



The Essential Guide to Real Estate Showings for New Agents





ShowingTime was founded in 1999 with a straightforward goal: simplify how real estate professionals connect with buyers and sellers through lead generation, scheduling and market analytics.

Two decades later, we're the real estate industry's leading showing software and market statistics provider, serving more than 950,000 real estate professionals and helping manage more than three million showings every month.

We've interacted with hundreds of thousands of real estate professionals throughout our 20 years in the industry. We've listened to their needs and requests. We've worked with them in their many successes.

We created this guide to help new real estate professionals apply what we've learned from our clients into their businesses.

SHOWINGS 101

What is a showing?

A real estate showing is a professionally scheduled appointment for a prospective buyer looking to tour a property.

A showing is typically set up between a showing agent, or buyer's agent, working on behalf of the prospective buyer, and a listing agent, or seller's agent, working on behalf of the seller.

The showing agent requests a date and time for their client to view the property through the listing agent, who gets the appointment approved by the seller. A seller has the right to accept or deny a showing request based on whether the date and time fits into their schedule.

How is a showing scheduled?

Before the introduction of showing management technology like that provided by ShowingTime, showings were traditionally scheduled by phone. In that situation, the showing agent would contact the listing agent to set up the appointment. As you can imagine, this method required a lot of back and forth, voicemails and phone tag.

Today, thanks to the rapid advancement of technology, agents can facilitate showing requests using text, email and even with a mobile app. These changes have greatly simplified showing management, saving time for agents, sellers and buyers alike.

Prospective buyers or showing agents begin the process once the buyer finds a property they're interested in. The buyer contacts the showing agent – or a real estate office if they're at the very beginning of the home buying process – to communicate their interest and provide dates and times they're available to tour the property.

The showing agent then contacts the listing agent, who works with the seller to set a date and time for the prospective buyer and showing agent to view the property. The interaction between the showing agent and listing agent can be done through a Multiple Listing Service (MLS), phone call, text message or a mobile app. The showing agent will then communicate the details back to the prospective buyer.

Want more tips and insight to help you manage showings?

Visit www.showingtime.com/resources for the latest best practices in showing management.

Who attends a showing?

Showings can be attended by the prospective buyer, showing agent and sometimes the listing agent. The seller is highly discouraged from being present at a showing, as it can make the buyer uncomfortable; in their place, the listing agent will often have the option to be on hand to answer questions and represent the seller's interests.

A significant benefit of having the listing agent present at a showing is that all of the prospective buyer's questions can immediately be answered by the professional who knows the property best. No follow-up emails, phone calls or texts are necessary. Prospective buyers will have all relevant information once the showing is complete as they prepare to make a decision.

The prospective buyer, who may have seen the property listed online, uses the showing to get a more personal viewing of the property. They can inquire about the home's history, property, neighborhood – anything that pops into their mind while walking through for a closer look.

From the listing agent standpoint, they'll certainly want to attend any showings for luxury, historic or other premium properties because of the size of those sales.

The pros of a listing agent attending a showing are:

- Guaranteed feedback on the listing
- Available to answer any questions
- Seamless enter/lock up
- Possibly speeding up the sales process

The cons are:

- Prospective buyer feels uncomfortable
- Listing agent misses out on showing other properties
- Too many voices in the room

Whatever you decide as a listing agent, be sure to communicate your plans to the showing agent.

Should listing agents be present for showings?

Whether listing agents regularly attend showings depends on the market, the price of the home and the particular agent.





How long do showings take?

Just as every home is different, so too is every prospective buyer. Despite being extremely interested in an online advertisement, a prospective buyer could instantly know upon arrival the property isn't for them and leave. Another might immediately fall in love with it and spend an hour walking through the home, planning where every last family photo will hang.

A good rule of thumb for sellers is to plan on being away from home for around two hours. Showing agents can also help by letting the seller or listing agent know when the showing is complete.

What are the different types of showings?

Private showings, which are what we've discussed so far, are usually the most beneficial for prospective buyers. They get to view the property in their own time frame, don't have to deal with or feel pressured by other prospective buyers and, if they reach this stage, are typically very interested.

Yet a private showing is just one example of how to get prospective buyers to view a property.

Open houses

Open houses have long been the first step prospective buyers take into the home buying process, though the internet is changing that.

However, this type of showing is still a great tool for listing agents to get many people to view their property, typically on a weekend. Although open houses don't typically sell homes, they tend to help listing agents generate new leads.

Lockbox showings

Lockbox showings are becoming more and more popular. Rather than the listing agent meeting the showing agent and prospective buyer at the property to let them in, or the showing agent filling up their key ring, the listing agent provides the showing agent with a special digital code to access a lockbox during a specific time period.

