

Purchasing or selling property takes time and effort, and it's something you'll want help with. Hiring a real estate agent means you'll have an expert who can explain the transaction process while ensuring you get the best deal. But how do you find an agent who gives you the service you deserve? Here are five tips for choosing an agent.

Determine your Needs

Are you a senior looking for a new property to age in place? Are you a first-time seller? Do you have to move within a certain time frame? Before you begin your agent search, think about your situation and how you would explain it to a prospective agent. Once you figure out your needs, you'll have a better sense of what to discuss with an agent when it's time to go through your choices.

Ask People You Trust

One of the top ways real estate agents gain new clients is through referrals. If a friend, family member, coworker, or other person who you trust has bought or sold property, you can ask for recommendations of local agents. These people are likely to tell you the truth about their experience working with that agent, so don't be afraid to ask for the good and bad.

Look for a San Antonio Area REALTOR®

As a consumer, you want your licensed agent to be a REALTOR®. Agents who have chosen to be REALTORS® follow a Code of Ethics that protects their clients' interests. REALTORS® also have access to more than 100 forms that nonmembers cannot use, which means that your San Antonio area REALTOR® has forms for many real estate situations that non-REALTOR® agents don't.

Conduct Interviews Before Making a Choice

Once you've narrowed down your list of potential REALTORS®, set up interviews to ask questions about their services and explain what you are looking for.

Here's a list of potential questions worth asking:

- What is your communication style? If you prefer certain types of contact or expect to be in touch with a certain frequency, be sure to mention those preferences in your interview.
- What does your marketing plan entail? Sellers should find out how a REALTOR® plans to market their home to prospective buyers.
- Do you specialize in my situation? Some REALTORS® focus on specific areas, demographics, and transaction types. For example, if you'd like to sell some land, a San Antonio area REALTOR® who specializes in farm and ranch transactions might be best for you.

Talk to Their Other Clients

Even if you got a recommendation for a San Antonio area REALTOR® through someone you know, you may want to talk to other past and present clients during the vetting process. This could give you a chance to hear from someone who has a similar situation as yours and can explain how the agent handled it.

Although it may take some time to find a REALTOR® who fits your needs, it's worth it. Real estate transactions can be complicated, and a REALTOR® is the best person to provide guidance about each step, give you advice, and help you reach your goals.

For more information on buying, selling, or leasing your home visit SABOR.com and use a San Antonio area REALTOR®.