

# **10 Questions to Ask Your Realtor Before You Decide to List Your Home**

by Russell Bradchulis

Most of us sell only a small number of homes in our lifetimes. With limited experience in real estate, how are we to be capable of maximizing the profits from our home sale? Many home sellers make the critical mistake of thinking all Realtors are the same. They list with the first agent who comes along. Does it make good business sense to put the responsibility of selling your home with someone who has no plan or qualifications?

This special report will educate you with valuable information that will help you make the best decision concerning: Which real estate agent should you list with?

Start by doing a few hours of research. Ask around. Get to know who has the most signs, ads and marketing material in your neighborhood. Who's the most active agent? Compile a list of agent names and use these questions to help you determine which agent is right for you.

1. **Could you send me some information about yourself?** You can often get a good idea of which agents are the most professional by looking at their promotional materials. If their own materials aren't professional, how well are they going to market your home?  
Track how long each agent takes to respond to your request and how quickly they follow up. If they don't respond efficiently to your listing requests, imagine how they'll handle potential home buyers.
2. **Do you sell real estate full time?** A large percentage of agents sell real estate part time. If one doesn't devote 100% of their time to listing and selling real estate, how could they possibly keep up with the changing business world that we live in. Marketing and negotiating are two skills that a top producing agent must be 100% in tune with.
3. **How do you feel about selling your own listings?** You may be shocked to know that many agents don't want to sell their own listings. They want to list it and then let another agent sell it to reduce their liability.
4. **How long have you been in business?** The length of time a real estate agent has been licensed is not a sure fire sign that they've been an active seller. They may have been in business for 10 years but only part time, whereas an agent who's been in business for 2 years may be a real top producer.
5. **Do you have an assistant or support staff?** By employing someone to handle the details of their business, the agent can spend more time servicing your needs. However, make sure you know how much time an agent will spend and how much time their assistant will spend on the sale of your home.  
It may be fine if the assistant does most of the legwork as long as the agent is there at the most critical times of the transaction period. Often, top producers disappear after they list your home.  
This is unsettling to many sellers. Most sellers want the agent that they hired to list their house to be accessible to answer questions as they arise.

6. **How often will you hold open houses?** According to the NAR (National Association of Realtors) only 1% of houses actually sell due to the open house. So why do so many Realtors do them then?  
The answer is simple: so they can get more buyers. When a buyer walks into a home on Sunday (most people only have Sunday off), there is a 99% chance that they won't buy it. However, the chance of that Realtor selling them another house is very good. So who does an open house really benefit?
7. **What listing price do you recommend and what is that price based on?**  
Pricing is the most critical step to selling your home. Take great care in choosing an agent with the knowledge to price your home effectively.  
Keep in mind that the selling price should attract prospective buyers to your home, get you top dollar in the current market and reflect the condition of your home. Be realistic and avoid 'yes agents' who will say 'yes' to any request or price while your home languishes on the market.  
Lowball agents will try to talk you into an artificial price simply to sell as fast as possible. Be sure the agent is skilled in pricing a home and has facts to back up the price he or she recommends. Emotion or how much an agent likes the house should not be a factor.
8. **What does the listing agreement entail, what are the beginning and expiration dates, and what are the fee amounts I will be paying?** Have your agent go over every detail in the listing agreement with you until you understand it completely.  
Make sure the beginning and ending dates are on the agreement; a good standard for length is three months. Know exactly what fees you will be paying and remember that less is not always better.  
If the agent stands to make very little commission, you can bet it will be reflected in the amount of time and effort that is spent marketing your home.  
If the agent reduces their commission to get the listing, it may mean they intend to spend very little money promoting the property. The normal commission is 6 percent.  
If an agent will list your home for 4 or 5 percent, be sure they offer 3 percent in the MLS or it could drastically reduce the number of showings you will get.  
Agents are paid strictly by commission, therefore if there are ten houses to show and eight of them offer a 3 percent selling commission and two of them offer a 2 or 2 ½ percent selling commission, which ones will possibly not even be shown?
9. **Is the agent willing to pay for advertising or do they depend on the company to do it all?** Often agents ride on the reputation of their company in their marketing efforts. Agents are independent contractors and are self employed.  
It is up to the individual agent as to how a property is marketed. Be sure that the agent is willing to invest in many different marketing strategies that will give your home maximum exposure and show you in writing what these strategies are.
10. **What types of things separate you from your competition and will you give me some feedback?** How effectively will they advertise? Do they have 24-hour advertising capability? Will all the leads be followed up on by your agent's team or will they go to other agents who may have other listings they would prefer to

show? Agents who are innovative and offer new methods of attracting home buyers will measurably outperform agents who rely on methods of the past. Marketing effectively in the 2000's and beyond requires progressive strategies that add value and service for both buyers and sellers!

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