



A few key questions to ask Realtors you are interviewing

Don't you owe it to yourself to take the time to interview 2-3 agents to find your best fit; someone who is going to listen, have relevant and current experience and be your advocate throughout the purchase process?

The following questions will help you in the process of interviewing buyer's agents; you're about to undergo what is likely your most expensive purchase to date.

- 1. How long have you been involved in real estate?**
- 2. How many personal real estate transactions have you had? Do you own your own home?**
- 3. Why did you get involved in real estate?**
- 4. What advanced training/education have you undertaken to hone your skills? What designations do you have?**
- 5. What technology do you use to streamline the purchase process for your clients?**
- 6. How are you different from other Realtors?**
- 7. Will you be working & communicating directly with me?**
- 8. Do you work most often with buyers or sellers?**
- 9. How readily accessible will you be? Do you have time for new clients?**
- 10. How are you compensated?**
- 11. How will you negotiate the best price for me?**
- 12. Can you provide me with at least 3 references?**

So that you can learn a little about me here are my responses to the questions above:

1. & 2. How long have you been involved in real estate? How many personal real estate transactions have you had? Do you own your own home?

I purchased my first home when I was 23 years old in San Francisco. A subsequent purchase was a multi-unit building near Glen Park, San Francisco where I learned the ropes by doing everything from leasing to property management to the intricacies of S.F.'s complicated rent control laws to sweat equity.

Tiring of living so close to "work" (I lived in one of the units for ~3 years), I bought a home in the Sunnyside directly from the owner (FSBO). (I'll save for another post why FSBO's are great for buyers and not so great for sellers).

Seeking warmer weather and a bit more space, I moved to Burlingame which is ~15 minutes south of S.F. in 2004. I represent clients in both San Francisco and San Mateo Counties and am a member of the Realtor Associations (MLS's) for each county. It's now been since 1992 that I've been involved in real estate.

3. Why did you get involved in real estate?

I became involved in real estate for two reasons. Since my first purchase, I quickly fell in love with property ownership & renovating my homes. I'm a firm believer in the rewards of owning one's personal residence & knew early on that I wanted to become a homeowner ASAP.

I am fortunate to work with a diverse group of fantastic people who I consider friends and enjoy that every day is completely different.

Secondly, prior to my becoming licensed which I'd been thinking about for a couple of years, I had the experience of working with a "veteran" agent who did less than a stellar job in representing me as a buyer. This resulted in a very costly, 5+ year lawsuit which resulted in the judge ruling in my favor, details of which will be shared in future posts.

I knew that if I could receive this poor level of care from a long term agent that I could do a better job of protecting my clients. I will note that I had good experiences in working with my prior Realtors.

I do everything possible to ensure my clients have no surprises with their purchase through extreme diligence and continue to be there as a resource after close of escrow since I do care about the fantastic people that hire me & who have placed a great deal of trust in me.

I have invaluable experience on several levels to offer my clients.

4. What advanced training/education have you undertaken to hone your skills? What designations do you have?

I fully believe in the power of continually improving one's skills through education which translates into a higher level of skill & professionalism for my clients. I have both an [Accredited Buyer's Representative \(ABR\)](#) & [Graduate of Realtors Institute \(GRI\)](#) designations.

I currently am completing coursework for the [Council of Residential Specialists \(CRS\)](#) degree which is held by less than 4% of all licensed Realtors.

5. What technologies do you utilize to streamline the purchase process for your clients?

I continually research new tech tools which will help save my clients time in the purchase process. I've been using [DocuSign](#) for more than 3 years. Clients love the ease in signing docs online as well as making a contribution to the environment by cutting down on paper usage & drive time to gather signatures.

On that environmental note, I run a 95% [paperless transaction](#) and clients receive a pdf file at the close of escrow. The added benefit for clients is a more secure transaction since there is no schlepping around of files which has personal information & which can inadvertently get lost or stolen. Our title companies are slowly making the move in this direction as well.

