

# GUIDE

TO CHOOSING  
THE BEST AGENT

CURRAN & PINNER  
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There are dozens of estate agents on the high street so how do you choose which one to use? It can be a daunting decision, so here are a few things to consider.

## **We hope these will help you choose the right agent for you.**

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### Local knowledge

Choose an agent who's local, who really knows their area (rather than a national chain with token representation on your high street). A local agent will know who your potential buyers are, they'll know who to talk to and how best to market your property. They have the best chance of getting a great result, at the right price and quickly.

### Bigger is not always better

It's common practise in the world of estate agency to over-value your property in an attempt to impress you. Unfortunately, this may well come back to haunt you as you're then likely to be under pressure further down the line to reduce your price, when the property doesn't sell. Interestingly, there are agents who will under-value your property and whilst this is likely to get you a quick sale, you may well be in a much worse state financially than you would've been had you chosen an agent with realistic, market-driven valuations.

A correct valuation is absolutely vital. Choose an agent that has a thorough working knowledge of current buyer behaviour and one that quotes a figure based on properties that have actually been sold.

### You get what you pay for

Most people don't deal with estate agents very often so it's easy to think that you should simply go with the agent with the lowest commission. This is often a huge mistake. It's a bit like buying a car without looking at anything else but the price. A cheaper car may well turn out to be a false economy if you then waste lots of time sorting out problems with it. The same is true of estate agents. A cheaper estate agency may well be using inexperienced negotiators (who won't be advising you adequately), they may be short staffed (so you won't always be kept informed about what's going on with your sale) and they may have very limited cover at weekends (which may result in you missing out on offers from potential buyers)

Also, if an agent will easily reduce their own fees, how much more willing will they be to reduce the price of your house? The amount you end up with in your pocket is surely more important than the percentage fees charged?

## Once more with enthusiasm

If an agent is not enthusiastic about your property, do not instruct them. You need your agent to be excited, and you need them to really 'sell' your home to potential buyers. Apathy should not be rewarded.

## Advertising

Make sure you choose an agent who uses a varied cross-section of media to tell people that your home is for sale. Choose an agent who advertises on all the main property websites as this is where the vast majority of property searches begin.

## It's good to have a plan

Very few estate agents use professional floor plans in their property particulars, yet our research has shown that buyers overwhelmingly prefer them to written information and dimensions. Floor plans allow the potential buyer to get a real sense of layout and scale and can really bring your property to life. Choose an agent with high quality, informative floor plans.

## Keeping up appearances

Choose an agent who practises what they preach, with beautiful, stylish, welcoming easy-to-find premises. Go and visit their offices; look at their window displays, check out their staff and pay attention to how organised and efficient the office is. All of this matters and will have a significant bearing on how they treat you and your property.

## Open all hours

Most buyers want to view properties in the evenings and at weekends so it makes sense to choose an agent that's open outside of normal office hours and is flexible when it comes to accommodating viewing times.

## It's a virtual world

The internet is a valuable tool for estate agents. Be critical of your agent's website and working practises; see how easy it is to use their search facility on their site, test how thoroughly they follow up enquiries and ask how they capture the really serious buyers on-line. With many of your potential buyers making enquiries through agents' own websites, your chosen agent should be monitoring and managing enquiries through their site closely.

## Accompanied viewings

Ask if your agent accompanies all viewings (including evenings and weekends). Surprisingly, very few estate agents commit to accompanying all viewings but they should. When an agent accompanies a potential buyer to a viewing they can ask questions, listen to their comments and increase their understanding of what the buyer really wants. Agents who develop a really clear picture of what their buyers want sell more properties, and avoid frustrating their clients with lots of time-consuming viewings that go nowhere.

## Independence

Many agencies are owned by large financial institutions that make more money from selling mortgages than they do from selling properties. This may not be obvious initially so do some checks before giving an agent your business.

## After-sales service

Finding a buyer is a significant stage in the selling process (obviously) but an agent's job shouldn't stop there. Many sales have fallen through due to poor follow-up or inadequate liaison with surveyors or solicitors. Choose an agent who will be with you throughout the entire process.

## Lead by example

Choose an agency that is owned and run by property professionals who are genuinely interested in your sale. Be cautious around sales-driven, target-orientated teams, employed to just build an empire. Ask to speak to the MD before you make a decision, they should be very happy to take your call. Their attitude will tell you a great deal about the business that they run and how you are likely to be treated.



## It's good to talk

Most estate agents will be very keen to call you when they have good news, but choose an agent that will keep you informed whatever the situation is. Good agents should be in regular contact with you and update you after each viewing. Good agents will also advise you if/when they think changes need to be made to your property or the selling price. You should always know what's going on with your sale and you should feel confident that your agent is working hard for you.

## We're confident that Curran & Pinner fairs well against all these considerations but just to reassure you further...

- We have two local offices in Beckenham and Shortlands and have been trading since 2007. We live here (Daniel Curran and Warren Pinner were both born here), and know the area like the backs of our hands.
- Our valuations might not be the highest, but they're honest and realistic, and you won't be under constant pressure to reduce your price.
- Our commission is fair and reflects the amount of time and expertise invested in selling your flat. We are not a fixed fee agent. Our staff are fully-trained and continually rewarded and our focus on customer service is second-to-none, so you can be confident that choosing us as your agent is absolutely the right thing to do.
- **We love what we do!** Our enthusiasm about your property is absolutely guaranteed.
- We send out regular targeted mailings to the local market and our properties are on all of the main property websites. We often use the 'featured property' listing format on the property portals so your properties are more prominent and seen by more people.
- We produce top quality 3D floor plans for every property we represent.
- Our offices are welcoming, stylish, busy and efficient. And the kettle's always on.
- We are open until 9am - 7pm Monday-Thursday, 9am - 6pm on Fridays and 9am-5pm every Saturday. Viewings can be arranged at other times by appointment (this includes Sundays).
- We continually invest in our website and every enquiry is treated efficiently and quickly. Visit the site and put us to the test.
- We accompany all viewings and always give prompt and constructive feedback.
- We are independently-owned and our focus is on the sale of our clients' properties.
- We'll be by your side through the whole process and excitedly hand you your new keys on moving day!
- Give Daniel Curran (**020 8313 6868**) or Warren Pinner (**020 8663 4949**) a call. They're the co-owners of the business and will be very happy to talk to you and explain why Curran & Pinner is a different kind of estate agency.
- You'll never need to chase us. We return every phone call and reply to every email.

**You'll always know  
what's going on!**



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