



Questions TO ASK A POTENTIAL REAL ESTATE AGENT PT.1

We know finding the right agent can be challenging, but finding the right person to work with is essential for your success in selling your home. Take this checklist to meetings with your agent or your realtor and don't settle until all of their answers are to your satisfaction! At DREAM, we expect these questions and are happy to provide whatever you need to feel comfortable.

1. CAN I SEE YOUR REAL ESTATE LICENSE?

No brainer, right? Always ensure you're working with a trained, accredited professional. Every listing agent should be prepared to deliver proof of their license to sell in your area. If they can't deliver, move on because something shady is going on.

2. CAN YOU PASS ALONG A LIST OF REFERRALS?

Like a license, every listing agent—and home buyers' agent for that matter—should arrive at a first meeting with referrals. If they do not, ask for them! At DREAM, we always include access to our testimonials and referrals. Be wary if an agent can't offer a handful of client names to call.

3. WHAT IS YOUR LISTINGS' AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET?

Always ask to see how long their listings sit on the market. Compare it to other agents interviewed, and if theirs is oddly high, ask for an explanation. If they can't attest to why, find another agent.

4. WHAT IS YOUR LIST-TO-PRICE RATIO?

An agent can show the prices at which they list a home, but more important is to see how that compares to the price the homes actually sell—up to date, of course. A good list-to-price ratio will depend on the market and location, but be wary of percentages too far below 90%.

Also, if an agents' ratio is skyrocketing over 100%, be careful of their strategy of underpricing homes to pad the ratio. Request specific details about their motivation for the listing price.

5. HAVE YOU SOLD HOMES IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?

Communities differ greatly in terms of what types of homes sell, what buyers want, and more. Plus, to sell a home, agents are also selling the neighborhood and its perks. If an agent has experience in your specific neighborhood, it's a major advantage.

6. HAVE YOU SOLD HOMES IN THIS PRICE RANGE?

Price range can dramatically alter decisions for marketing and selling a house. Agents should understand the market, period.

7. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A REAL ESTATE AGENT?

Be cautious of new agents, but it's not a deal-breaker if they have stellar referrals.

8. ARE YOU A PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME AGENT?

Be far more cautious if an agent is part-time. Selling your home needs to be a full-time job, and they should be focused.

9. HOW MANY SELLERS ARE YOU CURRENTLY REPRESENTING?

Focus is also a concern for agents who are juggling several listings. You don't want to get lost in the shuffle. At DREAM, we make sure you're always taken care of with our Team approach.



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10. WHAT'S THE RATIO OF BUYERS AND SELLERS YOU REPRESENT?

Listing agents need to be experienced in, of course, listing. If history shows far more experience on the buying side than the selling, it's not a deal-breaker, but be comfortable with an agent's answers for all of the other questions. It could benefit to have a network of eager buyers at the disposal.

11. WILL I BE WORKING WITH YOU DIRECTLY OR A TEAM?

There's nothing more frustrating than getting incredibly comfortable with an agent and then seeing someone new at every meeting. At DREAM, we love working with our Team, but make sure to incorporate everyone into the process at the beginning stages. Don't allow your home to be another nameless, faceless listing.

12. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO MARKET THE HOME?

Every realtor should enter this partnership with a plan—period.

13. DO YOU HAVE XYZ IN YOUR NETWORK?

Experienced listing agents should, at a minimum, be able to recommend the following: a lawyer specializing in real estate, mortgage advisor, handyman, home stager, house cleaners, and moving companies. Part of the benefit of working with a real estate agent is access to their vast network.

14. HOW DO YOUR REALTOR FEES WORK?

No surprises, understand ahead of time how to pay the realtor. Typically listing agents work under split commission. When the seller pays a listing agent, for example, 6% commission, that agent will split it with the agent who brought the buyer to the home. However, fees should always be negotiable.

QUESTIONS FOR AFTER YOU'VE CHOSEN A REAL ESTATE AGENT

Now's the time to get started selling a house, but it's not time to stop asking questions. Stay involved in the process, particularly at that first meeting with an agent after selecting him or her. At this point realtors should be the ones asking the questions, but stay in the loop by coming to the table with your own.

15. PLEASE EXPLAIN THE HOME SELLING PROCESS START TO END?

For home-selling novices, the process can seem long and complicated. Feel comfortable understanding the key points along the way—preparing the home, showings, how to manage offers, home inspections, what happens post-accepting an offer, timelines, etc. A realtor should make you comfortable along the way, though always expect the unexpected.

16. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO CONTACT YOU?

A realtor should never be out of touch, within reason! If they are away, make sure there is a plan in place for backup. Vacations are great- we love vacations- we just want to make sure you feel supported!

17. CAN I SEE A WRITTEN COMPARATIVE MARKET ANALYSIS?

A CMA is step one of determining a price for the house. It examines the neighborhood, showing prices at which similar properties sold.

18. WHAT PRICE WILL SELL THIS HOUSE?

No nonsense, a realtor should tell it like it is. If you've followed the first 14 checklist questions and chosen someone you trust, now's the time to listen.



Questions TO ASK A POTENTIAL REAL ESTATE AGENT PT.3

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19. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WILL SELL THIS HOME?

Jones believes this is the second most important question to ask a realtor. Ditto to question 18. When it's a trusted realtor, this should be easy advice to follow, even if it may be hard to hear—i.e. a remodel, removing all family photos, a new roof, painting over a beloved mural, etc.

20. HOW CAN WE BEST WORK TOGETHER TO SELL THIS HOUSE?

The agent-seller relationship is a partnership. Ask what you can do to help.

21. WHAT CAN I DO TO GET THIS HOUSE READY FOR SHOWINGS?

Selling a home can sometimes be a full-time job for sellers, too, to keep a house spic and span for home showings, Fleishman says.

"I remind sellers they have to get up early, they have to make their beds and put the dishes in the dishwasher," Fleishman says. "If they want to get top dollar for their house, they have to be in top condition."

22. DO I NEED PROFESSIONAL STAGERS FOR MY HOME?

A realtor will come up with a plan for showings about how the house should look. That might include professional stagers—which a good agent will provide for free, Overbeck reminds sellers.

23. WHAT SHOULD I ALREADY BE PACKING UP?

Preparing for a listing and then showing the home will almost always include the sellers removing personal property from the home, whether a professional stager is involved or not.

Ask what the realtor believes should go—the clutter of children's toys, the wall full of family photographs, the bed from a room that will be staged as an office—and get a head start on packing for the move.

24. WHAT ARE THE CLOSING COSTS?

Be prepared for the upfront costs sellers may need when closing on a home offer. The total costs will depend on the buyer's offer, but an agent should be able to estimate the money sellers need on hand. They can include attorney fees, title fees, broker commission, appraisal fees, and more.