

# Hiring the Right REALTOR®



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## **What experience do you have working with divorcing clients?**

The purpose of this question is to help you determine the knowledge of the real estate agent as it pertains to the divorce process. Not all agents understand the dynamics with the numerous professional services that can be involved in a divorce case. You want to feel confident the agent has strong communication skills to assist between you and your soon-to-be-ex. Additionally, it's important that your agent knows how to communicate with potential buyers and their agents, without revealing sensitive information that could work against in you negotiations. The importance of trust between you and your agent cannot be overstated.

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## **What marketing strategies do you implement to get homes sold?**

The difference between listing and marketing a home is crucial to understand. Listing a home is simply about getting it on the market. Marketing a home is about bringing in buyers and getting top dollar for your home in the current market. Working with an agent that knows and implements a true marketing strategy is key. Sure, there are canned answers like "list on 100s of sites" or "post on social media", but what are they going to do to identify and attract the *right* type of buyer for your property? What guidance will they give you to prepare your home for market? How will they help buyers see themselves in the property? The more detailed the plan, the better the partnership.

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## **Can you provide information about recent comparable sales and market trends in our area?**

Pricing a home is an in depth analysis of recent past sales combined with current market trends. A bit like a historian and a future teller. Ask your agent how they came to a list price. It shouldn't be just a figure of averages or average price per square foot. Just as an appraiser makes adjustments, your agent should know how to defend the price to you, the buyers and their agent and potentially the appraiser as well. Aside from adjustments, listen for things like days on market, appreciation rates, current competition - these are cues of a more in-depth analysis.

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## **What do we need to do to best prepare our home for market?**

If the agent's response is "get it photographed and it's ready to go" then move on. A truly experienced agent knows they need to walk your home to identify any potential repairs that need to be considered, addressed or disclosed. They should be able to guide you room-by-room to position the home so that buyers are attracted to it. Asking for advice on preparing your home for sale helps you understand what improvements or staging may be necessary to enhance its market appeal and potentially increase its value.

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## **What is the anticipated timeline for selling our home?**

It's ideal to inquire about the timeframe for selling your home so that you're able to plan your transition and align it with other aspects of the divorce process. A great agent will ask you what *your* ideal timeframe is so they can understand your needs and what will help keep the stress down as much as possible and offer a tailor-made strategy that considers all factors.

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## ***How will we handle showings?***

Let's face it, no one loves people trekking in and out of their homes, especially when we are in an overwhelming season such as divorce. Yet, in order to get buyers in to see your property, it's a necessity of the process. You want to make your home available as much as possible. If you work from home, have children or have pets, it's important to communicate this with your agent and listen for them to ask you about any restrictions and/or optimal timing. A good agent will inform you of any potential concerns with restrictions but will advise on how accommodations can be incorporated.

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## ***Can you help me find my next home?***

This shouldn't be just a simple, "yes," it should include follow up questions from your agent. Your agent needs to know where you plan to go next so they can factor this in while negotiating for the best timeline in your sales contract. Your real estate agent may be able to assist in helping you buy your next home or even help identify rental opportunities if that suits your needs better. If you're planning to purchase another home, it's imperative you discuss this with your agent so they educate you on how your divorce may affect your qualifications. The more proactive you can be in this, the better.

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## ***What fees can I expect to be a part of the sale?***

Asking about the fees that may be included as a part of the sale process is a critical part of determining the true amount of proceeds that you'll receive, therefore that you may be splitting. Those fees certainly include the fee that your agent charges for their listing services, but it also includes figures for prorated taxes, possible state transfer tax, attorney fees, recording fees, the existing mortgage balance, any payoff fees for additional liens or judgements on the title, and more. Your agent should be able to provide an estimate of what these numbers could be if they're asking the right questions.

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## ***Who will I be working with throughout the sale?***

Sounds like an odd one, right? It's not uncommon that the agent you're interviewing ends up sending another junior member of their team to actually lead the process. This may work for you if you also had the chance to hear their responses. Now, this is different than the interviewing agent having some assistants throughout that help with documentation or staging prep. But who leads the marketing efforts, the communication and the negotiations? You should feel comfortable that you know and trust who you will receive effective communication from, because after all, the agent you hire will need to communicate with anyone who has marital interest in the property and needs to fully understand your particular dynamics.

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## ***Are there any legal considerations we should be aware of regarding the sale of our home during the divorce process?***

Your agent needs to know the answer to this is, Yes. Again, depending on your state, your spouse may have marital interest in the property, even if they are not on the deed or mortgage, in which it would require their signatures on all documents as well. You also need to have determined how deposits and proceeds will be distributed between the two of you.

[www.PeaceofMindDivorce.info](http://www.PeaceofMindDivorce.info)

DISCLAIMER: The information provided does not act as legal, financial or psychological advice. While the insights may have wide applicability, readers should consult with an attorney, CPA, financial advisor, therapist or coach in your state to obtain advice with respect to your particular issue and/or case.

Jamie Milam Consulting, LLC © October 2023

REALTOR® INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

*Speaking to:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Firm:* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Questions:**

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**Notes / Observations:**

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