

7 things to expect from your estate agent

By [Paul Stevens](#)

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Selling a house is a slow and complicated affair; the transfer process (what happens after you accept the offer and until the property is registered in your buyer's name) can take months and there are many things that can go wrong. You will need an agent that is organised and diligent. There will be many people competing for the mandate to sell your property and you need someone who has your best interest at heart. Buying or selling a home will be one of the biggest transactions of your life, so make sure that you choose an agent with great reviews and a great track record.



Paul Stevens, CEO of Just Property

Here is an easy-to-understand check-list for all home-sellers:

1. Honesty and transparency

It is important to choose an agent who is honest and believes in full disclosure. Your agent needs to be transparent about the documents you are signing. Remember to trust your gut. If your gut is telling you that something does not feel right or that your agent isn't practicing full disclosure, you have every right to ask for the contact information from past buyers that the agent has represented. Meet with different agents and get to know them; your intuition will guide you.

2. Frequent communication

You need an agent who will always keep in touch with you. There is a lot of information that agents will need to keep you updated with, such as inspections and title work. A good agent should not take longer than a couple of hours to respond to you. You need to respond to your agent in a timely manner too. Both parties need to have their finger on the pulse. Ask your agent if they prefer to be contacted via Whatsapp, phone calls or emails. And

ask what their availability is. You should feel that your agent is contactable when you need to (within reason).

3. Use of current technology tools

Technology changes on a daily basis, and so does its effect on the real estate industry. We have introduced digital signing and "e-business cards" into our business and it has already made a big impact on the way we do things. Most of us have busy personal and work schedules, and allowing clients to digitally sign can save a lot of time and effort. Audit trails are more robust too. And that's just the tip of our technology iceberg.

4. Business connections

A sales estate agent is not the only person that is needed when selling a home. There are many different parties involved in a property sales transaction, including bond and transferring attorneys, electrical inspectors and more. You need to be confident that your agent has solid business relationships and that they can recommend the right people to you based on their established reliability and credibility. Ask why an agent is recommending a particular person or firm to you. This will help you establish whether your wants and needs are aligned with their recommendations.

5. Proven track record and success

Before choosing an agent, ask about their sales history and success. A real estate agent who has sold over 50 homes has a different level of experience compared to an agent that has only sold a couple. Make sure to ask your agent how many homes they have sold in the past year. Also, pay attention to how visible an agent is in your area: are their boards up, do you see branded cars, do they stand out in the community? Look online at who is marketing properties in your area: how they promote other properties is how they are likely to promote yours. Which ones impress you? Consider the views of other property owners: Google My Business is a great place to find out what people really think of the service they have received and our offices, like Margate and Blouberg, have embraced this way of collecting client feedback.

6. Strong negotiation skills

To receive the best deal that you possibly can, you need an agent who will advocate for you. It is their job to make sure that you get the best possible price for you. They need to be a strong negotiator, without being too pushy or aggressive. How they treat you in trying to win the mandate is how they are likely to treat buyers when trying to close the deal. Just Property Port Elizabeth franchisee Andrea Stevens lives by the T. Harv Eker quote, "How you do something is how you do everything." This standard can be used to hold your agent accountable across all aspects of his/her work.

7. Professionalism

When buying any product, we expect professionalism. Although it is a given, agents need to treat everyone equally and with respect. Your agent also needs to be punctual for meetings and so do you. If a meeting is set for 11am, your agent should be there at 11am or a bit before then. Being late shows a lack of professionalism. Look beyond the commission rate; not all agents are created equal. It may be worth paying a higher commission if you feel assured of an excellent service. Ask your agent to describe situations where they have gone the extra mile for a client. This will give you insight into what their service standards and levels of professionalism are.

It's not easy to choose someone to represent you when it comes to selling your property. Everyone is promising the same thing: a quick sale, the best price, value and services you can trust. These seven points give you a useful framework for choosing the agent that is just right for you.

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