

Buyer's Packet

Information for Buyers

Nisha's Philosophy

I'm here to provide the knowledge and expertise to make buying or selling a home a fun and rewarding process. I work with my clients, providing personalized attention and excellent customer service, to make sure their real estate needs are 100% satisfied. Guided by Intero's core values of trust, respect, and integrity, I aim to help find the perfect home as your agent. It's my goal to ensure my clients are clients for life, so dream big, and let's work together to make those dreams a reality.

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496 FIRST STREET | SUITE 200 | LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA 94022
LICENSE #: 01746077

Introduction

Buying a home is the largest business transaction most of us will ever make. The buying process can be very complex and time consuming, however with my services, you can be certain that you'll come away completely satisfied and stress free.

I would like to assure you that real estate is my passion, and I will do everything in my power to satisfy you—the client. That is my number one priority. To that end, I will use my knowledge of the real estate industry and local market to find the perfect home for you.

In order to accomplish the task of buying your dream home, I will work closely with you to ensure all of your needs are being met. Together, we will be successful in achieving your real estate dreams. With my numerous years of experience in real estate as both a Realtor® and an Escrow Coordinator, I have worked on hundreds of transactions. I will use this experience and all of the resources I have at Intero to work with you to ensure a successful process.

Get in touch with me today to schedule an appointment to begin the search for your dream home!

Nisha Sharma

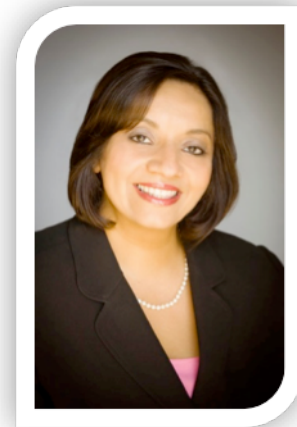
Realtor®*, *Certified EcoBroker®*, *SRES®

Direct: 650-947-4761

Fax: 650-653-2569

Email: NSharma@InteroRealEstate.com

Website: NishaSharmaHomes.com



Top 10 Reasons to Hire Me

1. Experience

I bring my numerous years of experience successfully buying and selling homes in the local Silicon Valley market to the table. Having seen it all, I can effectively manage whatever situations may arise.

2. Local Perspective

Having lived in the Silicon Valley for over 20 years, I know the neighborhoods, schools, market conditions, zoning regulations, and local economy, thereby allowing me to find you the perfect home in the perfect community.

3. Dedication

I am a full-time real estate agent—anything less and you would be short changed. I will do the legwork, keeping you up-to-date on new listings and conditions as they impact the market.

4. Networking

Throughout the years working in this industry, I have established strong relationships with a plethora of past clients, hundreds of the area's top brokers, mortgage lenders, escrow officers, and contractors. I will utilize this extensive network to best serve you.

5. Client Care

You will be my only client in the real estate transaction, allowing me to focus solely on your needs. I will guide you through the complexities of buying a home, eliminating the hassles and stress of trying to figure this all out on your own. I will keep you updated on the activity involving the transaction and keep you are aware of our progress throughout the process.

6. Negotiating Skills

Through my experiences working on a variety of different transactions, I have honed in on my negotiating skills, which I will be able to efficiently use to ensure you receive the best deal for your future home. My track record of success with past clients speaks volumes about my ability to use these strong negotiating skills to effectively advocate for you throughout the transaction.

7. Internet Presence

Given that over 90% of home buyers begin their search online, I offer you powerful home search capabilities on my website, NishaSharmaHomes.com, which offers numerous online tools and information.

8. Range of Services

Along with my team of trusted professionals, I proudly offer all the services you require under one roof, including mortgage, title, closing services, and insurance.

9. Prospecting

I will prospect for potential sellers, utilizing my extensive network, including current prospective sellers, my sphere of influence, local agents within Intero and throughout the local area, and homeowners from the neighborhood you desire to move to.

10. Powerful Brokerage

In less than a decade, Intero Real Estate Services has established itself as a premier real estate brokerage. In 2002, the founders formed Intero to fill a client service void that was missing in the real estate industry. In 2005 Intero was recognized by the National Association of Realtors® as the fastest growing real estate company in the nation. In 2009, Intero was the #1 brokerage in the Bay Area based on closed sales.

