



12 Questions to Ask Before You Hire a Real Estate Agent

Hiring a real estate agent isn't just about finding someone who can unlock doors or put a sign in your yard. The right agent can protect your financial interests, negotiate on your behalf, anticipate problems before they become expensive, and make one of life's biggest transactions significantly less stressful.

Not all agents provide the same level of service, experience, or strategy. Before you commit, ask these questions to make sure you're choosing the right fit.

1. How long have you been in real estate?

Experience matters, but years alone don't tell the whole story. Ask how many transactions the agent completes each year and whether they work full-time in real estate. An agent who consistently handles transactions is often more familiar with changing market conditions and negotiations than someone who only closes a few deals annually.

2. Do you specialize in buyers, sellers, or both?

Some agents spend most of their time helping sellers market homes, while others focus on buyers. There's nothing wrong with either approach, but you want someone whose experience matches your goals.

If you're selling, ask about pricing strategy, marketing, staging, and negotiation. If you're buying, ask how they help clients compete in today's market without overpaying.

3. How well do you know my neighborhood?

A great agent should be able to discuss recent sales, pricing trends, buyer demand, and what makes your neighborhood unique. Local knowledge helps with pricing, negotiations, and marketing.



4. What is your marketing strategy?

If you're selling, "putting it on the MLS" isn't enough.

Ask questions like:

- How will you market my home online?
- Do you use professional photography?
- Will you create video content?
- How do you market on social media?
- Do you have a strategy beyond waiting for buyers to find it?

The quality of marketing can directly impact how quickly your home sells and the offers you receive.

5. How do you determine the right listing price?

Pricing a home isn't simply looking at Zillow or averaging nearby sales. A thoughtful agent should explain how they analyze comparable properties, current market conditions, competition, and buyer behavior.

If someone promises the highest price without explaining how they arrived there, that's worth questioning.

6. How will we communicate?

Communication styles vary widely.

Ask:

- How quickly do you respond?
- Do you prefer text, phone, or email?
- Will I hear from you regularly, even if there aren't updates?

Knowing what to expect helps prevent frustration during the transaction.

7. Will I be working directly with you?



Some agents work independently, while others have large teams.

Ask who will:

- Answer your questions
- Attend showings
- Negotiate offers
- Coordinate inspections
- Be your primary point of contact

There's no right or wrong answer, but you should know who will actually be guiding your transaction.

8. How do you handle multiple offers or difficult negotiations?

Every transaction has challenges.

Ask for examples of situations where the agent successfully navigated inspection issues, appraisal problems, financing delays, or multiple-offer situations. Their answer can tell you a lot about their experience and problem-solving skills.

9. What happens if something goes wrong?

No one can promise a perfect transaction, but experienced agents can explain how they manage unexpected issues.

Ask how they've handled problems such as:

- Low appraisals
- Inspection surprises
- Contract disputes
- Delayed closings
- Financing complications

You're hiring someone to solve problems, not just complete paperwork.



10. Can you explain your fees and services?

Commission isn't just about the percentage. It's about the value you receive.

Ask what services are included, whether there are additional fees, and what support you'll receive from listing through closing.

The cheapest option isn't always the least expensive if poor representation costs you thousands during negotiations.

11. Can you provide references or reviews?

Past clients often provide the clearest picture of what it's like to work with an agent.

Look for comments about communication, professionalism, negotiation skills, and whether clients would hire them again.

12. Why should I choose you over another agent?

This question often reveals the most.

Listen for answers focused on strategy, communication, experience, education, and client service—not just production awards or sales volume.

A great agent should be able to clearly explain how they add value and what makes their approach different.

Final Thoughts

The best real estate agent isn't necessarily the one with the biggest billboard or the most advertisements. It's the one who listens carefully, communicates consistently, understands your goals, and has the experience to guide you through every step of the process.

Interview more than one agent. Ask thoughtful questions. Pay attention to how they communicate—not just what they say. The right professional should leave you feeling informed, confident, and comfortable that your best interests come first.



Because buying or selling a home isn't just another transaction. It's one of the biggest financial decisions you'll make, and choosing the right guide can make all the difference.