This type of showing, which is efficient for vacant properties, is a great way for showing agents and their prospective buyers to pop in and out of multiple properties and get a feel for what's available without taking up a portion of the listing agent and seller's day.

In any kind of market – whether it's a buyer's market or a seller's market – it's important for listing agents and sellers to do everything possible to increase the visibility of their listing.

Top-performing agents are great at creating interest, getting showings and selling listings at or near list price. How do they do it?

We've reviewed an assortment of content and referenced what we've learned from ShowingTime customers to compile this list of eight surefire ways to get more showings. Some points might seem obvious, but making them "must-do" items for each listing can help you reap rewards.

8 TIPS TO GET MORE SHOWINGS

Here are eight surefire ways to create interest, get more showings and sell your listing:

1. Confirm the listing is ready to be put on the market

Make sure the home is cleaner than it was when the current homeowner moved in. Have your homeowners give rooms a fresh coat of paint (preferably white or neutral, so it's easy for the next occupants to paint over it as they wish) and fix any wear and tear on the walls, trim, etc. Hire a professional cleaning service to come in to remove every last speck of dust. Don't forget curb appeal. Make sure the homeowners understand the importance of a well-kept lawn and fresh landscaping.

2. Market the listing as desirable

When staging the home, make sure the homeowners' personal belongings and knickknacks are out of sight as much as possible. Use professional-level photographs to showcase every room and be conscious of lighting. While visual elements are crucial, don't neglect how you word the listing description. Use enticing (and accurate) language to highlight the features of the home, neighborhood and school district. Advertise with as many different websites as possible to maximize the number of impressions and make sure to incorporate social media into your listing marketing plan.

3. Think outside the box and use technology

Professional pictures are important, but don't limit your marketing to only still photographs. Consider hiring a professional videographer and perhaps even better, a drone videographer to create a virtual tour of the home. For luxury listings, a 3D virtual tour can be an excellent way to highlight a property's unique features.

4. Make the listing easy to show

All agents know that convenience and communication are key in making showings easier. Lockboxes can help showing agents get in and out of a listing effortlessly, and having few restrictions on when the listing can be shown is also important. It's an obvious fact, but it's one that bears repeating: The more often a listing is available, the more often it can be viewed and the better chance you have at getting it sold in a timely fashion.

5. Let neighbors know the home is available

We've heard from agents who have had success handing out flyers in the surrounding community and inviting neighbors and other community members over for a pre-open house. Maybe they know someone who is looking for a house and can recommend it. There's real power in word of mouth.

6. Know the market when setting the price

The most beautiful house on the nicest block in the most charming neighborhood won't sell if the asking price isn't right. Use market statistics to help determine the listing price.

7. Offer a competitive buyer's agent commission

How commissions are split is something listing agents agree to with sellers; it wouldn't hurt to consider adding an incentive. Something extra could entice showing agents to share the listing with their clients.

8. Lower the price/offer to pay closing costs

Too high of a listing price is one of the most common reasons homes remain on the market longer than expected. Depending on how long the home has been listed and the homeowner's timing, a price adjustment might be worth considering in order to complete the process.

Did you know?

The median length of time a home remains on the market is 65 days according to realtor.com®

THE POWER OF FEEDBACK

What is feedback?

In the real estate industry, a listing agent solicits feedback to determine what showing agents and their prospective buyers think about a property, which they can share with their seller.

Why is feedback important?

Buyer feedback impacts a number of factors in the home selling process. It provides validation directly from the market and indicates if the seller's asking price and hope for a quick sale are legitimate.

Even the most comprehensive of stats might not be enough to convince some sellers their home isn't the best on the market. It's a tricky situation many listing agents have been in, which is why receiving feedback from prospective buyers is important and can ultimately help lead to a smoother and quicker sale. Thankfully, agents now have tools at their disposal to set appropriate expectations for their sellers. Some, like the **ShowingTime Appointment Center**, can even automatically request listing feedback after a buyer's agent has finished a showing.

Why is it so difficult to get feedback?

Real estate agents are busy. You've worked as a showing agent and showed several listings in a single day, fielded calls and wrote reminders – all while putting the client at the forefront. Because of that hectic lifestyle, sometimes receiving feedback after a showing appointment is the most difficult task residential listing agents face. You also might not be getting helpful feedback because you're not asking the right questions. Too often feedback requests go unanswered or, if a comment is made, it might be as vague as, "good showing," "nice house" or "buyer still looking" – which isn't constructive to help move forward with a sale.

