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Kevin Flaherty, Broker · eXp Realty · Orangeville, Ontario

Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings

Should You Hire a Friend as Your Real Estate Agent?

The Objective Checklist

A practical, printable worksheet for sellers who want to make the right choice based on merit, not loyalty.

Prepared for Orangeville and area homeowners by **Kevin Flaherty**, Broker with **38 years of real estate experience** at **eXp Realty**.

Purpose of this checklist: This guide is not designed to talk you out of hiring a friend. It is designed to help you decide whether your friend is genuinely the best professional to represent one of the largest financial decisions you may make.

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Why This Decision Matters

For many homeowners in Orangeville and the surrounding area, a home is not just a place to live. It is often the largest financial asset they own, the foundation for their next move, and a major part of their long-term security. Choosing the person who will price, present, negotiate, and protect that asset deserves more than a loyalty-based decision.

Hiring a friend who is also a real estate agent can work well when that friend has the experience, systems, local knowledge, availability, and professional objectivity required for the job. The risk is that friendship can make it harder to ask direct questions, compare alternatives, or hold the agent accountable if results are not meeting expectations.

This checklist helps you separate **relationship comfort** from **listing competence**. Use it before signing a listing agreement. If your friend scores well, you can move forward with confidence. If they do not, you will have a respectful, practical way to explain that your decision must be based on what is best for your sale.

Guiding principle: A good friend should want you to make the right decision for your home, even if that decision is not them.

How to Use the Checklist

Score each criterion from **1 to 5** based on evidence, not promises. A score of 1 means the agent has little or no proof in that area. A score of 5 means the agent can clearly demonstrate strong results, a specific process, and a professional standard you would be comfortable defending.

Suggested decision rule: If your friend-agent scores below **32 out of 45**, or if any single category scores below **3**, pause before signing. Consider getting an objective second opinion from an experienced local broker.

Score	Meaning	What You Should Be Looking For
1	Weak	Mostly vague claims, limited evidence, or little relevance to your local market.
2	Below standard	Some ability, but important gaps in experience, preparation, or systems.
3	Acceptable	Competent enough to consider, but not clearly superior to other options.
4	Strong	Clear evidence, a defined plan, and relevant local experience.
5	Excellent	Demonstrated track record, strong systems, and professional judgment under pressure.

Objective Criteria Scorecard

1. Local Market Knowledge

Your agent should understand the difference between selling in Orangeville, Mono, Caledon, Shelburne, Amaranth, and surrounding communities. Local knowledge includes neighbourhood demand, buyer expectations, recent comparable sales, school-area considerations, rural versus in-town property differences, and how current inventory affects pricing strategy.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Can they explain recent comparable sales and current competition in your specific area without relying only on generic averages?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

2. Pricing Track Record

A strong listing agent should have a disciplined pricing process. The right price is not simply the highest suggested number; it is the price most likely to attract qualified buyers, create confidence, and protect your negotiating position. Ask how often their listings sell close to the recommended strategy and what happens when the market does not respond as expected.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Can they show how they arrive at value, what data they use, and how they avoid overpricing just to win the listing?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

3. Marketing System

Marketing should be more than a sign, basic photos, and a listing on MLS. A modern seller deserves a clear plan for how buyers will discover, understand, and remember the property. Kevin Flaherty's own approach is built around **Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings**, which help buyers understand layout, features, upgrades, and location context before deciding whether to view in person.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Can they describe a complete marketing system that makes your home easy for serious buyers to understand online before booking a showing?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

4. Communication Style and Reporting

Good communication is not just being friendly. It includes clear expectations, direct feedback, timely updates, showing summaries, market changes, buyer objections, and practical next steps.

A friend may assume informal communication is enough, but a seller needs professional reporting and documented advice.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Will they provide structured updates, honest feedback, and a clear response standard throughout the listing?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

5. Negotiation Results and Strategy

Negotiation is where experience, preparation, and emotional control matter. Your agent should be able to explain how they handle low offers, multiple-offer situations, inspection issues, appraisal concerns, closing terms, and buyer pressure. You are not only hiring someone to find interest; you are hiring someone to protect your outcome.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Can they explain their negotiation process and provide examples of how they protected seller interests in difficult situations?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

6. Willingness to Give Hard Advice

A friend may avoid uncomfortable truths about price, staging, repairs, clutter, odours, pets, access, or presentation. That avoidance can cost a seller time and money. A professional listing agent must be willing to say what needs to be said kindly, clearly, and early enough for you to act on it.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Can they give you specific, constructive recommendations for preparing your home, even if the advice is uncomfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