What I Can Do for You

The long and winding road that leads to the door of your new home can be confusing and exhausting. It helps to know you are not alone and that you have, at your disposal, your Realtor's® professional expertise. I will help you to do the following:

- Educate you through the entire process
- Listen to your needs to understand your real estate objectives
- Help you understand all of the paperwork
- Handle any problems that arise during the transaction
- Properly prepare forms, contracts and disclosures, which are required by law, and make sure that they are legally correct
- Provide comparable sales data to assure that you are paying the proper price for your home
- Help you find the right home in the right neighborhood
- Screen homes before your inspection to make sure the property meets your needs
- Guide you regarding the repairs that should be made
- Show you homes in an effective and professional manner
- Guide you in your selection of escrow/closing and title people
- Oversee the closing process
- See that the completion of the transaction is smooth, including obtaining keys and taking possession of the property
- Help you spot sellers who are attempting to take advantage of you
- Help you understand the use and limitations of good faith deposits
- Advise you as to when you should seek the advice of an attorney
- Make sure the appraisal process is handled properly
- Help you to understand the complete loan, escrow/closing and title process
- Advise you as to any inspections such as septic, well or soil, which might be applicable to the specific property in which you are interested
- Guide you as to how the escrow/closing instructions should be prepared
- Properly handle the walk-through process with you prior to the final closing
- See that any repairs or requirements are met prior to the closing
- Advise you as to what course of action should be taken if the seller refuses to close the transaction
- Negotiate and deal effectively on your behalf with the seller, other agents, escrow/closing, title people and attorneys
- See that each and every facet of the buying process is effectively and professionally handled in your best interest

Testimonials

Read on below to see what a few of my clients and colleagues have to say about my work...

“After interviewing and trying various agents for a year [we] had almost given up...Luckily [we] met Nisha. Nisha with her excellent knowledge of the neighborhood and great relationships and team she had built over the years...negotiate[d] the right price and terms on the house, she managed and guided [us] through the rest of the process...provided a worry free, no pressure, ethical, friendly and easy environment...She is what a real Realtor should be!”

- Anil & Jyoti Chaudhary

“Buying a house can be a very daunting and intimidating task – especially when you don’t have much experience or prior knowledge. Lucky for us, we had Nisha Sharma guiding and helping us each step of the way. She listened very carefully to what we wanted in a house and used her extensive knowledge and familiarity with the housing market to hone down our search. She spent countless hours previewing houses and speaking with listing agents...She took the time to get to know me and my family...Although our offer was not the highest in dollar amount, I firmly believe it was the charm, experience and integrity of my realtor that convinced the seller to go with our offer. Of course, not satisfied with helping us successfully purchase our home, she personally arranged for any work that would need to be done before we moved in. She interviewed painters, termite agencies, roof repairmen and floor specialists to make sure we got the best deal - we always got the best deal because everyone loves working with Nisha!”

- Karen Shin, M.D.

“Nisha Sharma is an excellent and extremely successful realtor. If you are looking for knowledge, business savvy, keen listening skills, patience with clients, going above and beyond, then Nisha is the realtor for you...Her kindness and attentiveness to both clients and friends is exemplary – nothing is ever too much trouble...You will always be her top priority and you will forever be happy you chose her as your realtor!”

- Heather & Wilson Haddow

“I have been exposed to thousands of Real Estate agents in my years of managing and coaching and I can confidently say there are few that match the professional expertise and personal concern Nisha demonstrates with every single customer she comes in contact with. Her dedication, commitment, and selfless attitude of giving is a service model all agents should strive for...Thank you Nisha for being not only someone who lives the values of Intero, but more importantly you do it when nobody is watching.”

- John Thompson, Founder & Vice President, Intero Real Estate Services

Benefits of a Buyer's Agent

For most of us, buying a home is the biggest single investment we're likely to make – and we're only likely to do it maybe once or twice in a lifetime. The process is, by nature, filled with checks and balances – and many complex details. Traditionally, agents were legally obligated to protect the interests of the home seller. Today preferences are changing. One of these changes is that more homebuyers are choosing to have their own real estate agent, known as a buyer's agent, to legally represent them.

