

8 Questions to Ask Prospective Listing Agents

Selling your home is a major life decision, and the person you hire can play a significant role in helping you reach your goal. You'll want to work with someone you trust and who meets your expectations, so you may want to interview a few listing agents before you agree to work with someone. Here are a few questions you can ask.

Are you a REALTOR®?

This may be the most important question. REALTORS® agree to abide by a strict code of ethics and to treat all parties fairly. Plus, REALTORS® have access to resources that can help sell your home quickly and for the best price.

What is your real estate experience?

There's no ideal number of years' experience a listing agent should have—even a new agent can do a great job for you—but you may prefer to work with someone who has experience with certain types of transactions. A REALTOR® may also hold designations or certifications, such as the Seller Representative Specialist (SRS) or Graduate REALTOR® Institute (GRI), indicating that he or she has an interest and extra training in a specialty.

What forms do you use?

Ask prospective listing agents if you can review the documents you'll be asked to sign when selling your home, which may include a seller's disclosure, a listing agreement, and contracts and addenda for the sale. REALTORS® have access to more than 100 forms that may apply to your situation and offer consumer protections that the Texas Real Estate Commission's promulgated forms don't provide.

How do you market your listings?

The agent may provide examples of how he or she has marketed previous properties. The agent may also suggest ways you can prepare your home to show well, or offer services such as hiring a home stager and using a professional photographer for listing photos.

How long on average do your listings stay on the market?

You may also want to ask how this compares to your market. This can give you an idea of how quickly the agent's listings sell.

How close have your sale prices been to your list prices?

This can give you a general idea of an agent's pricing strategy, but other factors can contribute, like an especially hot market.

What is your experience selling homes in my area?

Housing-market characteristics can vary from city to city and even among neighborhoods. You may want to work with an agent who has sold properties in your area and understands what attracts buyers to the community.

May I have a list of references?

Ask if you can contact a few of the agent's former clients and hear what their experience working with the agent was like. References can comment on their overall satisfaction and the agent's negotiating skills and responsiveness.