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FREE GUIDE · FOR ANY MARKET

Questions to Ask *Before You Sign.*

What to ask any real estate agent before signing a buyer-broker agreement — including the questions most buyers never think to ask.



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Exclusive Buyer's Agent · AXEN Realty, LLC

WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Most buyers never get asked these questions — they just get handed a form

Since 2024, buyers in most states are required to sign a written agreement with an agent before touring homes. That's a meaningful shift — but most buyers still don't know what to look for in that agreement, or what questions to ask before signing anything.

This guide isn't only about working with me. Whoever you choose to work with, in Tucson or anywhere else, these are the questions worth asking first.

THE CORE CONCEPT

Dual agency vs. exclusive buyer representation

In many states, including Arizona, one agent — or one brokerage — can legally represent both the buyer and the seller in the same transaction. This is called dual agency, and it's disclosed, but that doesn't remove the underlying conflict: an agent can't fully advocate for two opposing interests in the same negotiation.

	DUAL AGENCY / SAME-BROKERAGE DEAL	EXCLUSIVE BUYER REPRESENTATION
Who the agent works for	Both sides of the same transaction (disclosed)	You, exclusively — never the seller
Negotiation posture	Must stay neutral between both parties	Advocates fully for your price and terms
Disclosure of home flaws	Limited by duty to both parties	Full disclosure obligation to you alone
Listing inventory conflict	May steer you toward in-house listings	No listings to steer you toward — ever

> **This isn't about any one agent being dishonest.** It's a structural conflict built into the dual-agency model itself — one worth understanding before you sign anything.

THE QUESTIONS

5 questions that reveal who an agent really works for

1. **“Do you ever represent sellers, or take listings?”**
   If yes, ask how they'd handle showing you one of their own listings — that's dual agency in practice.

2. **“What happens if I want to see a home your brokerage has listed?”**
   Even without personal dual agency, a same-brokerage deal can create a version of the same conflict.

3. **“Can you show me every home that fits my criteria, or only certain ones?”**
   Some agents unconsciously (or consciously) favor homes with better commission splits or in-house listings.

4. **“What does this buyer-broker agreement actually commit me to?”**
   Ask about the term length, exclusivity, and what happens if you want to end the relationship.

5. **“How do you get paid, and does that change based on which home I buy?”**
   Understanding compensation structure tells you a lot about potential incentives.

BEFORE YOU SIGN

Red flags in a buyer-broker agreement

- A long exclusivity term (6–12 months) with no easy exit if the relationship isn't working
- Vague language about dual agency that doesn't clearly explain what happens if you want to see the agent's own listing
- Pressure to sign before you've had a real conversation about your goals
- No clear explanation of how and when the agent gets paid
- An agent who can't clearly answer the 5 questions above

> **None of this means agreements are bad.** A written agreement protects you too, when it's clear and the agent explains it plainly. The goal is understanding what you're agreeing to — not avoiding agreements altogether.

WHAT EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION GUARANTEES

And how to walk away if it's not working

An exclusive buyer's agent — one who structurally never takes listings — guarantees a few specific things a dual-capable agent structurally cannot:

- Every home you see gets the same unbiased evaluation, flaws included
- Every negotiation is fought purely from your side of the table
- There's no in-house listing inventory competing for your attention

If it's not working with your current agent

Most agreements include a way to end the relationship if it isn't serving you — read that clause before you sign, not after you're unhappy. A direct conversation is usually the right first step; if that doesn't resolve things, most brokerages have a process for reassignment or release.

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Want to ask me these questions directly?

I'll answer every one of them honestly on a free call — whether or not we end up working together.

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