



**ENGEL & VÖLKERS®**

# **BUYER AGENT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**UNLOCKING THE POWER OF  
REPRESENTATION**



**Kari Green, Advisor**

360 552-8150

kari.green@engelvoelkers.com

<https://karigreen.evrealstate.com>





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## **I buy stuff all the time. Why do I need an agent?**

When we think of purchasing something, we think of a straightforward transaction.

Here is the money, I take home a gallon of milk.

Even with a vehicle purchase, that may require a loan, we get the loan, the money goes to the dealer, we purchase the car, and all the rights and privileges that come with it. We pay the bank, and the car becomes our own. There's a certain amount of risk when it comes to used cars or even recall issues with new cars, but it's still fairly straightforward.

With property, there is so much more to it. One can purchase a gallon of milk, and no one can come and say that they have a right to the carton. With property, there are many rights that can be divided separately. Understanding what you are purchasing, what your responsibilities are, and making sure all things are disclosed is critical to home purchasing.



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## Washington Requirements

January, 2024 brought some new requirements in Washington state. Our state has been a front runner for protecting the buyer/agent relationship, and making sure that buyers understand clearly how that relationship works, and what responsibilities fall into the agent's purview and how agents are are paid.

Because this is a contractual agreement that stays in place until a home is purchased, time runs out or it is terminated, buyers need to understand how to interview for the right agent. What are the right questions to ask? What are you paying for? How will I be protected by this agent?



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## Representation/Negotiation

Representation is the whole reason we have agents. Understanding that purchasing a home with an agent means that you have someone watching out for YOUR best interests.

Encroachments, easements, water rights, HOA..

These are just a few items that your agent knows about and will help walk you through.

Negotiation is understanding the best way to get you where you want to go, with each prospective offer you make. Each transaction is different, each seller has different motivations, and each buyer has different financing needs. Your agent should be able to effectively navigate negotiation, and make sure you, as the buyer, understand each step of the way.



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## **Are you my agent?**

The buyer/agent relationship is one of the biggest decisions you will make in this journey. As you begin your conversation, ask yourself if this agent is out to sell a house, or are they out to make sure you have the information you need to make the right moves, at the right time?

Has this agent brought these buyer/agent requirements in Washington to your attention?

Is this agent a sales person, or a high integrity agent, ready to represent your best interests?



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## Knowledge is Power

Interviewing agents has never been more critical. Once you have entered into this agreement, it is contractual. This means that, for the time specified in the contract, the buyer agrees that this agent is the agent they are working with

The truth is, this agreement should be signed **BEFORE** any real estate advice is given, or homes are shown.

Legally, this should **NOT** be done at the first offer. The spirit of this law is for the buyer to have a clear picture of agency **BEFORE** making an offer.

It protects both buyer and agent, and makes sure buyers have the right tools, at every stage!

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## Interview Questions

1. How long have you been a real estate agent?

If the agent is new, the next question would be, ***“How would you represent me better than a seasoned agent?”***

New agents can be great, because they may be more aggressive than a seasoned agent, and may be willing to think more outside the box instead of ‘doing what I’ve always done.’ It can also be a nightmare if the agent doesn’t have a strong backing with their brokerage, to make sure you have the BEST representation..

2. Do you have any references?

Previous clients are a great spot to interview and see, really, how an agent was effective for them. Other agents can also be great references for integrity. Does the agent you are interviewing have good relationships with agents?



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## Interview Questions

3. Is real estate your full time career, or are you a part time agent?

Part time agents may not have their head fully in your game. During negotiations and escrow process, your agent needs to be fully available to answer questions, get information and prioritize YOUR best interests. That crunch time is why buyers agents are so deeply needed. It doesn't take experience and knowledge to open a door. It takes an agent to make sure you are fully represented during the legal process of transferring property deeds.

If you are not a full time agent, what is your plan to make sure that I am fully represented when you are unavailable? Can I also interview this person?





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## **Interview Questions**

4. Do you understand Washington state's requirements for buyer/agent relationships?

It is imperative to have an agent that understands the rules, and follows them. Integrity is everything, when it comes to real estate. You need an agent, not a sales person.

5. Why should I choose you as my buyer's agent?

This answer should include integrity, understanding of representation and negotiation, and backing from the brokerage they are with. I can't say it enough... agents are not sales people. If this answer is focused on 'getting you into a home as soon as possible', 'lowest price,' and/or their own agendas, take a step back and a serious look. Focus should always be on your, your needs, and your best interests.

6. What is your dual agent policy?

Personally, to avoid conflict of interest, if I am the listing agent, I will help a buyer write an offer if they know their contingencies and offer. Once I am asked, most of the time, I can't fully represent both sides. Under all circumstances, this should be disclosed and decided by both buyer and seller.



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## Final Thoughts

My mission is dispel myths and educate the general community, when it comes to real estate. Real estate agents have been seen in all sorts of lights, since the beginning of selling land. There is definitely a correct way to do things and a wrong way to do them. Helping people be able to ask the right questions is critical to making sure that our industry is full of high integrity, educated agents, who want to do what is best for their clients MORE than they want to be the top sales agent in their area! In our little corner of the world, we can make a difference. Let's hold our agents to the fire, and expect full representation, excellent negotiation, and stellar integrity!

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# Agent Notes

Agent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Brokerage Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent years in business: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent Reference Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent Ref. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent Ref. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Is reference another agent or a client? \_\_\_\_\_

Full or part time (circle one)

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