



## Take your pick

Choosing the right real estate professional for you

By Susie Steckner

**T**he home-buying process can be a lot like a roller coaster ride with plenty of stressful ups and downs and unexpected twists and turns. And when purchasing a new home is contingent upon selling your current one, the stakes can be high — especially since most folks can't afford to carry two mortgages for an indefinite period of time.

Therefore, experts say you shouldn't take a gamble when you're deciding who will sell your current home. Instead, bet on an agent

whose real estate experience and acumen points to a sure — or at least as sure as reasonably possible — thing. But, how do you make sure you've got the right person by your side?

### Shop around

First, be sure you talk to multiple agents before settling on "the one".

"You want to assure that you are working with a competent professional who cares about you," said Lori Doerfler, the 2017 president-elect of the AAR, or the Arizona Association of REALTORS®. "Real estate is a relationship business and the process could take up to six months. It is important to make sure that there is the right chemistry between yourself and your real estate professional."

### Starting your search

Ask friends and family who they have used in the past or reach out to your lender for a recommendation, said Paris Davis, vice president and Northwest Arizona retail banking division manager for Washington Federal in Arizona.



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### Expert advice

You will have plenty to consider before choosing an agent. Here are five questions to ask:

1. How long has the professional been in business in your preferred area? *Doerfler said this demonstrates a professional's overall experience and area(s) of competence.*
2. Is the professional full- or part-time? *Will that schedule fit your needs?*
3. Does the agent work with new-home buyers or just resale buyers? *Does their*

*area of expertise reflect what you're looking for?*

4. What type of advanced real estate education has the professional completed? *Licensing laws require a minimal number of continuing education hours but advanced education is a reflection of the commitment level of the professional, Doerfler said.*
5. How often does the professional typically communicate with clients and in what way — text, email, phone calls? *Does this match your expectations and style?*

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The Arizona Republic  
200 E. Van Buren St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Content Specialist  
Sales Manager  
CAMI KAISER  
CKaiser@RepublicMedia.com

Creative Development Director  
ISAAC MOYA  
IMoya@RepublicMedia.com

Editor  
PAULA HUBBS COHEN  
Paula.Cohen@cox.net

Contributing Editor  
JIM WILLIAMS  
JLWilliams@RepublicMedia.com

Design  
CARL BEZUIDENHOUT  
CarlBez@me.com

Project Manager,  
Custom Products  
NICK KO STENKO  
NKostenko@RepublicMedia.com

For general advertising inquiries,  
contact Republic Media at 602-444-8000.

ADVERTISING  
Director, Classified Sales  
BRETT SONDRUP  
BSondrup@RepublicMedia.com

Real Estate and Rentals Manager  
LORNA WALKER  
Lorna.Walker@gannett.com

MICHELLE MURRIETTA  
602-444-8208  
MMurrietta@RepublicMedia.com  
GENA ZESTRIJAN  
602-803-8653  
GZestijan@RepublicMedia.com

### Licensing information

Real estate agent licensing information is available online at the Arizona Department of Real Estate consumer site: [services.azre.gov/public/database](http://services.azre.gov/public/database)

It's also important to understand the difference between an agent, broker and a REALTOR, Doerfler said. All REALTORS are licensed to sell real estate as an agent or a broker but not all real estate agents are REALTORS. "They [REALTORS] belong to the National Association of REALTORS and pledge to follow a strict code of ethics which establishes levels of conduct that are higher than typical business practices or those required by law," she said.

Davis said buyers can also turn to websites such as [myagentfinder.com](http://myagentfinder.com) and [upnest.com](http://upnest.com) to identify a real estate professional. The AAR's "find a REALTOR" database is also an option at [aaronline.com/realtor-search](http://aaronline.com/realtor-search).



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