



WAV GROUP REPORT 2024

HOW BUYERS FEEL ABOUT WORKING WITH AGENTS

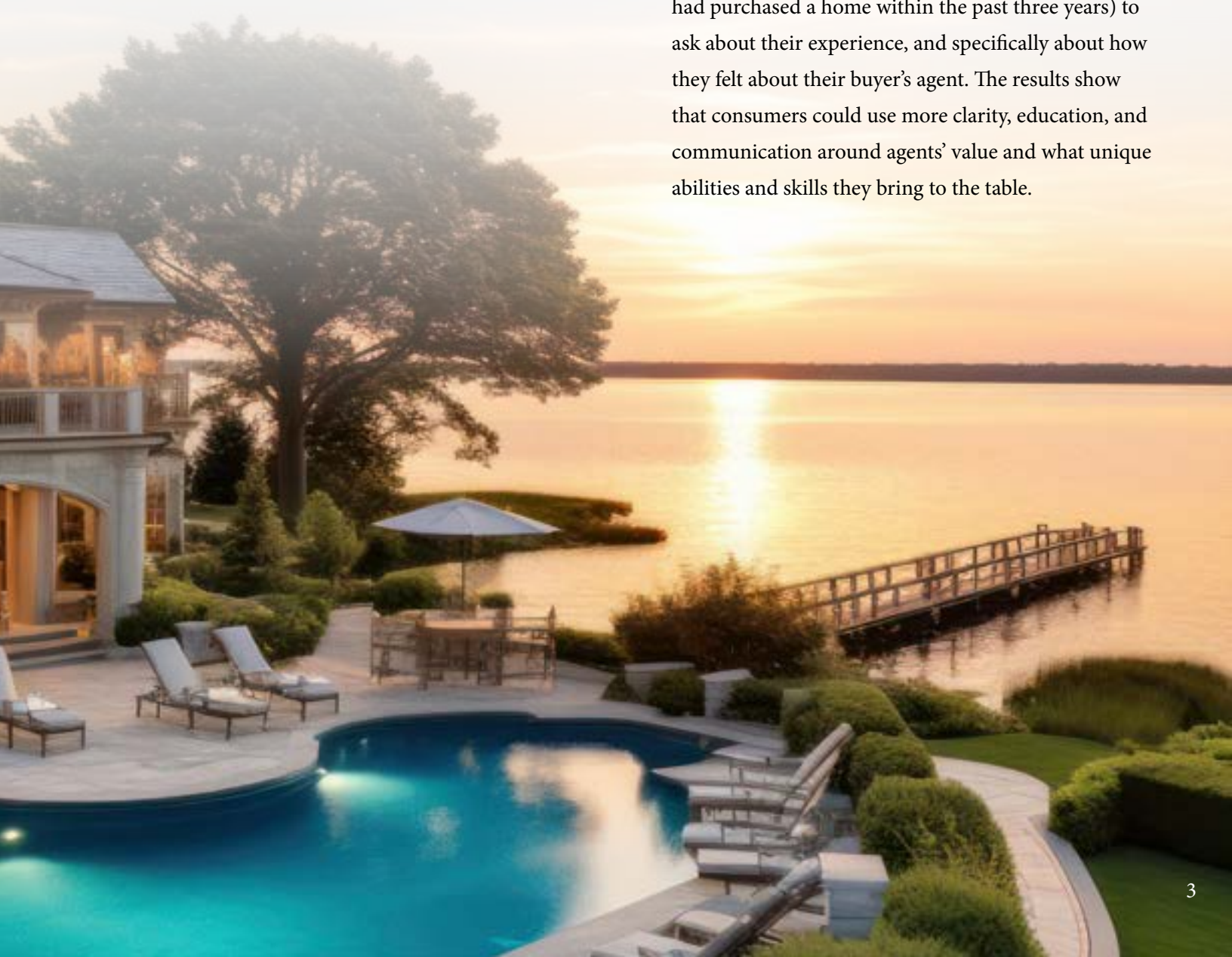
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Consumers, especially first-time homebuyers, have very little awareness around what exactly is involved in the home purchase process.
- This lack of understanding reflects a larger truth: Buyers don't know what value an agent brings to the table for them.
- Consumers need more explanation and education around the entire real estate process in order to set realistic expectations.
- There is a big opportunity for agents to create more clarity around disclosures and paperwork by walking buyers through the documentation required to buy a house, one big area of confusion.
- Buyers do not have a clear understanding of how much time their agents spend supporting their purchase efforts.
- Sharing success stories and educational pieces about every element of the homebuying process is another opportunity for agents to connect with buyers and help them set clear expectations around their purchase journey.

