

A Message from the President of the Youngstown Columbiana Association of REALTORS®

FINDING THE RIGHT REAL ESTATE AGENT

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When you form a relationship with a real estate professional, you hope for a perfect match.

Selling your home is like a short-term romance. It requires faith in the person you choose. You depend on your REALTOR® for meaningful communication and timely feedback. You want to sell your home, so you must trust them because they're your connection to achieving your goal.

The REALTOR® you choose is critical to your success in selling your home. Follow this guide on "Finding the Right Real Estate Agent," to help you through the selection process.

Start with a List

If you have no idea how to find the right real estate professional, start with a list.

- Ask friends, relatives, and coworkers for referrals.
- Check out "For Sale" signs in your neighborhood.
- Look through member registries for your church, social club, PTA, or other organizations.

Review Websites

Once you have a list of REALTORS®, search for their company websites. Some businesses use Facebook for easier client interaction, so search there too. Check out an agent's listings and sales, open houses, and marketing efforts. Look for a listing of credentials, real estate specialties, and client comments.

Undercover Observation

Compile a list of open houses from online research or open house signs in neighborhoods where you'd like to live. Simply show up with all the other guests and sign in. The person hosting the open house is usually the seller's agent, so as you walk through the home, check them out as well.

- Are they knowledgeable?

- Do they look and sound professional?
- How does he or she respond to inquiries about the home?
- What do your gut instincts tell you about working closely with this person?

You can learn a lot through undercover observation but ask a few questions as well. If you're impressed, ask for a business card.

Conduct Interviews

Treat a realtor interview as though you're the employer looking for the best candidate for the job. That's essentially what you'll be doing. Make sure the agent understands that it's an information-only meeting. Come prepared to ask the questions you couldn't answer from checking out a website or visiting an open house.

- How long have you been selling real estate?
- What is your specialty?
- What homes have you sold in the area?
- May I contact your prior clients?
- What's your commission?
- What services do you provide?
- What is your marketing plan?

Check Credentials

Ask about credentials, licenses, and designations but don't waste your interview time discussing them. You should focus on marketing, negotiation, and closing experience. In the end, these are the biggest factors in getting your home sold.

You can usually verify a realtor's license status through a state's online licensing portal. Realtor and broker designations are related to education and ethics.

- Realtor or Real Estate Salesperson: passed a license examination, is qualified to sell real estate.
- REALTOR®: member of National Association of REALTORS® and committed to education and ethical standards
- Broker or Real Estate Associate Broker: earned the broker's designation and broker's license through education and testing.

NAR offers education and training for other designations and certifications. You can find criteria for Accredited Buyer's Representative, Certified Residential Specialist, and other designations at NAR.com.

It's Worth the Effort

Making a perfect match with a real estate professional requires time and patience, but it's worth it. When you choose the right person, it can make a big difference in selling your home quickly, professionally, and for the price you want.

County Totals:

Mahoning: 487 on the Market, 697 Sold, 232.33 Average Sold Each Month, 2.10 Months of Inventory left, 143.12% Chance of selling your home in 90 days

Columbiana: 205 on the Market, 244 Sold, 81.33 Average Sold Each Month, 2.52 Months of Inventory left, 119.02% Chance of selling your home in 90 days

Trumbull: 341 on the Market, 583 Sold, 194.33 Average Sold Each Month, 1.75 Months of Inventory left, 170.97% Chance of selling your home in 90 days

Dennis Gonatas is the 2022 President of the Youngstown Columbiana Association of REALTORS®