COMPARE AGENTS | COMMISSIONS | SELL WITH CONFIDENCE

AGENT INTERVIEW PACK

12 questions to ask before you sign with a real estate agent

Compare up to three agents side by side. Capture evidence, costs, responsibilities and agreement terms - not just sales pitches.

Prepared for New Zealand home sellers | Verified against REA / Settled guidance as at 31 August 2026

How to use this pack

Interview at least two agents - three gives you a stronger comparison.

Ask every agent the same questions so the comparison is fair.

Write down examples, dollar figures, timeframes and names - avoid scoring on personality alone.

Use the 1-5 score only after you have written the evidence.

Before signing, read the agency agreement and REA guide and consider independent legal advice.

The 12 questions

1. How accurate have your recent appraisals been?

Why it matters: A residential price appraisal must realistically reflect current market conditions and be supported by comparable sales information.

Ask for: Anonymised examples of recent comparable listings showing the appraisal or appraisal range, final sale price and sale date.

Strong answer: Specific, recent examples; explains misses as well as wins; does not rely on vague claims.

2. What will I actually pay in commission - and what is included?

Why it matters: Before you sign, the agent must explain in writing how commission is calculated, when it is payable and the estimated dollar amount based on the appraisal.

Ask for: The estimated commission in dollars, whether GST is included, any minimum fee, admin/auction charges, and a list of services included in commission.

Strong answer: One clear total estimate plus a clean list of inclusions and separately charged items.

3. What will the marketing campaign cost me?

Why it matters: Marketing can materially change the seller’s upfront cost. Agents must explain the marketing plan, additional expenses, and relevant rebates, discounts or commissions.

Ask for: An itemised marketing budget, what is optional, what happens to unused spend, and any rebates/discounts/commissions the agency receives.

Strong answer: Itemised, optional vs included clearly separated, no pressure to buy extras.

4. Why is this sale method right for my property?

Why it matters: Auction, tender, deadline, negotiation and advertised-price strategies can produce different buyer behaviour and costs. The recommendation should fit your property and local market.

Ask for: The evidence behind the recommended method, likely buyer pool, recent local examples, timeline, risks and fallback plan.

Strong answer: Explains why this method fits your property rather than using the same method for every listing.

The 12 questions - continued

5. Who will actually handle my sale after I sign?

Why it matters: The person who wins the listing is not always the person doing the day-to-day work. REA rules require regular, timely communication and keeping the client informed.

Ask for: The name and role of the day-to-day contact, who runs open homes, who follows buyers, who negotiates, and the communication schedule.

Strong answer: Clear accountability, response times and a named backup if your main contact is unavailable.

6. What exactly happens in the first 14 days?

Why it matters: A clear launch plan lets you compare activity rather than promises.

Ask for: Photography/listing dates, database launch, portal timing, open-home schedule, buyer follow-up, reporting and the first review milestone.

Strong answer: A dated plan with responsibilities and measurable actions.

7. How will you report buyer feedback and decide if the strategy needs to change?

Why it matters: Good reporting separates market evidence from pressure to reduce price.

Ask for: Frequency and format of vendor reports, buyer feedback, online engagement, open-home numbers and the trigger for reviewing price or method.

Strong answer: Uses evidence and pre-agreed review points, not ad-hoc pressure.

8. How will you handle offers and negotiation?

Why it matters: Licensed agents must submit all written offers to their client. The seller should also understand who leads negotiations and how competing offers are handled.

Ask for: How offers are presented, how conditions are compared, who negotiates, how multi-offer situations are managed, and when you will be contacted.

Strong answer: A clear process that preserves your decision-making and explains price versus conditions.

The 12 questions - continued

9. What happens if my property does not sell?

Why it matters: You need to know the plan before the campaign loses momentum or marketing spend grows.

Ask for: Review points, options for changing method/price/marketing, further costs, withdrawal process, and what happens at the end of the agency term.