If you ask for general feedback, you'll likely receive general feedback. If you ask for specific feedback, you'll be much more likely to get the substantive information you need to encourage sellers to make needed changes to their home, to their listing or to both.

5 tips to increase your feedback response rate:

1. Request feedback in a timely manner

We found the most optimal time to send feedback requests is one hour after the showing, while the house is still fresh in the agent's mind and they can easily remember what their buyers thought of the house. To improve your response rate and help jog the agent's memory, provide a survey that includes your company name and logo, your photo and a photo of the house. Or, if you request feedback by phone, make sure you have some of the property's distinguishing features top-of-mind to help guide the conversation and elicit constructive feedback.

2. Keep your feedback form or call short

The shorter your feedback form, the better response you'll receive. Real estate agents don't have time to fill out a 10-question feedback form. Instead, aim for a form that takes three minutes or less to complete, with no more than six questions.

3. Only ask questions you'll use

Your objective is to find out what the buyer thought of the house so you can talk with your sellers about improvements that may be needed or if a price reduction is necessary. It makes the conversation easier when you have validation directly from the market. Don't ask, "Did you find the property OK?" Instead ask, "What is your opinion of the price?" or "What did you like most (and least) about the house?"

Remember: It's hard to get feedback, so make the process as painless as possible for agents.

4. Prioritize the most important questions

Start by thinking about the most compelling information to present your sellers to help sell the house. For most, it's the house's price and condition.



If you're having trouble prioritizing your questions, jot down a list of all of the items you want feedback on and pick the top five or six. You want agents to answer the questions that matter. Keep your questions short and concise and only mark the most important ones as required.

5. Customize your questions for each listing

You should include customized questions for each listing to help you get the most useful feedback. Avoid general questions and ask agents to tell you the things you want to know.

However, you don't have to customize all of your questions. You'll have a few standard questions, such as those about pricing and likes and dislikes, but include a couple of house-specific questions to show that you and your sellers really care about the feedback.

An MLS is ... a linked system where multiple real estate brokers, offices and associations share information on their property listings to ensure their agents and clients get the most showings – and sales – possible.

6 feedback questions every agent should ask:

Personalized questions provide the best feedback and can help shed light on where your listing stands compared to others. Here are six suggested feedback questions every listing agent should ask.

1. What was your overall impression of the home?

This is a rather vague question and answers could vary from “good” to a well-thought-out paragraph, but it's good to open by casting a wide net.

2. What did you like most about the home?

Your listing could be in an excellent school district with a nice yard, but something else might stick out to one or more buyers. Knowing what buyers are looking for – and what this listing offers – adds to the features you can highlight.

3. What did you like least about the home?

The reason people seek feedback is to improve, so this is an important question. If it's something that can't be changed – detached garage, noisy street – that's still valuable. If it's relatively cheap, fixable and adds value – a fresh coat of paint, new carpet, updated landscaping – encourage the seller to maximize the home's value.

4. How do you feel about the price of the home?

If a large percentage of buyers all answer it's too high, take note. But some buyers look at homes out of their price range, so don't make any rash decisions if only a few voice concern.

5. How would you compare this home to others you have viewed?

Not only does this gauge buyer interest, but it also gives listing agents and sellers a chance to see how their listing stacks up against others on the market.

6. What would help your buyer consider submitting an offer today?

This is an aggressive question, but it shows how interested buyers are in the listing and where they are in the home buying process. Maybe they're looking for a quick purchase or something small is holding them back. That's the great thing about getting feedback: you never know until you ask.

CONCLUSION

The decision to buy or sell a home can be emotionally taxing and stressful. For sellers, a home that won't sell can raise pressing questions that can keep them up at night. For prospective buyers, the process for choosing the right home can likewise present challenges as they navigate the market.

Fortunately, agents are uniquely suited to help their client, whether buyer or seller. By setting the right framework for a smooth showing and feedback process, supported by a showing management solution like the **ShowingTime Appointment Center**, an agent can be confident that his or her client receives the guidance they need to make the transaction stress-free.



LET SHOWINGTIME HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR SHOWINGS

Real estate agents and teams enjoy professional service, efficient scheduling and higher feedback response rates with the ShowingTime Appointment Center. Contact our sales team today to learn more.

- Showing calls handled 24/7/365 by live appointment specialists
- Mobile app for scheduling and feedback, including push notifications
- Quick appointment scheduling, confirmations and feedback
- All activity tracked on listings (showings, feedback, open houses, etc.)
- Price change notifications automatically sent to past showing agents
- Feedback automatically sent to sellers for efficiency (optional)