

# How to Find the Right Real Estate Agent to Sell Your Home

By [Angela Colley](#) | Jan 13, 2016



Once you've decided to sell your home, you need a trusted guide by your side. That means it's time to [find a real estate agent!](#)

Here we'll teach you how to find this essential professional to help you pull off this most important of all transactions. Because not all real estate agents are created equal.

Here's how to find a real estate agent who's right for *you*.

## **Gather referrals, but take them with a grain of salt**

There are a lot of agents out there. So how do you choose? Go ahead and ask your pals for referrals, but don't fall into the trap of picking an agent purely because of rave reviews. The old mantra of location, location, location applies to real estate agents as much as homes.

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You want an agent who is very familiar with your area, says **Wendy Flynn**, a Realtor and agent in College Station, TX. The reason is simple: If they've spent time in the area, they'll know how to market your house there.

So a better question to ask your friends than "Know any real estate agents?" is, "Know a real estate agent who's sold any properties in my area in the past few years?"

## Test their communication skills

Once you have some potentials, email them or call their office, then sit back and wait. This is your first test of a key component: how responsive will your agent be? Ideally, she should get back to you that same day.

"If it takes longer than four business hours without a decent explanation, I would be cautious," says **Chandler Crouch**, broker for Chandler Crouch Realtors in Fort Worth, TX. Imagine if you've got competing offers on the table, or if some problem comes up with the home inspection. You don't want to wonder where your agent is and whether you'll hear back from her!

## Probe their experience

Your initial conversation with a prospective listing agent should be like any job interview: Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions right off the bat. A good agent should know his stats, and any dancing around these numbers could mean he's hiding something. According to Crouch, you should ask the following:

- **How long have you been in business?** Aim for agents with at least two years of experience, enough time to learn the ropes and finesse their marketing and selling plans. Time (on the job) is money (in your pocket).
- **How many houses did you sell last year?** Look for agents with double-digit sales. "I wouldn't consider an agent unless they had 20 or more sells a year," Crouch says.
- **What percentage of your listings do you sell?** Ideally you want an agent who has sold an average of 60% to 80%.

- **What is the average list price to actual sell price ratio for your listings?** This can fluctuate by market, but you should still look for high numbers. "I would set a low bar of 95% to be acceptable for even the worst market conditions," Crouch says.

## Assess their marketing skills

Everyone knows that to sell a house quickly (and get the big bucks) you need to reach as many eyeballs as you can. And the way to suss out an agent's ability to do that is to ask these questions:

- **How will you market my home?** An agent should use at least a good brokerage website to showcase your listing, national listing portals such as [realtor.com](http://realtor.com), and an email subscription list.
- **How will you use social media?** They should use at least Facebook and Twitter to market listings; they get bonus points if they post photos on Instagram.
- **What offline materials do you use?** While most marketing is done online now, your agent should still make use of tried-and-true methods such as fliers, yard signs, and brochures, especially at an open house.
- **How much do you spend on advertising?** "Don't stop asking until you get a solid dollar figure," Crouch says. Advertising costs vary widely by area, but agents should consistently spend a portion of their business expenses on advertising. By asking for a set amount, you'll know if they're doing that or not.

## Don't shoot for cheap

Finally, don't assume the most inexpensive agent is the one for you. While agents work at different price points and some may take a lower commission, they should be confident enough in their abilities to stand by their prices, according to Crouch. So when you're talking terms, he recommends asking agents if they'll work on a discount. If they jump at the chance early on in the conversation, that might be a red flag.

"Think about this: If the agent can't even negotiate to protect their *own* money, how likely do you think it will be for them to go to bat to protect *your* money?" Crouch says. "It'll be a test of confidence in their own services at least."