INTRODUCTION

Why hire an agent to buy a house? Given recent developments around buyer's agent compensation, this is a question that would-be homeowners are more likely to start asking themselves as they begin the purchase process. Hiring an agent remains standard operating procedure for buyers, but agents who can't articulate the value they bring to buyers during the purchase process will likely fail to be successful in the looming future environment.

WAV Group surveyed 340 recent homebuyers (who had purchased a home within the past three years) to ask about their experience, and specifically about how they felt about their buyer's agent. The results show that consumers could use more clarity, education, and communication around agents' value and what unique abilities and skills they bring to the table.



BUYERS WEIGH IN: HOW MUCH TIME DID AGENT SPEND?

Agents know how much time and energy it takes to help an aspiring buyer become a homeowner, and the vast majority of buyers say that their agent was paid fairly for their work. That said, agents are not doing a very good job of communicating those efforts and the amount of time they spend to those buyers, whose responses were all over the map when asked how many hours their agent spent on their deal.

The largest proportion of respondents (21%) said they thought their agent spent between 11 to 15 hours working on their home purchase transaction. Another 21% of buyers collectively said they thought their agent spent at least 26 hours on their home purchase.

However, a cumulative one-in-four buyers said that their agent spent 10 or fewer hours on their home sale transaction: 9% said 1 to 5 hours, and 16% said 6 to 10 hours. While it is possible that there is indeed a wide variation in the amount of hours these different buyer's agents worked, a more likely explanation is that many buyers simply were not clear on what their agent did or how much time it took.

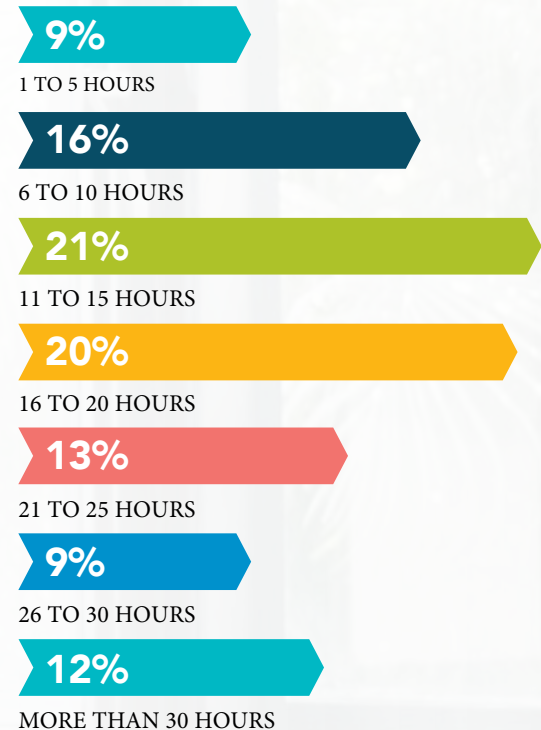
Was your agent fairly paid, overpaid, or underpaid?


Fairly paid: **87%**

Overpaid: **12%**

Underpaid: **1%**

How many hours did your agent spend on your purchase?



A large, two-story house with a swimming pool and a patio. The house has a grey roof, white columns, and a stone base. The interior is visible through large windows and an arched doorway, showing a dining table and chairs. The pool is in the foreground, and the patio is paved with light-colored tiles. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with a warm glow.

The fact that buyers do not have a clear idea of how much time their agents spend on their needs indicates that they do not completely understand the home purchase process. They don't have a firm grasp on all of the steps required, what their agent will do to assist them, and what work they will need to do.