A buyer's agent represents you, the buyer, not the seller, and has full fiduciary duties, including loyalty to you. By definition, the buyer's agent has your best interests in mind throughout the transaction. The percentage of homebuyers with buyer representation has grown significantly in the past decade. According to a recent National Association of Realtors® survey, nearly half (46%) of home buyers used the services of a buyer's agent last year, and four out of every five buyer's agent agreements were in writing.

The benefit of buyer representation is the dedication of a buyer's agent to the home buyer. The buyer's agent and homebuyer establish a mutual agreement, known as a buyer agency agreement, that will entitle the homebuyer to, but is not limited by:

Loyalty

The real estate agent must act in the best interest of the buyer.

Disclosure

All material facts such as relationships between agent and other parties, existence of other offers, status of earnest money, seller's financial condition, property's true worth, commission split with other brokers, and legal effect of important contract provisions.

Confidentiality

Any discussions, facts, or information that should not be revealed to others but does not include responsibility of fairness and honesty in dealings with all parties.

Accounting in Dealings

Reporting of where any money placed in the hands of the broker is kept.

Reasonable Skill and Care

Arriving at a reasonable purchase price and advising the buyer of such, affirmatively discovering material facts and disclosing them to the buyer, investigating the material facts related to the sale. With a buyer agency, the interests of the homebuyer will be represented in the purchase of the home. This scenario is different from a typical transaction where the buyer is not technically represented.

Rent vs. Own

There's nothing quite like a home that you can truly call your own. A place where you can have the gleaming hardwood floors you've always dreamed of, a space to cultivate your own vine-lined patio, a way to provide a good neighborhood for your kids to grow up in, and a freedom from the whims of your landlord. These are the images that immediately come to mind, for many of us. Yet some of the biggest advantages of owning a home are less romantic and more practical—in fact, there are financial advantages to owning a home:

Tax Deductibility

You can deduct the cost of your mortgage loan interest from your state and federal income taxes. Since interest generally will account for most of your payment during the first half of your mortgage, the savings can be significant. Some of your costs at the time of closing (including prepaid mortgage interest) can be taken as deductions on that year's income tax return, and points paid up front at the time of closing represent additional mortgage interest and may be taken as a deduction. You can also deduct all property taxes you pay.

Appreciation Potential

Real estate is considered a good long-term investment because it usually appreciates in value. The effects of borrowing potential can increase as the value of the home appreciates.

Capital Gains Exclusion

When it's time to sell your home the amount of capital gains you have to pay is reduced. A homeowner can exclude up to \$500,000 per couple if married and filing jointly, or \$250,000 if single or filing separately for homes that have been the taxpayer's principal residence for the previous two years.

Capital Gain Treatment

Congress allows preferential tax treatment on gains from capital assets held for more than one year. This would be important for a homeowner who has gains in excess of the allowable exclusion.

Principal Accumulation

Mortgages are designed to pay the interest for the time that the money has been used, as well as to retire the principal debt over a period of time. This payment plan means that part of the payment each month is for principal accumulation.

Personal Enjoyment

Pride of ownership is a valid reason for wanting to own a home. You can personalize your home while enjoying the financial benefits.

For the best evaluation of your financial situation, consult your financial advisor. He/she will be the most qualified to discuss the financial consequences of a home purchase decision, as well as help you to establish a plan that will achieve your home ownership goals.

First Time Buyers

Approaching the task of buying a home can be overwhelming. It is a complex event during which there is so much to learn and to consider. How much can I afford? Where will the down payment come from? How much will I need and where can I find the best loan? How do I begin the look for a home, what should I expect from my real estate agent and what type of home is right for me?

These questions are just the beginning. Buying a home is one of the largest financial transactions in one's lifetime, yet most people know very little about it. When embarking on the path to home ownership here are two very important points to remember:

You can and should understand everything that is happening in the homebuying process. You will need to learn some new terms, apply some new concepts and take the time to learn about purchasing a home.

