

How to Choose A Real Estate Agent?

7 Tips for Choosing a Real Estate Agent

Interview the agent and check their references.

Has your agent worked with buyers or sellers with similar needs? Do they have specific insights on your neighborhood? If you're relocating to a different state, your agent will be one of the few people who can tell you about the neighborhood you're looking to move to, and will need to know your lifestyle and needs before jumping in.

Checking the agent's references may be more important than you think. While your initial interview with your real estate agent should be thorough, a lot can be inferred from the way their references answer one simple question. John May, a real estate agent with Austin Properties Group in Austin, TX, suggests clients ask references the following question: "Would you be willing to work with that agent on your next home purchase or sale?" If the answer is yes, you're most likely in the clear. Any hesitation? It's probably a good idea to ask why and dig a bit deeper to check the agent's history.

Understand their communication style.

You won't want to chase down your agent for crucial updates. Ask your agent's references if they ever struggled to get their agent on the phone or have questions answered by e-mail.

The way an agent handles themselves during negotiations can make or break a deal. If you feel that your agent is confident enough to turn down a deal that they believe isn't in your best interest, that's a great sign. "A good agent knows how to understand the parties' needs and how to bring a deal together without getting in the way," says Amanda Jones, real estate agent with Compass in San Francisco, CA. "I also think that a good agent will help a buyer to walk away when it gets too

heated. Sometimes silence is a great negotiation tactic.â€

Ask about their negotiation tactics.

Your agent should be able to guide you to a successful sale or purchase, including providing suggestions for offers (and counteroffers), strategies for competitive markets, and any contingencies youâ€™ll need in order to make it to the closing table.

Look into their credentials.

Some agents have certifications in addition to a real estate license: a certified residential specialist (CRS) has specific training for residential real estate transactions; an accredited buyerâ€™s representative (ABR) designation means they completed training to represent buyers.

Ask them about their network.

A stellar agent has a broad network of potential buyers and sellers, plus great relationships with other agents. â€œThey should also have a team of vetted and loyal experts such as contractors, handymen, designers, and architects who can help clients with renovations, small fixes, or design,â€ says Anna Kahn, an agent with Halstead Property, New York, NY.

Determine their workload.

Kahn suggests using the initial interview time to check in on an agentâ€™s dedication. She recommends asking how long an agent has worked in your location, plus: â€œIs this their full-time occupation, or are they a yoga teacher or struggling actor who sells real estate for a few hours a week? This is a big decision, and the agent should be a full-time, dedicated, and extremely experienced professional.â€

A full-time agent is more likely to put in the work to hustle for your real estate transaction to the closing table than a part-time agent who dabbles in real estate or has to supplement their real estate earnings with a second job.

Look at their public record.

Find out if your agent has been disciplined (and why!) to help decide if theyâ€™re a good fit your real estate transaction.