

10 Questions to Ask a Real Estate Agent When Selling Your Home

Researching and hiring a listing agent can be as daunting as moving. After all, the National Association of Realtors has over a million members. But picking the right realtor can make the sale process smooth, so carefully vetting your options is important.

A great realtor will recommend pricing and marketing strategies to sell your home quickly and maximize your profit. They'll also save you time and stress by effectively managing paperwork and negotiations on your behalf.

So, how do you find a realtor who can do all that? Start by visiting the [Homes.com Agent Directory](#). Then, set up interviews and ask the following questions.

11 Questions to Ask Your Prospective Listing Agent:

1. How many homes have you sold in my neighborhood?

This is the most important question to ask your prospective listing agent because if they have little to no experience selling homes in your area, there's no need to ask anything else. "That would be an immediate disqualifier," says agent Robert Elson of Coldwell Banker Warburg. You need a realtor who is familiar with the local market trends, comparable properties and neighborhood amenities like schools, shopping and dining. If they're experienced selling homes here, they'll know how to price, market and negotiate the sale of your home most effectively.

2. Do you have experience selling this type of property?

Whether you're selling a historic home or a new build, a traditional single-family property or a condo, your realtor should have experience selling similar listings. This will ensure they know the buyer pool, which will, in turn, allow them to price and market your home effectively. They'll be able to highlight your property's unique features and address possible buyer concerns, too. For example, if you're selling a historic property, your realtor should understand relevant preservation regulations for your area.

3. What do you look at when setting a list price?

Ultimately, you'll decide on the list price, but your realtor should suggest an appropriate range. "The role of the agent is to share their specific market and process knowledge and expertise with the seller," says Andrea Saturno-Sanjana of Coldwell Banker Warburg. Coldwell Banker Warburg agent Sarkie Ampim says your prospective agent's answer should include a [comparative market analysis](#). Also known as "comps," a CMA compares your home's age,

amenities, condition, location, size and style to similar active and recently sold listings in your area.

4. How will you market my home?

To sell your home fast and for the best price, your agent must have a well-crafted marketing plan that involves more than putting up a “for sale” sign. Ampim says effective strategies include leveraging Google search engine optimization and running ads on multiple social media platforms. A good marketing plan should include professional listing photos, too. “They are what will create the first impression of the home and hopefully engage the buyer to take it a step further and see it in person,” says broker Jennifer Roberts of Coldwell Banker Warburg. She also suggests providing floor plans and interior videos, even exterior drone footage, to give prospective buyers a complete and clear picture of the property. An agent worth working with will show your home often, as well, whether by scheduling open houses or hosting events. Roberts says holding wine tastings or pop-up shops is an effective marketing tactic to attract buyers.

5. How long will it take to sell my home?

On average, it takes about two months for a house to go from listed to closed. However, the timeline will vary depending on the property type, price, and current market conditions. Your realtor should give you an estimate based on their knowledge of the real estate trends in your neighborhood. “I always let a seller know how long homes are taking to sell in their building or area,” says Guy Hobson of Coldwell Banker Warburg, adding that he also stresses the importance of setting the right list price. If the initial price is too high, your home will likely sit on the market for a long time and eventually sell for much less than it would have with an appropriate initial price.

6. What's your plan of action if my home doesn't sell within the first week?

You'll want to confirm that your realtor's sale strategy extends beyond the first few days of listing. Depending on the market trends in your area, they may suggest offering incentives like covering closing costs and the buyer agent's commission, even a price adjustment. First, they should gather feedback from potential buyers to understand why offers aren't rolling in. The reason could be as simple as lack of access, in which case your realtor can propose scheduling more showings and open houses. “If you limit the number of showings, you're almost lowering interest,” Realtor Delany Hogg of ERA Woody Hogg & Associates. “The best thing you can do to generate a lot of interest in your home is really opening it up and getting the most people in the door as possible,” she explains, noting that your realtor should be flexible and keep their availability for showings open.

7. How should I get my home ready for listing?

Hogg: we're getting it ready to show and making it a blank canvas for the buyer so they can envision themselves living there. So I usually start by putting a new doormat in front of every exterior door, removing clutter... sometimes I'll recommend painting, but I'll try not to recommend that unless I really feel it's a need. Removing personal belongings like photos, jewelry, anything they see as valuable, we definitely want to remove that from the home. Essentially, we want to minimize visual clutter. So emptying closets out about halfway, is what I typically recommend. Adding baskets in the closets to remove some of the visual clutter. And I go in and help stage as well, so I have a staging day, like a pre-photo prep day, so everything is photo ready for when that day comes.

8. What is your process for vetting buyers?

Your realtor should assess each buyer's financial readiness, including verifying their mortgage preapproval, credit history and employment status. Knowing the buyer's likelihood of securing financing is the best way to ensure the contract doesn't fall through after you accept an offer. Your realtor should also get a feel for each buyer's needs – you don't want to spend time wooing a buyer with pets if you're selling a condo in a pet-free building, for instance.

9. How much will selling my home cost?

You won't get to keep all the cash you make from selling your home. Some of it will go toward realtor commissions, closing costs, paying off your existing mortgage, taxes, moving fees and more. A typical listing agent commission is between 1 and 3 percent of the home's sale price, but you may be able to negotiate a lower percentage, especially if the sale price is high. Closing costs, like outstanding property taxes, title insurance and escrow fees, can run anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 or more. Hogg says your prospective agent should bring a seller's net proceeds sheet to your listing appointment. "It's going to show the real estate commission, the lawyer fees, the cost of a termite inspection and all the other fees associated with the sale of a home," she explains.

10. How do you like to communicate?

You need a realtor whose preferred communication method aligns with your own, whether that's texting, calling or emailing. A good realtor will answer this question with another: Which method works best for *you*? They'll also tell you how often you can expect updates and whether they'll be reachable outside of typical weekday business hours.

11. What is your policy for canceling our listing agreement?

A listing agreement is a legal contract that allows your realtor to market and sell your property on your behalf. It'll specify the listing price, the agent's commission and other details, like the marketing strategy. It'll also bind you to the agent for the contract's duration, typically between three and six months. This means you can't hire anyone else to sell your home during the contract term – even if the agent you signed isn't doing a good job. Before signing, read the

cancellation or termination clause. Depending on the contract, you might be required to provide a written cancellation notice and/or pay a termination fee.