

How to Choose the Right Listing or Buyer's Agent

Why Your Agent Choice Matters

Buying or selling a home is one of the largest financial transactions most people make. Choosing the right real estate agent—whether for selling, buying, or both—can significantly impact your experience, timing, and financial outcome.

The right agent will guide you through every step, advocate fiercely on your behalf, and deliver real results. The wrong one? Missed opportunities, poor communication, and unnecessary stress.

Key Qualities of a Great Listing Agent

What to Look For

Why It Matters

Local Market Expertise

A strong understanding of hyperlocal trends, pricing patterns, and buyer behaviors allows your home to be positioned strategically.

Strategic Pricing Approach

Data-driven pricing (not guesswork) helps you attract attention early and avoid unnecessary price reductions later.

Marketing Plan

Your agent should provide professional photos, engaging descriptions, social media promotion, and targeted outreach beyond the MLS.

Preparation Support

A strong agent doesn't just help you get your home ready—they help you choose the right improvements for the best return on investment. That includes offering strategic guidance and referrals for staging, updates, and light renovations that will pay off.

Communication

You should feel consistently informed, supported, and empowered throughout the process—not left in the dark.

Negotiation Skills

An agent who can read the room, interpret offers, and negotiate with confidence can protect your bottom line and peace of mind.

What to Avoid in a Listing Agent

- Suggesting a high valuation/asking price without supporting data
- Passive or limited marketing efforts

- Poor or vague responses to your questions
- Lack of accountability after listing goes live

What About Choosing a Buyer's Agent?

Even if you're not selling a home, buying one without a dedicated agent comes with risk. A buyer's agent:

- Acts solely in your best interest
- Guides your search with local insight, showing you homes you can afford and compete for if necessary
- Evaluates potential pitfalls and resale risks
- provides their own property valuation for any property you want to make an offer on
- Helps structure offers to be competitive—without overpaying
- Coordinates inspections, appraisals, and attorney review
- Navigates you smoothly through to closing

Tip: Dual agency (where the same agent represents both buyer and seller) is legal in NJ. Just make sure your interests are fully protected by a reputable dual agent.

Smart Questions to Ask Any Agent

- What sets you apart from other agents? Can you explain that?
- Can I speak to one or two recent clients of yours?
- Can you walk me through your pricing or offer strategy?
- How do you ensure I maximize my net profit and avoid overpaying?
- How will you keep me updated throughout the transaction?

Your Next Step

If you're looking to buy or sell a home in Monmouth County or the Jersey Shore area, consider working with someone who meets every one of the standards above.

Kerry Ascione of Shore Insight Group offers data-driven strategy, concierge-level service, and hyperlocal expertise—whether you're selling, buying, or doing both.

You don't have to figure it all out alone. Schedule a no-pressure consultation to learn more about how the right agent can simplify the process—and maximize your results.

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