7. Professional Availability

Selling a home can involve short-notice questions, showing coordination, offer timing, condition deadlines, and fast-moving buyer decisions. Your friend may be licensed, but you need to know whether they have the availability and support to handle your listing professionally, especially during evenings, weekends, and high-pressure moments.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Do they have a reliable process for inquiries, showings, feedback, offers, and urgent decisions when they are unavailable?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

8. Buyer Reach and Network

The best listing strategy actively reaches buyers rather than passively waiting for them. Ask how your agent will get the home in front of qualified local, relocating, upsizing, downsizing, and out-of-area buyers who may be considering Orangeville and surrounding communities.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Can they explain how they reach likely buyers beyond basic listing exposure and social posts?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

9. Objectivity Under Friendship Pressure

A friend-agent must be able to separate personal feelings from professional recommendations. They should not take questions personally, resist comparison, or pressure you through guilt. They should welcome your due diligence and be willing to earn the listing on merit.

Evidence to Ask For	Score
Do they support your right to compare agents, ask hard questions, and make a business decision without damaging the friendship?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

Total Score: ____ / 45

Lowest Single Category Score: ____

Decision: Strong candidate Needs comparison Not the right fit for this sale

Red Flags: Signs the Friendship Could Hurt the Sale

These warning signs do not automatically mean your friend is unqualified. They do mean you should slow down, ask more questions, and consider an objective second opinion before signing a listing agreement.

Red Flag	Why It Matters	Check
They expect the listing because of the friendship.	Entitlement can replace preparation, evidence, and accountability.	<input type="checkbox"/>
They discourage you from interviewing other agents.	A confident professional should welcome comparison.	<input type="checkbox"/>
They suggest a high price without a clear pricing rationale.	Overpricing can reduce urgency, create stale listing perception, and weaken negotiation leverage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their marketing plan sounds generic.	A valuable property deserves a specific strategy, not a routine upload-and-wait approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>
They avoid giving direct preparation advice.	Sellers need honest guidance before the market gives harsher feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>
They are difficult to reach before they have the listing.	Responsiveness often becomes more important, not less, once the home is live.	<input type="checkbox"/>
They take your questions personally.	A listing relationship requires calm, objective decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/>
They cannot explain how they will reach buyers outside their immediate circle.	Buyer reach matters, especially in markets influenced by relocation and regional movement.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Practical test: If you would not hire this person for the same assignment without the friendship, pause before hiring them because of the friendship.

Conversation Starter: If Your Friend Does Not Qualify

An awkward conversation is easier when you frame the decision as a responsibility, not a rejection. Your home sale is a business decision with personal consequences, and a true friend should be able to respect that boundary.

“I value our friendship, and because I value it, I do not want this decision to put pressure on it. We are treating the sale of our home as a major financial decision, so we are comparing agents using the same objective checklist. After going through the criteria, we have decided to work with the agent whose experience, systems, and local strategy best match what we need for this sale. I hope you understand that this is about protecting the outcome, not questioning the friendship.”

If you would still like to involve your friend, you can say:

“If there is a professional referral arrangement that makes sense and is appropriate, we are open to discussing that. But the listing decision itself has to be based on who we believe is the strongest fit for this property and this market.”

Final Decision Worksheet

Use this page to summarize your notes after interviewing your friend-agent and at least one other qualified local agent.

Question	Notes
What is the strongest reason to hire your friend-agent?	
What is the strongest concern about hiring your friend-agent?	
What proof did they provide beyond personal trust?	
What did another agent explain more clearly or more objectively?	
Would you make the same choice if this person were not your friend?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure

Seller Name

Date

Want an Objective Second Opinion?

If you are deciding whether a friend is the right agent to sell your home, you do not need pressure. You need a calm, experienced, outside perspective. Kevin Flaherty can help you compare the plan, pricing logic, and marketing approach objectively so you can make the right choice for your situation, even if that choice is not Kevin.

Kevin Flaherty is a real estate broker with **38 years of experience** at **eXp Realty** in Orangeville, Ontario. Through **Flaherty.ca**, Kevin helps sellers evaluate pricing, preparation, buyer reach, and modern marketing options, including **Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings** designed to help buyers understand a home online before they visit in person.

Book an objective second opinion:
Visit **Flaherty.ca** or call **226-270-6433**.

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Note: This checklist is an educational planning tool for homeowners. It is not legal, financial, or appraisal advice. Before signing any agreement, review the terms carefully and seek independent professional advice where appropriate.