

How To Choose A REALTOR®

In almost every community, you'll likely find a number of real estate firms. Because there is heated competition, local REALTORS® must work hard to succeed in your community.

The best way to choose a REALTOR® that is right for you is to conduct some research. Get recommendations from people you know. You can also chat with REALTORS® and watch them in action at open houses. Consider their local advertising, including their Web sites. Get suggestions from lenders, attorneys, financial planners and CPAs. The experiences and recommendations of past clients can be invaluable.

You should conduct your search for a REALTOR® much like you would if hiring someone for any other job. This should include interviewing several REALTORS® before selecting one with whom to work. These interviews represent a good opportunity to question the REALTORS® about such issues as training, experience, representation and professional certifications.

Professional certifications, or designations, are earned by many REALTORS® through the completion of specific educational criteria. Each of these designations, which are conferred by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), are indicators of a REALTORS® advanced education and experience in a particular discipline. These specialty designations are available to REALTORS® only.

Without any obligation, you can invite local REALTORS® to visit your home and give you a "listing presentation" and explain why they believe they're the best ones to market it for you. A listing presentation includes having a REALTOR® review with you the reasons why you should list with that particular individual, and providing you with information that will assist you in making initial decisions about selling your home.

Most states, including Massachusetts, require a real estate agent to explain his or her role at the outset of any conversation. A REALTOR® should promptly provide this type of information, which is called a disclosure. Look for a REALTOR® who:

- Explains and discloses agency relationships (agency relationships refers to the role of the agent, i.e., who they are representing -- the buyer or the seller).
- Advises you on how to prepare your home for the market.
- Shows some enthusiasm for your property, listens attentively, instills confidence, operates in a professional manner, and has a complementary personality style to yours.
- Has already researched your property in the public records and the Multiple Listing Service, if applicable.
- Brings data on nearby homes that have sold (or failed to sell) recently.

The following are important questions to ask your potential REALTOR®:

- Are you a member of the National Association of REALTORS®?
- Do you belong to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS)? Multiple Listing Services are cooperative information networks of REALTORS® that provide descriptions of most of the houses for sale in a particular region.
- What have you listed or sold in this neighborhood lately?
- Do you cooperate with buyers' brokers?

What share of the commission will you offer a cooperating broker who finds the buyer?