A big opportunity exists for agents around explaining documentation to buyers. First-time buyers especially do not have a clear grasp of what documents they might need to get a mortgage, what a seller's disclosure is, how appraisals work, and much more. Creating clarity for them around all disclosures and documents is one way agents can show their value to buyers.

One way agents can help combat this lack of understanding is to build a presentation that explains each step in the process, and also includes what they will be doing on the buyer's behalf to help complete that step. This can be helpful for setting expectations with buyers.

WHAT BUYERS VALUE MOST FROM THEIR AGENTS

Agents do a lot for their buyer clients, though the survey results indicate that buyers don't fully grasp the full extent of their work and involvement. So the question emerges: What do buyers think their agent does as part of the home purchase process?

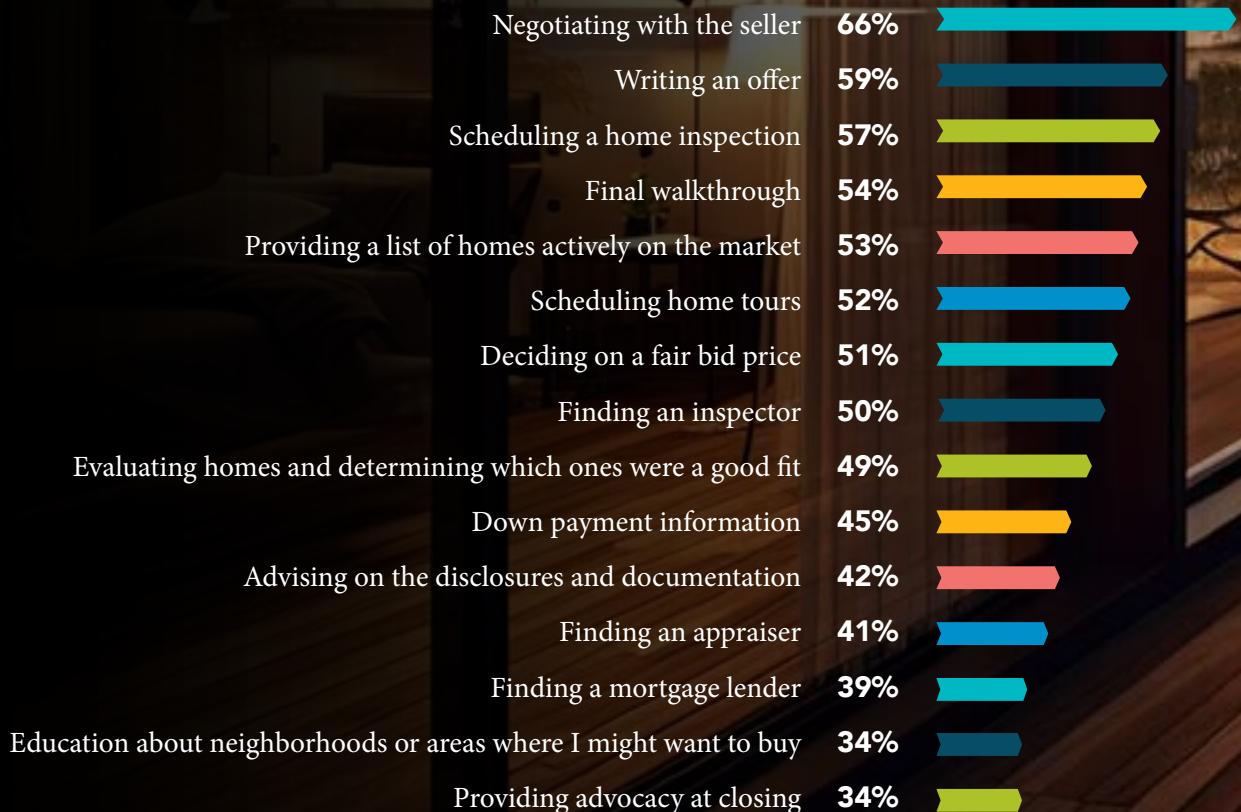
The survey asked respondents to share all of the areas where their agents helped them buy a house. Negotiating with the seller, writing an offer, and scheduling a home inspection were the most frequently selected options.

