



Essential Questions for Choosing a Real Estate Agent: What you should be asking to ensure the agent you work with is the right fit for you.

Congratulations! Wherever you are in your real estate journey, you're taking the most important step—figuring out the right person to partner with and be your advocate along the way. Choosing the right agent to handle the sale of your home can save you thousands of dollars.

But with over 2 million agents in the U.S. alone (and tens of thousands in the Denver area), how are you expected to find the right one for you? Here are some tips and questions to use as you interview agents.

Start by asking friends and family for referrals in your target area (pro tip- do this in person rather than blasting a recommendation request on social media, as you may find yourself quickly overwhelmed and not know where to start with interviews). Find out about family and friends' experiences and, hopefully, you will find a name that keeps coming up. Once you have a couple names, ask for a personal introduction from friends or call the agents directly to set up a time to go over these basic, essential questions.

How long have you been selling real estate? Are you a full or part time agent?

This question is key because it can lead to so much more than simply a number of years. While it is true that experience doesn't necessarily equal success, real estate is a commission-based business and it would be very difficult for an agent to survive for a long time providing awful service. An agent who has seen many different situations is less likely to be rattled should any bumps be encountered down the road. Of course, what you're really looking for here isn't just the ability to white knuckle it, but someone who has really honed their craft and understands the nuances and shifts of the market. Expertise is what you're after.

What is your average number of clients?

What you're really wanting to get to here is: will you have enough time for me? Will I be a priority for you? If your agent is working with a high volume of clients, this can be a good indication of skill and customer service, but be sure to find out how he or she plans to remedy the situation should you need additional support. Does she have other team members who can help when she isn't available? Does she have a licensed assistant who can offer advice?

What is your ratio of buyers to sellers?

As you talk with agents, you will find many work with primarily buyers or sellers. This is especially true on real estate teams, where there are often designated buyer agents and listing agents. While it's good

to know one thing very well, this can also lead to a limited perspective. How well can your agent be expected to know what a seller may be thinking if he's only worked with buyers, or vice versa? Not only that, but should you be looking to sell your current house and buy another, the transactions will be much more seamless should one agent be able to oversee the entire process.

Do you and/or your company have an app and/or website that will provide me with useful information for research, services, and property listings?

Online searches are the standard for the vast majority of homebuyers, and there are certain privacy and comfort levels that you might appreciate in starting a preliminary search this way. It's also a matter of convenience, having 24-hour access to information. By searching the Realtors and the company's web sites, you will get a clear picture of how much work you would be able to accomplish online, and whether or not that suits your preferences. Some companies will even offer a customized app to personalize your search.

Do you specialize in a specific area?

You will likely encounter agents who are self-proclaimed neighborhood experts and others who will travel halfway across the country to make a sale. It's best to find someone in the middle. The internet now allows agents a better understanding of a larger territory, but doesn't mean they can cover an entire state while maintaining intimate knowledge of local markets. And when working with that "neighborhood expert," they may try too hard to fit you into a shoe that doesn't fit. Again, what really matters here is expertise and someone who will have your best interest in mind. Find someone who works both in and around your main area of interest.

Are you part of a team?

There are benefits to working with individual agents, and there are benefits to working with a team. Either way, you'll want to be sure you clarify the relationship and expectations from the beginning. Within a team, its members will have a wider level of experience and you will often find one has more intimate knowledge of specific situations than another. However, it should be disclosed up front if the team plans for you to work with one agent the duration of the transaction, or if you will be meeting with different people at different times. You shouldn't expect to work with just one agent, only to find you're passed around at every step along the way.

How will you get paid?

The way agents get paid is often a source of confusion for both buyers and sellers. Truthfully, this is an issue that can also be related to agency. In many areas, the seller still customarily pays all Realtor commissions through the listing broker. Sometimes, Realtors will have other small fees, such as administrative or special service fees, that are charged to clients, regardless of whether they are buying or selling. Ask for an estimate of costs from any agent you contemplate working with.

Do you have a performance guarantee?

If I'm not 100% satisfied with your performance as my agent, can I terminate our listing agreement? To protect everyone's interest in the transaction, realtors are required to get signed listing/buying agreements.

How will you keep in touch with me?

Every realtor handles their business differently, and you'll want to be sure you have the expectations set about communication from the beginning. This is a good chance for you to both set and clarify expectations on the best methods for communication, how often you like to be updated, and . Equally important, this should be where you both set expectations for how often you should be updated, the best methods to use and who all needs to be kept in the loop. These should be determined by what makes you, as the client, feel most comfortable.

Do you have a recommended vendors list?

An experienced agent will have developed trusted relationships with other industry professionals over a long period of time. From lenders and title companies to contractors and inspectors, your agent should be able to refer you to multiple sources so you can ultimately determine who works best for you. These should be recommendations, nothing more – the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act gives you the right to choose who you work with every step of the way.

Can I have the contact information for two references?

While an agent should be able to accurately judge the customer service provided, no one can better say than his or her past clients. Obviously, agents won't be handing out information for clients who hated them, so take what they say with a grain of salt. Ask specific, open-end questions based on your priorities.

What questions do you have for me?

This is one of the most important question you will ask. The true determination of a person's mindset and priorities is exposed by the questions she asks. A good agent will not have a predetermined plan for your real estate experience, but will customize it to your goals and priorities. If an agent takes the time to get to know you, your goals and your priorities, this is an excellent indicator s/he is already setting a foundation of client-centered service, for which there is no substitute.

I hope these questions help you in assessing the best fit for you, as regardless if you ever work with me or not, I want you to have the best experience in your real estate adventures as possible. So if you'd ever like to discuss your goals as a buyer, give me a call today or visit us online(I'm at www.JessicaAbegg.com or our team website at DenverRealEstateTransformed.com or (303) 995- 8744.

To your thriving success,

Jessica Abegg

