

# Maximizing the First Call

Building a relationship with a potential client begins the second you're connected. This means the first time you get on the phone with them, you have one overarching goal: to establish rapport that will lead to a face-to-face meeting. Here's how to completely nail the first call.



## Prioritize a phone conversation

In the very beginning, we strongly encourage phone calls over text and email. It's an opportunity to gauge the buyer's needs and wants, build rapport, and gather information that will help you find similar properties.

If you try to reach the prospect by phone and don't get an answer, follow up with a text message. The goal remains to get them on the phone.

Hi, [prospect name]! This is [your name] from [brokerage]. I'm excited to connect as I saw you requested information about [address]. Do you have time at [XX:XX AM/PM] to jump on a 5 minute call to discuss?

## Schedule an in-person appointment

Scheduling a face-to-face appointment is a crucial goal of the first call. That's because 73% of buyers end up working with the first agent they meet with.<sup>1</sup>

Start with a strong introduction, including a greeting, your name, and your brokerage. Then, to guide your prospect toward an in-person meeting, we recommend a simple strategy that also leads them to share details about their home-buying needs. We call it the ALM approach, as you'll be inquiring about the key areas of Appointment, Location, and Motivation:

**Appointment:** “When would you like to see 130 5th Ave?” If the prospect inquired about a building, ask which apartment in the building caught their eye.

**Location:** Ask if there are any other buildings or apartments the buyer would like to see. Always strive to show more than one property during the first appointment. This lets them know you're there not just for one listing, but for their entire home search.

**Motivation:** Find out the “why” behind the location. “What prompted you to reach out about this building? This apartment? Were there any others that caught your eye?” Getting this information will help you learn more about their wants, needs, and timeline, as well as find other properties to show during the appointment.

### TIP

Throughout the conversation, keep asking open-ended questions to gather more information.

## Explain your role

After discussing when they'd like to see the property, be sure to disclose your role. For example:

Great! I'll follow up with the seller's agent to confirm us for [day/time]. To be clear about my role, StreetEasy connected us because I'm an Expert buyer's representative in this [building/neighborhood] and I've helped several clients here in the past. I'll be representing you as the buyer, at no cost to you. I'm excited to work with you and help you find a home for the best possible price!

Then, pivot to location:

What prompted you to reach out about this [property/building]? And while we're out, are there other properties you're interested in seeing?

## Focus on the person, not the property

Your very first call with an online prospect can present unique challenges. The home they're focused on could be under contract or already sold, or they may have hyper-specific questions about a property you've never seen.

Your natural reaction when faced with these challenges may be to focus on the property. But insights gathered from some of our most successful Experts indicate you'll close more deals by focusing on the person, not the property.

The vast majority of prospective buyers don't transact on the first property they inquire about. So start your relationship by learning more about the person and their requirements.



## Know how to respond to common objections

Objections happen. What matters is how you handle them.

**“Are you the listing agent? I’m looking for the listing agent.”** We don't recommend telling a lead you're not the listing agent if they haven't asked. Don't assume they want to speak with the listing agent, and don't give them the idea. Use this analogy: “Have you ever been through a divorce? Would you have the same person representing you that is also representing your spouse? Of course not!” If you don't overcome the objection, reach out to them in a few days making sure they got what they needed.

**The buyer is not pre-approved.** We also don't recommend getting into financials on the first call. Give them an opportunity to meet you first and decide if they want to work with you. Less than 10% of consumers on average are pre-approved when they submit a lead.

**The listing is no longer available.** Avoid sharing bad news on the first call. Frame it in a way that allows you to gather more information and offer alternatives. For example:

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This property may have an accepted offer, but we can possibly still take a look in case it falls through. I'll reach out to the listing agent to confirm. In the meantime, I have some other properties in mind that remind me of this one. What motivated you to reach out about this listing in the first place?

Now you've earned the right to call them back once you confirm the property status. If it's indeed not available, you can come prepared with a few other options.



## No bad news!

Again, avoid sharing bad news during the first call. This might include stating that the property is in contract, the building doesn't allow pets, or the prospect's budget is too low for the desired area. It can kill the relationship before it even starts. Instead, ask questions to get them talking about their motivations for inquiring about the listing. Approach financial questions carefully: “Have you thought about financing?” “Will this be a cash purchase or will you be taking out a mortgage?”

## Confirm next steps

Don't end the call without confirming what the next steps are. Ideally, it's an in-person appointment. Find out your client's communication preferences — phone, text, or email? When is the best time to reach them? At the end of the call, repeat your information and let them know you'll follow up with an e-mail or text confirmation of the appointment. Include the time and place, as well as your contact information.