Agents also helped their clients with down payment information. The MLSs that offer down payment information as a product can give agents

the ability to help clients review and apply for multiple assistance programs.

Finding a home inspector and scheduling an inspection were also popular areas where agents helped clients. Agents can use igobooking.com to find highly qualified local home inspectors.

Scheduling home tours are another area of value. The MLS provides showing appointment software, which is critical for agents to understand and use.



There were many areas where buyers appreciated their agents' support, but some skills were valued more highly than others. Guidance around inspections and final walkthrough were not as critical for homebuyers as finding a house and the negotiation process.

When asked to rank the top three different services that their agent provided to them, the largest proportion of respondents chose:



NEGOTIATING WITH SELLER



PROVIDING A LIST OF HOMES ACTIVELY ON THE MARKET



DECIDING ON A FAIR BID PRICE

The smallest proportion of respondents chose:



PROVIDING ADVOCACY AT CLOSING



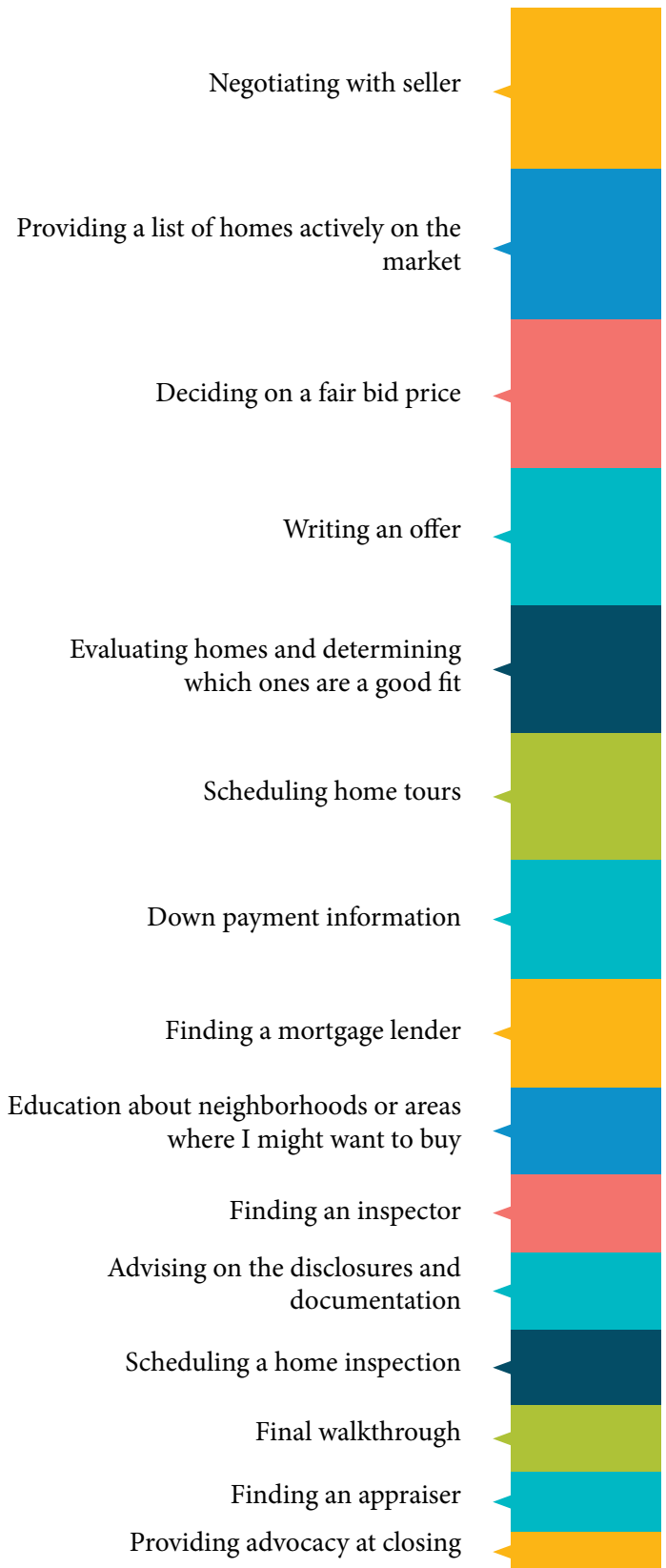
FINDING AN APPRAISER



FINAL WALKTHROUGH

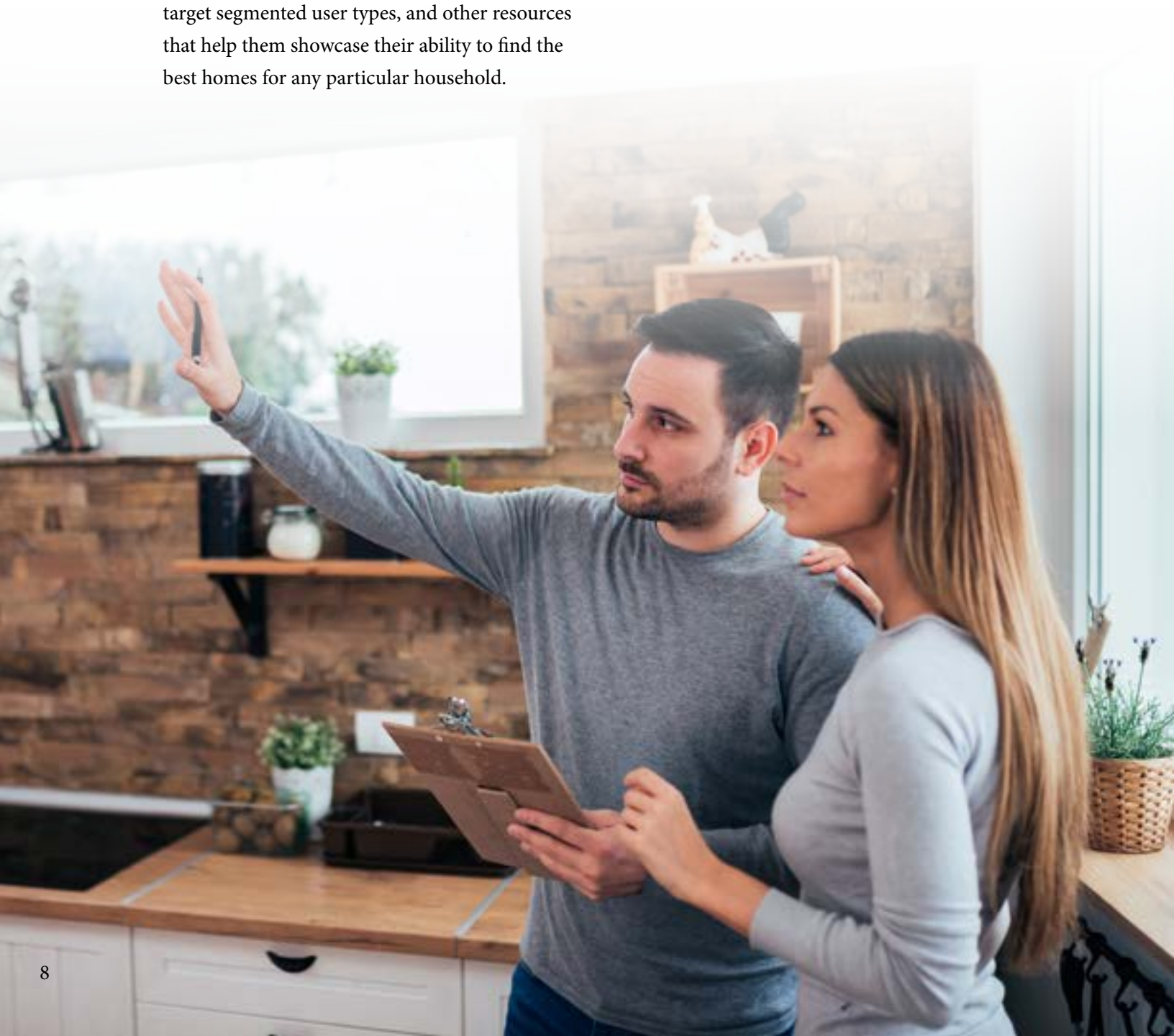
Need to brush up on your negotiating? The National Association of REALTORS® offers a certification around negotiation skills, the [Real Estate Negotiation Expert \(RENE\) certification](#).

