

Finding a Real Estate Agent

The Traits, Experience and Questions That Matter Most

Whether you're buying your first home or selling your fifth, choosing the right real estate agent can make all the difference. A good agent will guide you through the process, protect your interests and help you make informed decisions. But how do you know who's right for the job?

It's worth doing your homework — because not all agents bring the same experience, service or approach.

EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNICATION

One of the first things to look for is local market experience. An agent who knows the neighborhoods you're interested in can provide insight on pricing, competition and long-term value. They'll also have contacts with local lenders, inspectors, appraisers and contractors — which can speed up the process and solve problems before they grow.

Equally important is communication style. Do they respond quickly to questions? Are they available when you need them? Home sales often move fast, and delays in communication can mean lost opportunities. You want



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someone who listens, explains clearly and stays in touch.

Ask about how they work:

- Do they represent both buyers and sellers?
- Are they full-time or part-time?
- How many transactions have they handled recently?

An agent's track record doesn't have to be long, but it should reflect a solid under-

standing of the current market. If they're newer to the profession, a strong support team or mentoring relationship can still make them a good choice.

Also consider personality. You'll be working closely with your agent for weeks or even months. Look for someone you trust — someone who's patient, professional and focused on your goals, not just the commission.

HOW TO INTERVIEW AND CHOOSE

You can — and should — interview multiple agents before choosing one. Many people work with the first agent they meet, but taking time to compare a few professionals can help you make a more confident decision.

During your meeting, ask questions such as:

- What's your approach to

helping clients in this market?

- How do you handle competing offers or tough negotiations?
- Can you walk me through your process from start to finish?

Pay attention to whether they ask questions, too. A good agent wants to understand your needs, timeline and concerns before offering advice.

Don't be afraid to ask for references from recent clients, or to read online reviews. While no agent is perfect, consistent communication, professionalism and positive experiences should be a theme.

Finally, check that your agent is licensed and in good standing with your state's real estate commission. In some cases, you may want to work with a Realtor, which is a member of the National Association of Realtors and follows a strict code of ethics.

The right agent can help you navigate every twist and turn of the transaction with confidence. Take your time, ask good questions and trust your instincts — because when it comes to real estate, having a knowledgeable, dependable partner on your side makes all the difference.



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REAL ESTATE 101



You Can Interview Agents Before Hiring One

Choosing a real estate agent is like hiring any professional. Ask about experience, local knowledge and communication style to make sure they're the right fit.

HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Exclusive Buyer's Agent: An exclusive buyer's agent is a real estate professional who represents only buyers, never sellers. Their role is to advocate for the buyer's best interest throughout the home search and negotiation.

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