For sharing of large files, I use [Sugarsync](#) a great way to share large disclosure packages or photos which may be kicked back by email accounts which have small capacity for files.

I've tried out a couple of online transaction management programs where clients can check in on the status of their docs, escrow & time lines. These early systems lacked certain robust features.

Fortunately, the fantastic San Francisco Association of Realtors is rolling out a new version which will offer a lot more features for clients. I'm really excited to incorporate this into my business in 2010!

These are a few key tools that I've incorporated into my business practices.

6. How are you different from other Realtors?

My goal is to be a forever agent for you and your friends! Throughout our working relationship your goals and concerns are my priority. After the close of escrow I continue to be a resource for my clients who rely on me as a resource for their needs as they live in their home, whether it is referrals to contractors, painters, electricians or

other service professionals to networking with my colleagues and friends for job leads for their college grad kids.

Clients confidently introduce me to their friends to help with their real estate needs.

7. Will you be working & communicating directly with me?

When you hire me, I will be in direct communication with you. I have a support team who works behind the scenes including a Transaction Coordinator which frees up my time so that I'm readily available for my clients.

After all, you've taken the time to interview & get to know me not my support staff.

8. Do you work most often with buyers or sellers?

I work with a diverse group of buyers including first time buyers, move up buyers, techies, retirees, & investors. Typically, my clients are about 50/50 buyers and sellers; many are introduced to me by former clients.

I've taken additional educational course work in earning my [ABR](#) designation which is focused specifically on buyers needs which are different from seller needs.

9. How readily accessible will you be? Do you have time for new clients?

I don't work "banker's hours." I am available for clients 7 days a week & work around my clients schedules even if it means drawing up an offer at midnight due to your work/travel schedule.

The reality is that I work 16 hour days when occasionally needed.

10. How are you compensated?

In California, buyer's agent are compensated by the seller. There is no out of pocket expense for you. Therefore, why not experience the full benefits of working with a Realtor by hiring your Realtor at the start of the purchase process!

11. How will you negotiate the best price for me?

There are a number of details that goes into crafting a strong offer; the negotiating of price doesn't stop once a buyer is in contract.

A **pre-approval letter** specific to the property will be included in your offer so that the seller and their agent know they are dealing with a qualified buyer.

Together, we will **look at recent sales data** for the area to determine what dollar amount to come in at. I will explain the nuances of any properties that I've seen. I tour

about 20-35 properties a week in several neighborhoods and it's very likely that I will have seen much of the pending & sold inventory. If necessary, I will call agents of sold listings to understand the factors that led to the sales price; was the pest report high, were there buyer credits, were there appraisal issues, were there multiple offers and if so how many?

We will **evaluate year over year market data** to see what the trends are for that particular neighborhood/community including: are sales increasing/decreasing, what are typical days on market, how much inventory is there.

If we are dealing with new construction, I will network with my Zephyr colleagues to see what deals developers are negotiating on certain buildings. These sales & buyer incentives typically are not in the MLS.

We will discuss **appropriate contingencies & inspections** to include in your offer which will **protect your interests** as well as evaluate offer strategies if the property is to receive multiple offers.

I also **present offers in person**. This gives the list agent a chance to see me in person, hear about my clients, and discuss the terms of the offer.

Once your offer has been accepted, during your contingency period events will include inspections, appraisal, loan coordination, & meeting a few neighbors. For details on why it's important to meet neighbors [click here](#).

During negotiations which will be ongoing from the time that your offer is accepted to the time that escrow closes, we will work as a team and I will keep us grounded as well as work tirelessly towards the mutual success; seller & buyer meeting their goals in a **partnership approach**.

It is possible for both parties to gracefully get what they want at the end of the day.

12. Can you provide me with at least 3 references?

I will happily provide references. My clients welcome the chance to chat with you about their experience working with me if you'd like. For now, here are a few [testimonials](#).

Thank you for taking the time to learn a little about how I work with clients.