

Objection handler: ‘You can’t do anything better than my last agent’

Experts weigh in with scripts, perspectives and what might just be the perfect answer

BY *FABIANA GORDON Staff Writer*

Key Takeaways

- Change your perspective, and treat objections as if they are requests for more information.
- The last agent failed to sell the home -- remind prospects of that.

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Homeowners with expired listings may bluntly and pointedly say: “I don’t think you can do anything better than my last agent.”

How can you prove them otherwise?

If time were to stop when prospects utter this objection, a fork in the road would emerge with two paths: one that marks the start of your relationship with a client, and another that stops before it begins. Where you end up depends on what you say in the moments immediately after.

In the real estate Facebook Group Lead Gen Scripts and Objections, Atlanta-based Realtor Richard Hines *sought advice* in handling this tricky roadblock, which can derail a listing opportunity if you're caught off guard.

Agents from all over weighed in with some savvy responses that will guide you down the right path should a prospect confront you with this doozy.

It's all about perspective

Motivational speaker, author and sales expert Brian Tracy once said, "Treat objections as requests for further information," which might require a complete change of perspective on your part.

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In the same vein, Nashville-based agent Prentiss Holt believes dubiety from leads opens up a platform for sharing the ideas that make you different: "Can you do better than their last agent?" he asked Hines in the Facebook thread. "If so, how?"

Your natural instinct might be to see objections as roadblocks or threats to productivity, but changing your mindset will change your approach; and rather than being on the defense, you'll be the coach controlling the playbook.

Run "I don't think you can" through a sieve of positivity and you'll hear, "How can you?" instead.

The last agent didn't sell the home ... remind them of that

If you're dealing with an expired listing or someone who may be on the brink of switching agents, bring up the obvious: The last agent failed to do what the client hired him or her to accomplish — sell the dang home.

You're ready to change that.

California-based broker Bob Penzien would say, "I understand how you feel ... however, what is your last agent going to do differently this time to get you a different result?"

"A fresh approach is needed now, and I would like to show you what we are going to do differently to get your home sold ... and there is absolutely no obligation."

He also advised giving leads a couple of time slots to get together a la, "I can meet you tomorrow at 4 p.m. Or would 7 p.m. be better?" — rather than, "Would you like to meet?"

Georgia-based agent Dana Possick suggested saying, “I understand why you may feel that way. You already know what you are getting with your current/previous agent — and that didn’t sell the house — and you have nothing to lose by meeting with me to see what I do differently.”

Chicago-based real estate agent Jessica Chavez offered the following for expired phone conversations: “I understand, Mr. Seller. And obviously the only way to show you is to meet with you in person, right?

“All I am asking is 15 minutes of your time to show you my marketing plan and what I do to get homes sold and, if at the end you feel [it’s] not what you are looking for, at least you got a second opinion, right?”

The above scripts also buy you the time to brush off or nail down your top-notch listing presentation, during which you can close the deal.

And finally, St. Louis-based real estate agent Bill Wilmering quipped, “Your agent didn’t get it sold. So, I can’t do any worse; I can only do better.”

Be honest, talk it through and don’t overpromise

Virginia Beach, Virginia-based Realtor Jonathan O’Connor volunteered this effective and detailed response:

“I guess that would depend on precisely what [your] last agent actually did. [One] thing I’ll do is concentrate on how to attract buyers. That is my primary purpose.

“... but please don’t get the idea I am telling you I can get your home sold ... because I’m not [saying that].

“Once we get together, there are only three possible outcomes: 1) You’ re going to decide to list your home with me, 2) you’ re going to decide not to list your home with me, or 3) based on what we discuss, you might be giving me a job I know I can’ t do; and if that is the case, I’ m going to look you in the eye, tell you that, shake your hand and we part friends.”

If you feel the effectiveness of those words isn’ t as powerful as you’ d have hoped, O’ Connor offers the script he refers to as a last ditch effort:

“Tell me. If we were to get together, what would be the worst that would happen? What would be the best that could happen? What do you expect would be the most likely outcome if we sit down with each other?”

Be prepared to walk away, O’ Connor warned, because sometimes you and a prospect will simply lack compatibility.

Explain your unique value proposition

Ask your prospects what their other agent did and what they would’ ve had that agent do differently given the choice.

El Paso, Texas-based Realtor Sal Palos suggested saying: “To begin with, I personally know I’ m a better agent. But if you need a tangible example of what I’ ll do better, here is everything I’ m going to [do to] sell your house. Did your other agent do all these things, too?”

Don't ever forget to “emphasize how little things can make a big difference,” he added.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based Realtor Cory Rath recommended reaching out for a face-to-face. Meeting in person allows you to explain what you do and preview your services without the risk of being brushed off or hung up on.

“Without sitting down with you and getting more details about what was done and not done as compared with my listings sales strategy, I cannot comment meaningfully,” Rath would say.

“But I can tell you that I have a history of recent sales in the area with market times half that of the average for the area. My emphasis and my track record is results,” he added.

Levity and brevity might be all you need

For some agents, a witty one-liner might be enough to pique a skeptical client's interest; for others, a short, straight-forward response is key.

Slidell, Louisiana-based Realtor Troy Rizan would say, “Oh contrar, monfrer. Twenty minutes [and] I'll save you thousands.”

“Well, for starters, I'll get the house sold,” is what Florida based agent-broker Seth Rowlands would tell his prospects.

Katz chimed in again with, “So ... you plan to own the home forever then?”

Miami-based Realtor Yuri Flores wrote, “You’ re right — I have yet to master the art of letting my listings expire; I have mastered the art of selling!”

“Mr. Seller, that’ s a valid concern,” wrote San Diego agent David Espinoza. “Would you prefer to think I can or know I can?”

“That’ s exactly why we should meet,” is what Jason Boatner and Allie R. O’ Brien — agents from Florida and New Jersey, respectively — would say.

Be agreeable

Have you ever heard of the “Yes, and...” approach?

Salespeople, business executives, teachers, parents — anyone needing to tweak their negotiating skills — can benefit from eliminating one simple word: but.

“Yes, you have a point,” you tell your skeptical leads. “But ...”

And there you lost them.

Entrepreneur, author, life coach and philanthropist Tony Robbins says we often pretend to listen when in reality we're just waiting for our turn to speak. And, although you might side with your prospects on many things, they'll feel as though you think they're wrong the second you say, "but."

"Yes, you have a point," you tell another hesitant lead. "And, I also think ..."
Bam. You're now agreeable.

Uncertainty is natural. Prospects who don't express doubt and discernment at some point are hard to come by, and that's alright. Just be aware of your word choice when responding to their concerns.

Toronto, Ontario-based Realtor Chip Barkel said, "It's not about what two different agents do; it's about what they do differently.

Be different. Be the agent who chooses the right three-letter word.

The answer you're looking for

Agents weighed in heavily on Hines' request for objection handlers, but one in particular — New Jersey-based listing specialist and broker associate Mark J. Schmidt — hit the ball right out of the park with his response.

“I understand where you’ re coming from,” he’ d say. “And let me ask you — have you ever seen those shows on TV about botched plastic surgeries? What do you think separates the doctors who didn’ t do a good job from the ones who [did]? They both use the same tools, don’ t they?”

“The thing that separates them is how they use those tools. Let’ s get together so I can show you what I do that separates me from other agents.”

Schmidt said he’ s successfully used that analogy a couple times: “It’ s been received well since it’ s a good example of two people in the same profession who get totally different results.”

“#BOOM ... that’ s what I’ m looking for!” Hines replied.

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