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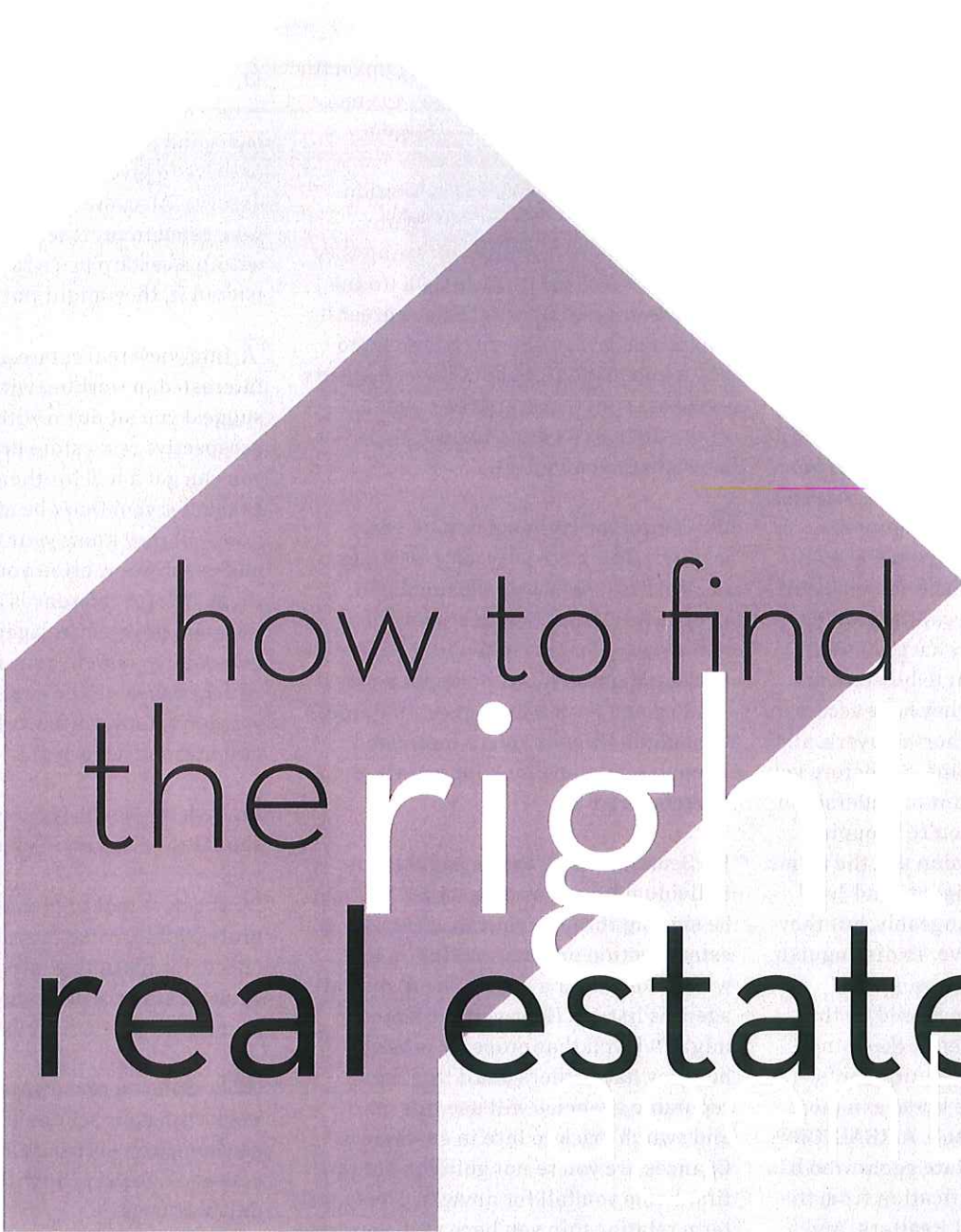
HOW TO Find a Good +
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how to find the right real estate

***n**ot all real estate professionals are the same, even though it may appear they all provide the same service for the same fee. Some agents work as individuals and some are part of a team. Some agents are semi-retired and aren't involved in the "open house" process, but will do the paperwork. Rookie agents, on the other hand, might have more passion, energy and determination to sell your home so they can quickly build a client base. The bottom line is that you need to interview potential real estate agents to find out who is the best for your personal needs. Keep in mind not all real estate agents are created equal. >>>>*

by melanie warner

When it comes to selling your home (or in the case of buying a home and using a buying agent), it's so important to find the right real estate agent due to the complexity of real estate transactions. This can't be overemphasized. So, in choosing the right real estate agent, always bear in mind some real estate professionals get involved in every step of the process, while others farm out much of the work to other sales agents. For those who work in teams involving many people in the process, often their expertise varies widely with the amount of formal education an agent has acquired. Expertise can vary widely with the knowledge they have about the neighborhoods you want to buy into and the real estate listings they have access to.

