

# Qualities to Seek in Your First Real Estate Agent

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Deciding to sell your house is a big step for most people, especially if you have never done it before. You may need to move for a job, or you may need to upgrade because you are starting a family. Whatever your reasons, you need to find a real estate agent to help you through the process.

Picking your first real estate agent is almost as big of a decision as your choice to sell. Your agent can mean the difference between a quick sale and a house that sits on the market for months with no results. A great real estate agent will help you set appropriate expectations, decide what you can do to get a higher selling price, and will help you find the right buyer in your preferred time frame. These are things that excellent real estate agents do. Don't be fooled into thinking, however, that all real estate agents are the same - in fact, far from it! Your job is to make sure you pick a real estate pro.

## **Experience**

Everyone has to start somewhere, including real estate agents. However, your first home is probably the biggest financial investment you currently have, and you cannot afford to make any mistakes in its sale. Your first agent will play a huge role in the successful sale of your property, and he or she needs to have the experience to pull it off. Choose an agent that has been in business for at least a few years, and one that has closed a respectable number of houses. For most agents, a dozen or so properties a year is common, but the higher the better. The agent should be full time and dedicated to the business. Is it possible a part time agent could do a decent job? Sure, but why take a chance when you don't have to.

## **Reputation**

Real estate agents are people, and like all people, some are better than others. Some agents have spotless reputations, while others do not. Researching your potential agent is worthwhile, because you may discover

things you do not like. Better to find out now than in the middle of the selling process. It takes time and experience to become a good agent, and unfortunately, not all agents put in the work necessary to gain this experience. Some agents may have licenses, but that does not mean they are good at their job. Examine multiple real estate agents, do some asking around, and verify that your community respects the person you will be working with.

### **Local**

Part of selling your home is understanding the place it is part of. The geography, the community, the laws and regulations of your particular area – all of these are important factors that only a local real estate agent can fully grasp. Ideally, your agent will be a part of your community with deep relationships throughout the area. The more your agent understands the surrounding city and community, the better he or she will be at selling your house.

### **Online Presence**

The Internet is the first place buyers go to when searching for a house. The stronger the online presence of your Realtor, the more likely your house is to be seen and considered. This does not mean simple Multiple Listing Services (MLS), either. A strong local online presence includes social networking, a personal website and an understanding of online real estate marketing. This ensures that your home is everywhere it can be, drawing in the most potential buyers and making it more competitive in the market. Additional consideration should include looking at the Realtors photography and listing descriptions they are providing current clients. Are they doing a good job? Would you consider looking at the home based on how they are being marketed? This is where you can really tell the difference between a good and lazy agent.

### **Word of Mouth**

This goes hand in hand with reputation, but it is also an excellent way to find a good agent with all of the qualities on this list. If your friends, family or neighbors have used an agent and had a good experience, ask them to tell you about it. Knowledge is power in real estate, and you want to gather as much information as you can about agents that might work for you. Choose your REALTOR® wisely based on [these questions](#). On many occasions, people make poor agent selections because they don't know the right questions to ask and simply base their decision on the agent's personality, or worse yet, the value they give the seller for their property.

### **Connected To Other Service Providers**

Selling your house involves far more than simply listing and collecting the money. Your agent should have a respectable number of connections throughout your area to help you accomplish any number of things. This includes [fixing up your home before sale](#), landscaping, obtaining a mortgage and more. Keep in mind – if your agent only has one recommendation for each, there may be a conflict of interest occurring. A good agent will present you with several options depending on your needs, and may even have a preferred vendor list. However, he or she should not be getting any kickbacks for referrals. Recommendations should be based on what is best for you and the sale, not how much money the agent will collect from your decision.

### **Busy But Not Too Busy**

You want a real estate agent that has a steady business selling homes. This means that he or she is in demand and is probably doing a good job. However, there is such thing as too busy. If the agent takes forever to return your calls, is rarely available to answer questions and has a tough time fitting you in for appointments, he or she may be too busy to give you the attention you need. Selling a home is tough work for everyone involved, and you need an agent that will be there for you through the entire process. The REALTOR® you are working with should be providing you with clear and concise feedback after a showing occurs. Communication

skills, a track record of success, as well as other happy clients are all things that should be a smart considerations when choosing a real estate agent.

The choice of an agent is one part logic, one part intuition. Keep these qualities in mind as you consider multiple agents, and use them to help guide your intuition in picking the perfect person for you and your home.

*Bill Gassett is a nationally recognized real estate leader who has been helping people move in and out of the Metrowest Massachusetts area for the past 27-plus years. He has been one of the top RE/MAX REALTORS® in New England for the past decade. In 2013, he was the #1 RE/MAX agent in Massachusetts. Connect with him on [Google+](#).*