional enough to respond promptly to your first request to find out more about them, they probably handle potential buyers for your home the same way. If you like the way they respond to you and are impressed with the information they supply, call them and invite them make a listing presentation to you.

Question 2

“How do you approach your work?”

What you should be looking for, first and foremost, is an honest and knowledgeable individual, who works full-time, represents a solid and successful real estate agency, and will treat your best interests as paramount. Length of time in the business, track record of success, previous experience, expertise in and knowledge of the local real estate market – all of these are factors to consider.

Question 3

“How many properties have you listed in the past 6 months?”

Look for an agent who is active in your area and has experience dealing with properties and situations like yours. This is especially critical if your property has special features or terms that may make it more challenging than the typical home sale.

Question 4

“How many properties have you SOLD in the last six months?”

BEWARE of agents who simply gather listings and let them sit and wait for someone else to sell them. Your agent should have a good track record getting properties sold, which is, after all, your ultimate goal.

Question 5

“What is the average length of time your listings are on the market?”

You automatically assume the shorter time on the market, the better... but take note: If an average length of time on the market is significantly faster than the average for other comparable properties in the area, is it because this agent is more effective or because he or she like to low-ball the asking price in order to get them sold more quickly?

Question 6

“How long have you been in the business?”

Depending on the agent’s background and track record, there is no hard and fast rule for what to look for here. An agent may have been a licensed real estate professional for 15 years, but only selling part-time and never really an active seller-maybe only handling one or two transactions per year. Whereas, another agent may have because licensed only several years ago, but has a background in real estate finance or even a college degree in real estate.

Either way, you need to find someone who has an in-depth knowledge of the legal ins and outs of the business, as well as the characteristic of the local market, and has demonstrated competence and professionalism in getting real estate SOLD.

Question 7

“What professional organizations do you belong to?”

The minimum here should be a fully licensed professional who is a member of the local real estate board and multiple listing service, as well as the state and National Association of REALTORS®. Local community groups and business associations may also be pluses in terms of networking and insight into the community.

However, make sure your agent is focused on what’s important...**selling your home!**

Question 8

“Do you have a personal assistant or other support staff working for you?”

Some agents employ an assistant or staff. This usually will mean better service, and it can be an indicator that the agent treats selling real estate as a business.

By employing someone to handle the small details, he or she can devote more time to serving your needs.

Question 9

“Do you have any questions for me?”

In the interview, look for an agent who asks pointed, specific questions, not someone who's just filling in blanks on a form.

That's the sign of someone who is already thinking about your situation and is creating a plan of action specifically for you rather than just using a cookie-cutter approach for every client.

Make sure you feel comfortable being around this person – you will be relying on his or her expertise.

Question 10

“What marketing approach will you use?”

Despite having the same basic marketing tools at their disposal – Multiple Listing Service, company tours, Broker Opens, fliers and brochures, MLS lock box, public open houses, advertising, direct mail and personal networking – every real estate professional has a different marketing strategy.

Learn each agent's marketing philosophy and determine what will work for you.

Make sure the agent you choose doesn't rely on the same marketing tool for every sale. What worked for yesterday's seller may not get the results you want. The key is to find an agent who will use all the tools available to your best advantage.

Question 11

“Will you produce a flier or brochure for my property and what will it look like?”

Take a careful look at the materials the agent has produced to market their current listings. Does the quality, design and wording of the materials seem to present each listing in the best light?

Put yourself in a potential buyer’s shoes: Would you be interested in the property after seeing these materials?

Question 12

“What is your advertising plan for my property?”

Ask the agent how often he or she will run ads and ask to see samples of what the ads will look like. Again, put yourself in the buyer’s shoes. Would these ads appeal to you? And how does advertising fit into the agent’s overall marketing mix?

Agents on the cutting edge often use a variety of creative advertising methods apart from the traditional house advertisements.

Many of them now use toll-free hotlines and fax marketing that give potential buyers 24 hour access to information about your listing.

Question 13

“How else will the property be exposed to other agents?”

Exposure is the key to any sale. In many cases your property will be sold because another agent knows a buyer who is looking for property like yours.

Beyond simply listing your property in MLS, your agent should be using a wide variety of techniques to let those other agents know about your property and keep them aware of it until it is sold.

Question 14

“Are you going to help me in staging my home or condo?”

Preparing a property for sale, or “staging” it, is very important in maximizing the value and minimizing the time on the market.

If a prospective agent does not mention this aspect of the sale on his own during the listing presentation, he or she probably has no plan to offer this service to you. Or he may be afraid of bringing it up for fear of offending you by telling you about negative aspects that should be changed – or positives that need to be highlighted – to increase its appeal to potential buyers.

A confident and competent agent will find ways of broaching the subject and let you know of specific ideas – beyond baking bread and putting out fresh flowers for open houses – to make your house more saleable.

Question 15

“What listing price do you recommend and what is that price based on?”

Pricing your property is the most critical step to selling it, and you should choose a real estate agent who has the knowledge to price your property wisely.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

DON'T go with a “yes man” who will promise a high price in order to get your listing – your property may languish on the market.

DON'T let an agent talk you into an artificially low price designed simply to sell as fast as possible, unless, of course, that is your sole objective.

DO have an agent justify the price through comparable properties and facts about the market.

The selling price should attract prospective buyers to your property, get you top dollar in the current market and reflect the condition of your property.

Be realistic. A good real estate agent will be honest with you about the value of your property and have the hard, cold facts to justify that value – both to you and to prospective buyers.

Question 16

“Can you provide me with further resources that I may need?”

Most agents work with a team of professionals in many fields, including attorneys, mortgage, home inspection, pest control, carpet cleaning, etc. While you are not obligated to work with an agent’s team, often you may find it is the optimum way to go.

The best agents have built strong relationships with their “teams”, and can often get priority service, should a crunch or problem arise.

Question 17

“Can you give me some references from other clients you have worked with?”

Don’t be afraid to ask for references. This is not confidential information, even though many sellers would never think to ask for it.

Real estate transactions are a matter of public record and, if you want to take the time to go to the courthouse, you could compile your own list.

However, any agent who provides good service and is proud of his or her work will be happy to provide references.

If possible, contact a few of these references directly. Check to see how well the situations described by these previous clients fit your situation, particularly if you have a complex transaction or special circumstances that require a specific expertise.

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Your Real Estate Professionals

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Gary Ruble CRS/GRI

Background

- ◆ BA-Education University of Evansville, 1980
- ◆ Teaching, Plainfield, 1980
- ◆ Indiana Association of Realtors Agent License, 1987

Sales Results

- ◆ Multimillion Dollar Member since 1989
- ◆ Top 5% of company agents since 1992 (750 agents)
- ◆ Over 100 Real Estate Transaction yearly.

Designations

- ◆ Graduate of Realtors Institute (GRI) Certified Residential specialist (CRS),
- ◆ The CRS & GRI degrees are held by less than 5% of all Realtors.

Ann Ruble

Background

- ◆ BS-Accounting University of Evansville, 1979
- ◆ Management & Sales Ryder Corp. 1979-1996
- ◆ Indiana Association of Realtors Agent License, 1996

Sales Results

- ◆ Extensive background in sales, marketing & managing.
- ◆ Graduate of the prestigious Floyd Wickman training class.
- ◆ Brokers' License 2004

Services

Full automated with a laptop & 2 desk top computers, along with digital technology for color fliers. Additionally, you are hiring 2 agents for 1!

Goals

To provide *SERVICE* unequalled in the
real estate community in order
to be *YOUR REALTOR*.