Always remember that you are the most important person throughout the entire real estate process. It is easy to think that many others may have more expertise or clout, but the truth is that you, the buyer, are the one person in this transaction that makes it all happen. If you decide not to buy, the entire process comes to a complete stop.

If you plan from the beginning to approach the homebuying process intelligently and with confidence, you are much more likely to buy the home you've always wanted, and have the confidence that the best decisions were made.

Steps To Buying A Home

1. Make a decision to rent or buy.
2. Figure out how much you can afford.
3. Find the right real estate agent.
4. Get pre-approved.
5. Decide what kind of home you want.
6. Find the right neighborhood.
7. Begin the home search.
8. Preview the homes.
9. Make an offer.
10. Apply for a mortgage.
11. Have the inspections conducted.
12. Close the transaction.
13. Move into your new home.

Using a Property Checklist

When searching for a home, it's easy to get overwhelmed with information and to forget the details of each particular home you've viewed - that's why I've created this list to help you keep track of all the information you need to help you in this important decision.

When you view a home, keep in mind this checklist:

- Is there enough room for both the present and the future?
- Are there enough bedrooms and bathrooms?
- Is the house structurally sound?
- Do the mechanical systems and appliances work?
- Is the yard big enough?
- Do you like the floor plan?
- Will my furniture fit in the space? Is there enough storage space? (Bring a tape measure to better answer these questions.)
- Does anything need to be repaired or replaced? Will the seller repair or replace the items?
- Imagine the house in good weather and bad, and in each season. Will you be happy with it year round?
- Take your time and think carefully about each house you see. Ask your agent to point out the pros and cons of each home from a professional standpoint.
- There isn't a set number of houses you should see before you decide. Just be sure to communicate often with your agent about everything you're looking for. It will help focus the search.
- Take detailed notes, take pictures, and make a video – anything to help you remember as much as you can. (Be sure to first secure the permission of the owner before photographing or taking video, though.)
- If the owner or the owner's agent is present during your viewing of the home, don't say too much about your likes or dislikes.
- Which items require ongoing maintenance (paint, roof, heating and air conditioning systems, appliances, carpet)?
- What about the neighborhood and the quality of life it affords?
- Does the home's style, features and amenities conform to the neighborhood?
- Are there any potential problems with the home's electrical or mechanical systems?
- Does the home appear to have any structural problems?
- Does the home appear to have any drainage or foundation problems?

Making an Offer

A written proposal is the foundation of a real estate transaction. Therefore, you need to enter into a written contract, which starts with your purchase offer. This proposal not only specifies price, but all the term and conditions of the purchase. There are a variety of standard forms used by agents and bound by both the law and local practice. After the offer is written and signed, it will be presented to the seller by your agent in the presence of the seller's agent, or by the seller's agent alone.

What the Offer Contains

The purchase offer you submit, if accepted as it is written, will become a binding sales contract (known as a purchase agreement). It is important that it contain all the items that will serve as a "blueprint for the final sale." The purchase offer includes such items as:

- Address and legal description of the property
- Sale price
- Terms: for example, all cash or subject to the buyer obtaining a mortgage for a given amount
- Seller's promise to provide clear title (ownership)
- Target date for closing
- Amount of earnest money deposit accompanying the offer, and whether it will come in the form of a check or cash. Also included may be the disposition of the deposit should the buyer back out of the deal at a later date.
- Method by which real estate taxes, rents, fuel, water bills and utilities are to be adjusted (prorated) between buyer and seller
- Provisions about who will pay for title insurance, survey, termite inspections and other details
- Type of deed to be given
- Other requirements such as disclosure of specific environmental hazards, seismic hazards or other locally-specific clauses
- A provision that the buyer may make a final walk-through inspection of the property just before closing
- Any contingencies

Negotiating

Of course, negotiating is a huge part of the homebuying process. I will negotiate on your behalf, bringing to the table years of experience and local expertise. There are some principles that are universal, though.

You're in a strong bargaining position if:

- You're an all-cash buyer
- You're already preapproved for a mortgage
- You don't have a home that needs to be sold before you can buy

These circumstances give you a little more leeway in negotiating. However, even if you are in a strong position, in a "hot" market, you may want to make your offer more desirable by offering more than asking price. When the market is "soft," homes tend to sell more slowly, creating a larger pool of homes from which to choose. On the other hand, when the market is "hot," there may be a limited number of homes to visit and the demand for them may be high.

