

Questions to Ask on Your Agent Interview



- **Is this your full-time job?**

Nothing against part time agents but will they be available when you are to see homes, attend inspections and handle all of the work required in the process of buying a home? And, a full-time agent is more in tune with the current market which helps you in the negotiating process. A full-time agent is more likely to be up-to-date on the market and the law.

- **How many sales have you closed this year? and in my target neighborhoods?**

Experience matters in real estate. You want someone who knows the local market, and has familiarity with your target neighborhoods.

- **Has a client ever filed a complaint against you?**

If you're uncomfortable asking, just check with your state's licensing board.

- **What do you charge?**

Most of the time the seller's agent will pay the buyer's agent. That's right - **A buyer's agent represents you and gets paid by the seller!** But what happens if the seller is not offering fair market commissions? Ask upfront if you'll have to pay the difference.

- **What's the scope of your service?**

Not all agents provide the same level of service.

- **Who else will be working with me?**

Some agents work with a team. Who will you be dealing with throughout the process?

- **Am I obligated to work with the lender, inspector, or other service providers you recommend?**

A "yes" here is a big red flag. Though good agents may have solid recommendations for lenders, inspectors, or other service providers, you should never feel pressured to use their recommendation. It's illegal for an agent to force you to use "his" lender or other service provider.

- **How long does the process take?**

A better question is will you be available when I want to see a house? Ask how accessible the agent is.

- **Do you represent buyers and sellers on the same house?**

When one agent represents both the buyer and seller, this is known as dual agency, and though legal, it is not always a good thing for buyers. If the seller's agent is trying to get the most money for his client's home, how can he also be trying to get you the best deal? Our advice is simple: avoid dual agency.

- **What makes you unique from other agents?**

Look for expertise, not just enthusiasm. You want an agent with experience, a track record of happy customers, and deep knowledge of any special requirements you might have in your home search.

- **What if I'm unhappy with your service?**

Most agents get paid when you buy a house, giving them an incentive to close the deal, even if you have doubts. Even if you have complaints after you purchase your home, it may be too late to do anything. Ask your agent if she's willing to guarantee your satisfaction, and what recourse you'll have for a bad experience.