

5. Twelve Suggestions in Choosing a Capable Real Estate Attorney (3 Minutes)

Q1. Mr. Smith, you've dealt with a lot of attorneys in your career. Could you give us suggestions in how to pick a capable Real Estate Attorney, because that's a specialized field?

A1. In my book, I spent a whole chapter with an interview of a real estate attorney, and we got into a lot of areas of mistakes of individuals and we also got into areas of his ideas of what would be good to check out in choosing a capable real estate attorney. Let me list them.

1. Word of mouth of satisfied customers is the best. Ask friends, relatives, bankers and real estate agents for names of capable real estate attorneys.
2. Ask them what percentage of their law practice is devoted to residential real estate.
3. How long have they been an attorney?
4. What year were they admitted to the local bar association?
5. What percentage of their practice is devoted to real estate?
6. Do they handle "for sale by owner" transactions?
7. How often do they represent buyers and how often do they represent sellers?
8. How much of their practice is devoted to commercial real estate versus residential real estate? Commercial real estate is much more complicated and more involved than residential in most states. Know who you're dealing with.
9. Is the attorney local? How long have he/she been in this area?
10. Is he or she familiar with the town or the neighborhood where you're shopping? (Local attorneys may know local ordinances that play a role in the real estate transaction. For example, in the past, the City of Flint required that a City of Flint Inspector be involved in every real estate transaction in the city. A Lansing or Detroit area attorney may not know of that particular ordinance, and the deal may get goofed up because of their lack of knowledge.
11. Does the attorney personally review and research and counsel the individual with the documents or do they hand them off to assistants to do the work? (The assistants may not have the experience or confidence of the attorney to whom you think that you are dealing with. Ask that up front.) Know who you're dealing with.
12. Does he or she charge a flat rate or an hourly rate? An example would be that perhaps in the preparation of a deed, the charge may be \$150 as

a flat fee. However, counseling and guidance throughout the whole process may incur charges of \$175 an hour.