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WORKING WITH YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT

Working With Your Real Estate Agent

Selecting the right real estate agent to help you buy or sell your home is essential to a smooth transaction. For the best possible experience, you should consider a professional's background, personality and responsiveness.

Here are some tips to help you choose and work with your real estate agent.

How to choose a real estate agent

1. When it comes to choosing a real estate agent, consumers who do their homework can save thousands of dollars and experience a smooth financial and physical transition. So don't waste time and resources - decide what's most important to you, and then find a professional who specializes in that area. Are you buying or selling a loft? A condo? A rural property? Raw land? An investment property? Perhaps cost is your main concern. Or timing. Whatever you decide, a RE/MAX Associate can help you.
2. Ask friends and family members for referrals. Someone you know and trust may have a RE/MAX agent in mind to help you meet your real estate goals.
3. If you've already determined where you'd like to live, drive through neighborhoods in the area and survey them for Realtor yard signs. Seeing the same name pop up on signs time after time may indicate that the agent is a specialist in the area. If you're thinking about selling, monitor the signs in your own neighborhood.
4. Moving far away? Right here on remax.com, you can begin to meet and greet RE/MAX agents from all around the world who can offer the same great expertise and service. Consider services they offer, additional certifications, any specialties, languages they speak. You'll find the right professional to meet your real estate needs no matter where your home search takes you.
5. Pay attention to credentials. This will help you determine areas of expertise. You may be interested in these designations: ABR (Accredited Buyer Representative), CLHMS (Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist), CRP (Certified Relocation Professional), CRS (Certified Residential Specialist) and SRES (Seniors Real Estate Specialist). There are dozens of designations pursued for continuing education, so identify one or more that fit your needs.

What to ask in the interview

1. If selling, ask the real estate agent how he or she would establish a price. Request a Comparative Market Analysis, also called a CMA, which shows the market value of similar homes in the area that are for sale or have recently sold.
2. If selling, ask the real estate agent how he or she would market your property. Understand that some agents may prefer to first tour your property and then put together a comprehensive customized marketing plan to present at a later meeting. But if he or she can't suggest a single strategy when asked, you might consider interviewing other candidates..
3. Ask the real estate agent how often you should expect to hear from him or her. Know how and when you will communicate to avoid unrealistic expectations. Pay attention to office hours and whether you'll be invited to stay in touch via a cell phone or e-mail.
4. Ask how long the real estate agent has been licensed and how many buyers and sellers he or she has helped. While time is not the most important factor, it may demonstrate experience.
5. Ask about designations. Interest in continuing education is a strong indicator of motivation and professionalism.
6. Pay attention to the agent's listening skills. Does he or she cut you off before you've finished a sentence? There's nothing worse than looking at houses you have no interest in because the real estate agent has not listened carefully to your needs, or having your home on the market too long because it's priced incorrectly and the wrong buyers are being targeted.
7. Ask the real estate agent what his or her fee structure is. Does he or she require a percentage of the sales price or work for a flat fee? Will the agent be paid another way?
8. If you are unsatisfied with a prospect's plans or personality, thank him or her for taking the time to meet with you and repeat the process with another real estate agent. It can be time-consuming, but it's worthwhile.

Once you've found the right real estate agent to represent you, hold up your end of the relationship. There are simple things you can do to help your real estate agent get you the best deal.

How to work with your real estate agent

1. If you are selling, create an information sheet that lists your home's features and best qualities, especially those you know best that others might overlook. Give this to your real estate agent, who may be able to use the information in marketing materials or when talking with potential buyers.
2. When selling, talk to the real estate agent about cosmetic improvements. Your home may need fresh paint or new carpet. (Make sure you choose neutral colors.)
3. If selling, keep it clean. Eliminate cobwebs and dust. Keep the bathroom counters and mirrors wiped down. Vacuum and sweep daily during the selling process.
4. If buying, be clear about what you want. Make a list of your priorities numbered 1 through 10 and give it to your real estate agent. You can always revise the list, but give your real estate agent something concrete so that he or she can research available listings more efficiently.

Food for thought

1. Office environment can say a lot about a businessperson. Is it clean and organized? Do the office hours make it easily accessible? Are staff members pleasant and helpful?
2. Your real estate agent is an authority you hire to help you make the right decisions, but you have the final word.
3. Hiring a Realtor will give you the best advantage. Although many practitioners work part time, RE/MAX Associates are industry professionals who can provide their complete attention and expertise. This gives you an enormous advantage.
4. Your residence is likely to be the biggest single investment you'll ever make. Buy and sell wisely.
5. Remember that home values fluctuate with the economy.