Questions to Ask When Choosing a REALTOR®

Make sure you choose a REALTOR® who will provide top-notch service and meet your unique needs.

1. How long have you been in residential real estate sales? Is it your full-time job? While experience is no guarantee of skill, real estate — like many other professions — is mostly learned on the job.

2. What designations do you hold? Designations such as GRI and CRS® — which require that agents take additional, specialized real estate training — are held by only about one-quarter of real estate practitioners.

3. How many homes did you and your real estate brokerage sell last year? By asking this question, you'll get a good idea of how much experience the practitioner has.

4. How many days did it take you to sell the average home? How did that compare to the overall market?
The REALTOR® you interview should have these facts on hand, and be able to present market statistics from the local MLS to provide a comparison.

5. How close to the initial asking prices of the homes you sold were the final sale prices? This is one indication of how skilled the REALTOR® is at pricing homes and marketing to suitable buyers. Of course, other factors also may be at play, including an exceptionally hot or cool real estate market.

6. What types of specific marketing systems and approaches will you use to sell my home? You don't want someone who's going to put a For Sale sign in the yard and hope for the best. Look for someone who has aggressive and innovative approaches, and knows how to market your property competitively on the Internet. Buyers today want information fast, so it's important that your REALTOR® is responsive.

7. Will you represent me exclusively, or will you represent both the buyer and the seller in the transaction? While it's usually legal to represent both parties in a transaction, it's important to understand where the practitioner's obligations lie. Your REALTOR® should explain his or her agency relationship to you and describe the rights of each party.

8. Can you recommend service providers who can help me obtain a mortgage, make home repairs, and help with other things I need done? Because REALTORS® are immersed in the industry, they're wonderful resources as you seek lenders, home improvement companies, and other home service providers. Practitioners should generally recommend more

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than one provider and let you know if they have any special relationship with or receive compensation from any of the providers.

9. What type of support and supervision does your brokerage office provide to you? Having resources such as in-house support staff, access to a real estate attorney, and assistance with technology can help an agent sell your home.

10. What's your business philosophy? While there's no right answer to this question, the response will help you assess what's important to the agent and determine how closely the agent's goals and business emphasis mesh with your own.

11. How will you keep me informed about the progress of my transaction? How frequently? Again, this is not a question with a correct answer, but it reflects your desires. Do you want updates twice a week or do you not want to be bothered unless there's a hot prospect? Do you prefer phone, e-mail, or a personal visit?

12. Could you please give me the names and phone numbers of your three most recent clients?
Ask recent clients if they would work with this REALTOR® again. Find out whether they were pleased with the communication style, follow-up, and work ethic of the REALTOR®.

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