These skills were most highly valued by respondents, from top to bottom.



Interestingly, even though consumers have numerous options for finding homes for sale, they highly valued agents' abilities to curate lists of homes available for purchase and helping them book appointments to view those properties.

Agents can lean into this value proposition by actively using prospecting emails from the MLS system, automated campaigns from a CRM that target segmented user types, and other resources that help them showcase their ability to find the best homes for any particular household.



DOTTING I'S AND CROSSING T'S: HOW AGENTS SHOW THEIR VALUE

Respondents were asked in a write-in segment about areas where their agents were particularly helpful and what they valued the most about working with their agents. One of the most frequently cited areas of support was the ease of finding a house, despite consumers' access to listing portals and home listing information online. They appreciated agents helping them with quick property searches in competitive markets and finding homes that best matched their preferences.

Agents also provided buyers with financial guidance, including financing options and down payment information. They ensured that all documents were in order for buyers, showed attention to detail, and were committed to helping their clients find an appropriate house. Respondents said that agents were supportive with advocacy and negotiation, including around repairs, price, and generally getting them what they felt was a fair deal in a difficult market.

Overall, buyers praised their agents for their responsive communication and keeping them well-informed about the process, understanding and accommodating their needs, customer service and personal touch, educational support, problem-solving and going the extra mile.

WHERE AGENTS COULD IMPROVE, ACCORDING TO BUYERS

While the vast majority of buyers felt that their agent earned their commission, there were some areas where even buyers who appreciated their agents saw room for improvement. At the top of the list of suggestions was to play a more active role in negotiating. Several buyers mentioned they wished their agent had helped them more around dealing with sellers, including discussing a fair price for the house.

Some buyers also said they wished their agent had offered more information or guidance around various aspects of buying a house. These comments included specific wishes for more education around the properties themselves, the areas or neighborhoods being considered, or what to look for and think about during the first visit or walkthrough.



In terms of agent proactivity and communication, some buyers felt that their needs were not fully met. They wanted faster responses, more frequent updates, and more effort around arranging home tours from agents.

The personal opinions that agents shared were not always appreciated by buyers, who perceived this behavior as “pushy” in terms of urging them toward or away from certain decisions. Buyers said they preferred a neutral and informative approach and seemed to feel that these behaviors were overstepping.

Some buyers noted that they wished their agents had helped them more with cost optimization. This included not just helping the buyers secure a better deal for the house or negotiating a lower price, but also being more considerate and conscious about various fees and expenses that buyers encounter.





Buyers also said they would have liked to have had more detailed information about the home they were buying. This could include a more thorough property inspection, so agents should make sure they are suggesting supplemental inspections for buyers considering homes that might necessitate those inspections. Buyers also voiced a need for more details like floorplans or video walkthroughs of homes on the market.

Generally speaking, several buyers said they wished their agents had put in more effort in various areas, such as communicating with sellers, advice on home repairs, and offering insights on tax implications of homeownership. Respondents also said they wished their agents had educated them better about market trends and certain legal processes, such as eviction for rental tenants.

Demographics and research information:

The survey was conducted in November 2023. There were 340 total respondents who had purchased a home within the past three years and who had their own buyer's agent representing them. Of those respondents, 33% purchased a home in the past 12 months, 39% purchased a home between 12 and 24 months ago, and 28% purchased a home between 24 and 36 months ago.

About WAV Group

WAV Group delivers innovative and effective guidance to help each of its clients continually evolve and expand. Specializing in the real estate industry, WAV Group is a full-service consultancy and trusted advisor for many of the industry's most successful associations, MLSs, and brokerages, as well as leading proptech and fintech firms.

The company's breadth of veteran executives deliver breakthrough, yet achievable solutions for better understanding customer need, gaining insightful competitive intelligence, setting strategic direction, launching new businesses and technology solutions, and building market share with engaging storytelling and targeted promotion. Learn more about WAV Group at wavgroup.com.