Overall, here are some suggestions:

- Enter into negotiations with the maximum amount you are willing to pay for the property firmly in mind.
- Keep in mind (and add to the contract) some terms you can live without – then you can make concessions without compromising the items that are important to you.
- Always have a few alternative homes in mind – knowing you have other options will help you stay objective during bargaining and may encourage the seller to be more reasonable.
- Try to ascertain what the seller wants and needs. If, for example, the seller's new home is not ready by the closing date, you might consider allowing the seller to rent back the home for a short time, provided your schedule permits.
- Terms may be negotiated as well as price, and the changes can result in financial savings.

How Much Should I Offer?

Generally, I will help you with this. However, there are several things to consider as you develop your purchase offer:

- Is the asking price in line with prices of similar homes in the area? I will conduct research, called a "Competitive Market Analysis" or CMA, on comparable properties, to help you come up with an educated opinion on the worth of the property.
- Is the home in good condition – or will you have to spend a substantial amount of time and money making it the way you want it?
- How long has the home been on the market? If it's been for sale for a while, the seller may be more eager to accept a lower offer.
- How much mortgage will be required? Make sure you really can afford an offer that you plan to make.
- How much do you really want the home? The closer you are to the asking price, the more likely your offer will be accepted.

Common Points of Negotiation

The buyer and seller may negotiate many of the associated costs of the transaction. Some common items are: price, financing, closing costs, repairs that need to be made, appliances and fixtures, landscaping, painting and occupancy time frame.

Counteroffers

Offers are occasionally rejected outright, but it is common for a seller to counter an offer with terms acceptable to them. But don't let this stop you. Now you begin negotiating. I will help you.

There are many options to explore:

Maybe you offer more money, but ask the seller to cover some or all of your closing costs or to make repairs that wouldn't normally be expected.

Or, you provide the seller with more time to move in exchange for a price break, if you know extra time is what they need.

Just remember – don't get so caught up in negotiations that you lose sight of what you want and what you can afford!

At What Point Are Negotiations Binding?

You will have a binding contract if the seller, upon receiving your written offer, signs an acceptance just as it stands, unconditionally. The offer becomes a firm contract as soon as the signed, unchanged offer is delivered to you or me, your agent. If the offer is rejected, that's that and the seller cannot change their mind and hold you to it.

Who Pays for What?

A major question in every escrow is: "Who pays for what?" The answers vary by county ordinances and standard practices. What is listed below are "customary" practices. All fees charged are governed by terms of the sales contract and other written escrow instructions. Note: on some FHA, VA or other government-backed loans, the buyer will pay some fees that governmental regulations will not allow you to pay.

Sellers generally pay:

- Real estate commission
- Document transfer tax (\$1.10 per \$1,000 of sales price)
- Notary fees
- Property tax proration (to date of acquisition)
- Special delivery/courier fees, if required
- Document preparation fees
- Document recording charges
- Homeowner's association statement fee and prorata dues
- Home warranty (according to contract)
- Work/repairs required (according to contract)
- Matters of record against the property or seller (loans, tax liens, judgments, etc.) and fees required to clear them (statement fees, reconveyance/trustee fees and prepayment penalties)
- Bonds and assessments (according to contract)

Buyers generally pay:

- Title insurance policy premiums (lender's and buyer's)
- Escrow fees
- Notary fees
- Property tax proration (from acquisition date)
- Special delivery/courier fees, if required
- Document preparation fees
- Document recording charges
- Homeowner's association transfer fee and prorata dues
- City costs
- Home warranty (according to contract)
- Inspection fees (according to contract)
- Matters of record against the buyer including tax liens, judgments and fees required to clear them
- Fire insurance premium for the first year
- Assumption/change of records fees if the buyer is taking over an existing loan
- Lender's new loan charges
- Interest on new loan from date of funding to 30 days prior to the first payment
- Other prorations (rents, insurance etc.) if applicable