

First, ask this one question

“What do I need to know about this?”

Here's the thing—you don't know what you don't know. And if you don't know, you can't ask the right questions in order to get the answers you need. So you have to start from zero, and ask “what do I need to know about this.” You'll want to ask someone who has more knowledge or experience than you.

What does a new home buyer need to know?

A couple of weeks ago, I was talking to an acquaintance of mine, who happens to be a top-selling real estate agent (she's sold something like \$25 million in property). I was telling her about my first few months as a homeowner, when I had to have a bunch of things fixed. The real estate agent asked me if I had gotten a home appliance policy. I told her that I hadn't and that I didn't even know about it. She went on to tell me she negotiates that for every single one of her new home buyers. She told me my real estate agent *should've* told me about it.

What do you look for in a real estate agent?

This question of course led to a discussion about my real estate agent, whom at first I really liked, but, after being in my house for a few months and dealing with a bunch of issues, I came realize didn't really do her job well. She didn't point out what I needed to know as a new home buyer. And I didn't know the questions to ask her, since I said before, you don't know what you don't know.

The more I learn about real estate and home ownership, the more I realize that my real estate agent (unlike my new acquaintance), was just not very good. She was mediocre but the fact is, it was my own fault for choosing to work with her without having educated myself more about what to look for in

a real estate agent.

You need to acknowledge that you don't know

I should've started by asking myself: "what do I need to know before buying a house?" I could've asked friends, I could've read books, I could've done more research online. I didn't.

I did watch a lot of HGTV (don't laugh, it was very helpful), especially *House Hunters* and *Property Virgins*. I watched enough HGTV to know that you have to look at the bones of the house, not the current esthetics and also to know what your priorities are. But those shows don't talk about issues such as heat pumps versus furnaces, or what costs you should plan for in your first year, and so forth.

But this blog is not about real estate, it's about communications

Not knowing what questions to ask is what gets so many projects off track. Say you are launching a blog, and you don't know to ask what you need in a web host, you may end up with a blog that doesn't work.

So before you start any communications project—whether it be launching a website or putting together a social media campaign—ask someone who's been there before: "what do I need to know?"

How do you know what questions to ask? Have you ever been in a situation where not asking the right questions made a project or situation go wrong?