If you're like most home buyers, all your assets are on the line. So, before you get started, it's important to understand exactly what (or who) you're shopping for. Many in the profession use the terms "Realtor", "real estate agent" and "real estate broker" interchangeably, but they aren't mutually inclusive. To distinguish, a real estate agent is a person who has a real estate license issued by the state in which they practice (keep in mind, though, that the requirements for getting a real estate license in most states are pretty minimal). A REALTOR®, meanwhile, is a real estate agent who has earned additional certification from the National Association of Realtors. And a real estate broker is an agent who has more training and a different license than either real estate agents or Realtors.

Confused? To some degree the exact title of the real estate professional you work with isn't as important as the level of commitment, energy and local knowledge he or she may have. But trying to find the real estate agent who embodies all the above can still be a challenge. Read over the following tips for choosing a real estate professional and you'll be ahead of the game.

1. There are a few types of real estate agencies out there - small ones, large ones, franchises and independent

agencies - but don't get too hung up on the differences. The individual agent is more important than the real estate agency.

2. Know what type of representation you're looking for. Most real estate agents are seller's agents, meaning they only represent seller's interests (to the disadvantage of buyers). This is great if you're a seller, but if you're looking to buy a home, inquire about buyer's agents - brokers who represent the buyer's interests in real estate transactions - at any agency you look at.

3. To find the right agency, do some legwork. There are currently over 3,000 licensed real estate professionals in the Central Valley. There are lots of real estate agencies listed in the phone book (and online). But if you pick one at random you'll probably regret it. Explore the neighborhoods you're interested in buying into and look for agents and brokers nearby.

4. Search for real estate agents, not individual homes or properties. You may be looking through your newspaper's real estate section one day and fall in love with a home that a particular real estate agent is listing. However, the agent might tell you that property is taken, but they have others you'd love. Less reputable agencies will use this 'bait and switch' trick to lure in customers. Chances are you're not going to get the first home you fall for anyway. The long-term relationship you have with your real estate agent is more important than any particular home.

5. Look for experience. The real estate profession has a high rate of turnover, which means lots of untested agents are constantly moving in and out of agencies. If you're considering working with a particular agent or broker, ask how long they've been practicing. If it's been less than two years, find out how long they plan to be in the business. New people sometimes have more to prove and will work harder, but some will give up if they don't make quick sales, leaving you hanging.

6. Look for commitment. Many real estate agents only practice on a part-time basis and they might not have the time or drive to give you the attention you deserve. Also, many brokers are also only interested in representing properties within a certain price range. If your home isn't in it, they might not give it their all.

7. Interview real estate agents you're interested in working with. Experts suggest you sit down with at least three prospective real estate professionals, so you can get a feel for them and what they can do for you. Don't be afraid to ask them how well they know your neighborhood and exactly how often you'll hear from them. Ask for references and check them. Evaluate prospective agents based on personality as well. Your relationship with him/her will be a working one, and if you don't think you'd work well with him or her, it won't work out.