Strong answer: Specific milestones, no automatic extra spend, and a defined exit/recovery plan.

10. What am I agreeing to with the agency agreement?

Why it matters: Sole and general agency agreements create different rights and obligations. Terms, end dates, cancellation and commission exposure should be understood before signing.

Ask for: Whether it is sole or general, start/end dates, notice requirements, what happens if you withdraw the property, and what happens when the agreement ends.

Strong answer: Walks you through the actual clauses and encourages you to read the REA guide and seek advice if needed.

11. Could I still owe commission after the agreement ends?

Why it matters: A seller can sometimes remain exposed to commission if a buyer introduced by an earlier agency later purchases the property, and overlapping agreements can create double-commission risk.

Ask for: The introduction/continuing-commission clauses, how introduced buyers are recorded, and how the agency reduces double-commission risk.

Strong answer: Explains the clause in plain English and documents introduced buyers clearly.

12. What incentives, conflicts or referral benefits should I know about?

Why it matters: Transparency matters when an agent or agency may receive rebates, discounts, commissions or other benefits connected with services or the transaction.

Ask for: Written disclosure of relevant rebates/discounts/commissions and any other financial interest or referral arrangement that could affect recommendations.

Strong answer: Direct written disclosure and no defensiveness about independent advice or alternative providers.

Three-agent scorecard

Score each answer 1-5 only after you have written down the evidence. 1 = vague / unsupported; 3 = adequate; 5 = specific, transparent and verifiable.

Question	Agent A	Agent B	Agent C
1. Appraisal evidence	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
2. Commission transparency	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
3. Marketing costs	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
4. Sale-method evidence	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
5. Who handles the sale	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
6. 14-day launch plan	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
7. Reporting & review	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
8. Offers & negotiation	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
9. If it does not sell	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
10. Agency agreement	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
11. Post-agency commission	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
12. Conflicts / incentives	___ / 5	___ / 5	___ / 5
TOTAL / 60	**____ / 60**	**____ / 60**	**____ / 60**

Decision notes

Best evidence: ____

Best value / cost clarity: ____

Best communication fit: ____

Biggest concern: ____

Questions to follow up: ____

Before you sign: NZ agency agreement quick checks

✓ Get the REA agency agreement guide first

For a residential sale, the licensee must give you the approved agency agreement guide before you sign and obtain written confirmation that you received it.

✓ Get the commission estimate in writing

The agreement process must explain how commission is calculated, when it is payable and the estimated dollar amount based on the appraisal.

✓ Check marketing extras

The agent must explain marketing/advertising and additional expenses. You are not obliged to agree to additional marketing expenses.

✓ Check sole-agency cancellation rights

If you change your mind immediately after signing a sole agency, you can generally cancel in writing by 5pm on the first working day after the agent gives you a copy. If the agreement followed an unsolicited approach by the agent, REA guidance says you may cancel within 5 working days of receiving the copy and it does not need to be in writing.

✓ Check long sole-agency terms

For a residential sole agency term longer than 90 days, either party may cancel after 90 days by written notice.

✓ Check what happens after cancellation

Some agreements may convert from sole to general agency, and earlier buyer introductions can create later commission exposure. Read the actual clauses.

✓ Consider independent advice

REA’s Code says licensees must recommend legal advice before a person signs an agency agreement or contractual document and allow reasonable time to obtain advice.

Sources and important note

This pack is a seller decision aid, not legal, valuation or financial advice. Agency agreements differ. Read the agreement you are actually offered and seek independent legal advice where appropriate. The regulatory notes below were checked against official New Zealand sources on 31 August 2026.

Real Estate Authority - Agency agreements

Real Estate Authority - Code of Conduct

Settled.govt.nz - Signing an agency agreement

New Zealand Legislation - Real Estate Agents Act 2008

Real Estate Authority - Marketing and advertising

PropertySeller.co.nz