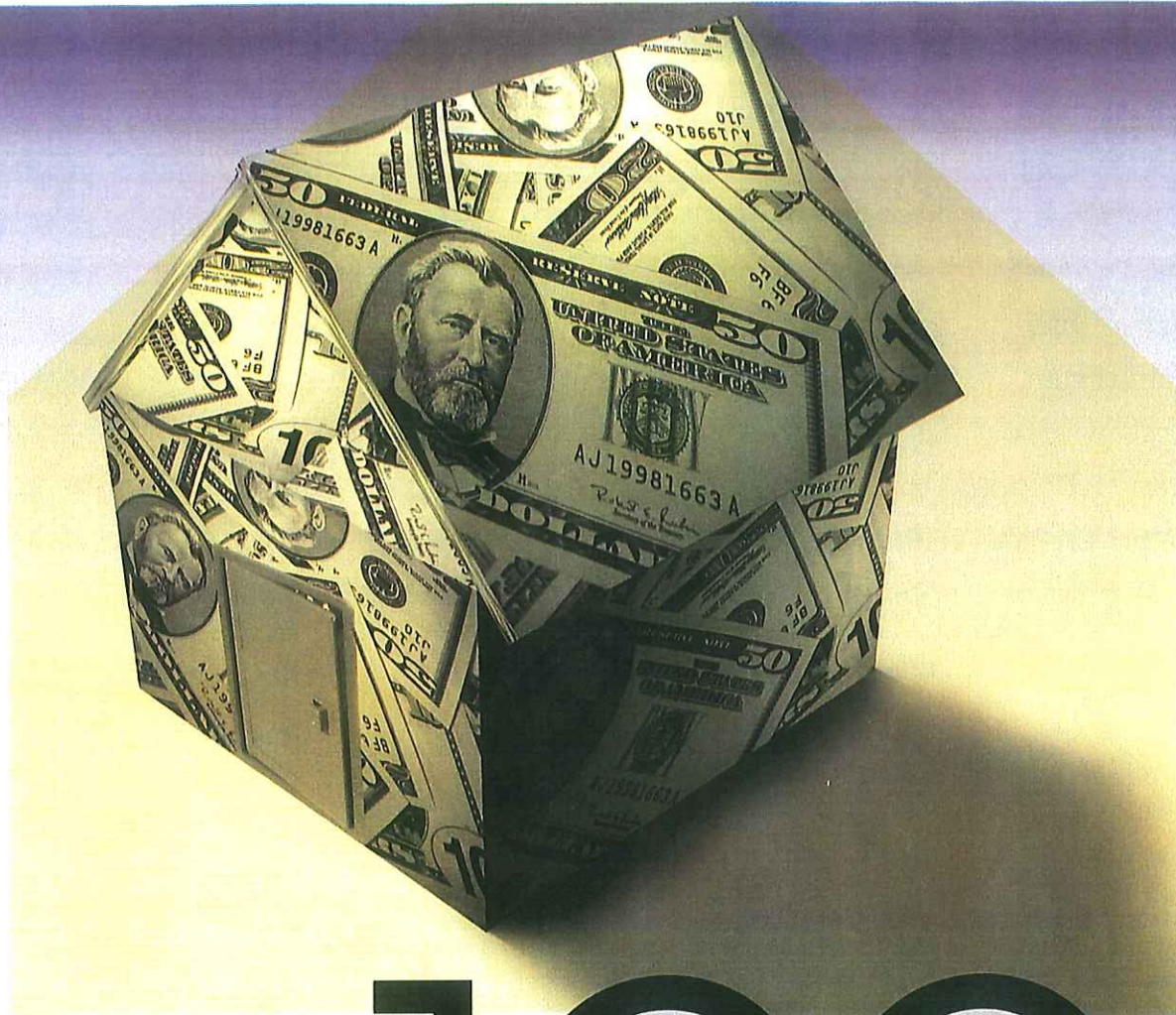
8. Ask friends to refer you to real estate agents they had good experiences with.

9. If you're looking for a real estate professional, you can start your search online for listings of professionals in your area. There are also many local associations which can help.

10. Select a real estate agent who can work with your schedule. If you can only see homes on evenings and weekends, you won't go very far with an agent who only works days.

Ask any prospective real estate agent what they'll do to sell your home. It sounds elementary, but not all agents work the same way. Some brokers will advertise your property and spread the word to other agents they know. Others will just add your property to the MLS (Multiple Listing Service, a directory of homes for sale) and wait for inquiries. The more proactive your agent, the better results you will see and the quicker they will buy or sell your home for you. Just remember, they work for YOU.





top 100 realtors in the central valley

*Source: information as submitted to the MLS for 2005

top 100 realtors

NAME	LISTINGS	VOLUME	NAME	LISTINGS	VOLUME
1 PAUL GESTIC	110	\$46,654,849	11 MIKE W DENNEN	30	\$20,620,550
2 JANET REID-BILLS	121	\$43,127,706	12 RUTHIE MCLEOD	34	\$19,684,100
3 KEN NEUFELD	128	\$38,871,530	13 ELAINE COLLETT	59	\$19,629,950
4 PAUL J CONNER	60	\$38,002,573	14 MEL KILNER	57	\$18,970,050
5 DARRYL ZUBER	83	\$33,492,718	15 GAYLE PHILLIPS	37	\$18,943,250
6 JUDY TEAGUE	40	\$30,044,720	16 CAROLE JACOBY	52	\$18,190,440
7 KAREN AVENELL	56	\$23,564,250	17 JOANNE OH	58	\$17,908,950
8 ROBERT E BOYAJIAN	44	\$23,175,736	18 LYNNE RAPADA	68	\$17,850,946
9 HAROLD PENNER	69	\$21,764,820	19 SANDY MOORE	40	\$17,443,750
10 JIM W SHERRICK	59	\$20,788,650	20 SUSAN E RODGERS	72	\$17,256,900

Name	Listings	Volume	Name	Listings	Volume
21. Rama Ambati	45	\$16,572,831	61. Sam Cavallaro	47	\$11,632,350
22. Erin D Miller	61	\$16,193,950	62. Gregory L Judd	30	\$11,563,900
23. James P Cavanaugh	39	\$15,804,800	63. Robin M Squires	22	\$11,383,000
24. Liz Kuchinski	46	\$15,675,483	64. Amie Lloyd	35	\$11,352,527
25. Rod Aluisi	18	\$14,876,771	65. A.J. Lakovich	36	\$11,325,400
26. Joseph N Fazio	76	\$14,756,250	66. Angie Hyatt	33	\$11,296,450
27. Ginger Caglia	16	\$14,667,127	67. Max Higley	35	\$11,232,500
28. Vivian L Swiney	54	\$14,265,800	68. Anthony J Gamber	29	\$11,078,400
29. Dianna Burgess	30	\$14,120,650	69. Debbie Henes	22	\$11,074,999
30. Dennis R Etchison	43	\$14,062,150	70. Betty Sarabian	21	\$11,032,700
31. Gina E Rodgers	33	\$13,937,850	71. Faye Wearin	25	\$10,875,000
32. George M Murphy	31	\$13,895,900	72. Joe Castillo	47	\$10,836,850
33. Dennis Schuh	31	\$13,865,800	73. Shayan Ashley	9	\$10,774,900
34. Gloria Banuelos	44	\$13,791,370	74. Chris Rima	35	\$10,761,400
35. Sarah Hedrick	27	\$13,641,650	75. Pedram Binesh	30	\$10,735,500
36. Patricia D Nielson	31	\$13,581,917	76. Marilyn Schutt	29	\$10,609,750
37. Sandy L Duncan	30	\$13,480,600	77. Christine Edmonds	25	\$10,564,000
38. Dan Hawkins	43	\$13,470,200	78. Jim Phillips	30	\$10,559,700
39. Ryan D Ramirez	41	\$13,057,650	79. Gloria Ruiz	35	\$10,435,900
40. Cindy Erbil	35	\$13,005,750	80. Allen Atchley	17	\$10,416,200
41. Dave Sawyer	35	\$12,974,550	81. Cheryl Shields	30	\$10,404,450
42. Patrick McDonnell	15	\$12,965,000	82. Thomas Miller	32	\$10,359,650
43. Ruben Valdez	43	\$12,908,650	83. Sue C Kendall	34	\$10,269,000
44. Gary Kittredge	33	\$12,874,150	84. Gloria Scarazzo	25	\$10,259,850
45. Lydia N Graham	40	\$12,846,450	85. David Runyon	58	\$10,236,697
46. Brent A Patch	33	\$12,806,374	86. Julie Fulcher	42	\$10,209,400
47. Ronnie & Kim Wareham	44	\$12,678,875	87. David Parker	31	\$10,107,900
48. Tony T Tjuanta	23	\$12,642,776	88. Richard Webber	27	\$10,096,900
49. Robert H Sarkisian	14	\$12,565,000	89. John Carey Jr.	35	\$10,079,046
50. Debbie K Anderes	14	\$12,397,000	90. Andrea Mead	34	\$10,031,200
51. Colleen Meehan	22	\$12,150,450	91. Frank Guida	19	\$9,964,000
52. Tammy C Myers	27	\$12,139,143	92. Todd L Kessler	59	\$9,772,360
53. Nancy McKee	23	\$12,138,000	93. Glenn Hammerburg	35	\$9,747,500
54. Linda Coelho	31	\$12,107,400	94. Keomany Lee	23	\$9,733,950
55. Jeri Kuddes	49	\$12,032,335	95. Joetta G Winter	34	\$9,699,175
56. A.J. Milirides	27	\$11,954,600	96. David Cruce	28	\$9,558,200
57. Manny J Cuevas	39	\$11,927,950	97. Andy Nazaroff	36	\$9,491,350
58. Bill Reece	33	\$11,833,400	98. Ryan K Leffingwell	34	\$9,468,600
59. Brian Winch	42	\$11,800,750	99. Nancy K Kalfayan	22	\$9,450,400
60. Warren T Fortier	39	\$11,779,425	100. Dan Cheney	26	\$9,406,200