



# Experience the **Realtor® Difference**



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## AN AGENT YOU CAN TRUST

Buying a home can be one of the most stressful and confusing times in a person's life... luckily you'll have a professional by your side through the whole process. When you team up with the right real estate expert, the difference is night and day. But choose wisely. Not all agents are equal. With over two million real estate agents in the United States, it can be difficult choosing which agent you would like to work with. It's important to find someone you trust completely. Remember, a great agent must be ethical, experienced, informed and well-connected.

**One easy step to narrow down your pick is to look for the Realtor® designation.**

Not all real estate agents bear this name, and it's your first indicator that you've found someone serious about the real estate profession. All real estate agents must maintain a license, but Realtors® are agents who take things a step further - or several. By joining the National Association of Realtors® (NAR), as well as a local organization like the Denver Metro Association of Realtors® (DMAR), agents commit themselves to a stricter standard of excellence and connect themselves to a greater web of professionals. By limiting your options to agents with the Realtor® title, you can be confident your representation is up to snuff. It's the higher standard of excellence that maintains the Realtor® brand and the reason you can expect a positive experience when you work with one. A Realtor® will go above and beyond for you because they've already done that for themselves by joining an Association. What does it feel like to have someone like this working on your behalf? It's something you need to experience yourself, but we can help give you an idea.

# REALTOR® vs. AGENT

*by the numbers*

Let's start by breaking down what it means to be a Realtor® versus a licensed agent (and why it matters to you as a consumer). Beginning with the technical definitions, **a real estate agent is any professional with a license to sell real estate; a Realtor® is a real estate agent who maintains membership with NAR and adheres to their code of ethics** – more on that later. Being a member of NAR is an important indicator that your agent is serious about their profession.

**But don't take our word for it! Trust the numbers:**

**98%** of Top Producers are Realtors®.

Realtors® boast **2x** as many transactions.

About **1/2** of all agents are Realtors®,  
and they earn **90%** of the money.

Average \$ volume for Realtors® is **3x** higher.

Realtor®-sold homes have **higher** closing prices.

Realtors® are **less likely**  
to offer concessions or act in a conflict of interest.

And let's not forget the power of numbers. NAR is the largest trade association in the country and when it comes to selling real estate, connections matter quite a bit! You can expect a Realtor® to be extremely well-connected in the industry. This translates to more opportunities to connect you with a fitting home or homebuyer, as well as better connections with trustworthy support professionals you'll need through the process. However you do the math, Realtors® come out on top. So look for that little blue "R" before moving forward with an agent. You'll be glad you did.



## THE REALTOR® CODE OF ETHICS

*(simplified)*

The Realtor® Code of Ethics is a massive, ever-changing document. To maintain the title, Realtors® are required to renew their membership every two years by taking a class updating them on this code, and any changes that have been made. This is a huge benefit to you as a client because you know when choosing a Realtor® to represent you, you are choosing an agent who swears themselves to a highly specific code of ethical conduct.

To help you better understand the expectations of an agent bearing the Realtor® designation, we are breaking it down into its core elements with easy-to-understand layman's terms. The document consists of 17 articles, each of which is summarized below. Keep in mind, this is highly simplified language and does not fully represent each article.

## **DUTIES TO CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS**

Article 1: Always put the clients' needs first, but remain honest with all parties.

Article 2: Details of a home must not be sugar-coated, exaggerated or omitted.

Article 3: Realtors® are to cooperate with each other unless it's not in the clients' best interest.

Article 4: Personal ties are to be made apparent before contracts are signed.

Article 5: Realtors® cannot give their services for sales in which they have an interest.

Article 6: Any recommendations which bring in referral fees must be disclosed.

Article 7: Clients must know if their Realtor® is receiving additional compensation.

Article 8: Client's money can never be in Realtors®' personal bank account.

Article 9: Any and all documents pertaining to a transaction should be present in clear, understandable terms.

## **DUTIES TO THE PUBLIC**

Article 10: Realtors® don't discriminate or deny service based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Article 11: Realtors® only provide services within their professional scope.

Article 12: You can trust a Realtor® to be honest (i.e. no false or misleading advertising).

Article 13: They aren't law experts, and won't pretend to be. Instead, they will recommend legal counsel when their client requires it.

Article 14: The code is their law. A Realtor® will not attempt to interfere in any way if they are charged with breaking the code of ethics, and must cooperate completely with the National Association of Realtors®.

## **DUTIES TO REALTORS®**

Article 15: Trash-talking is below a Realtor®, which is why they will not knowingly make statements that are false or misleading about other Realtors® or other professionals.

Article 16: They respect exclusive relationships and will refrain from interfering with the brokerage relationships that other Realtors® have with their client.

Article 17: Disputes are settled with due process.



# HOW TO FIND A GREAT AGENT

*in 3 steps*

## Step 1: Limit Your Search to Realtors®

When it comes to real estate representation, Realtors® are the gold standard. To find the best agent, you'll want to limit your search to agents with this designation. A good place to start is [REcolorado.com](https://www.recolorado.com), where you'll find detailed profiles of Realtors® in your area or the area you want to buy or sell. If you're using another method to search, such as word-of-mouth recommendation, just keep an eye out for the title "Realtors®" or the blue NAR logo to ensure they are held to higher ethical standards. But don't stop here! This is a great first step, but that hardly narrows your search down enough for an easy selection. With two million Realtors® in the country, you still have a vast pool to choose from.



## Step 2: Research and Online Vetting

By now, you'll have a handful of local Realtors® who are qualified and ethical, but "good enough" isn't so. Take some extra time and make an informed decision. Don't trust that the agent who was great for your friend will work well for you, don't pick the first Realtor® that comes up in a search and don't just choose a welcoming face either. Search for follow-up details: how much experience do they have, what price range do they prefer to work in, do they have any specializations or advanced designations that could help you, do they stay up-to-date on industry news and market trends? Pick a few promising leads and move to step three.



## Step 3: Meet up and Ask Questions

Now that you have an agent in mind, reach out to express your interest in real estate and working together. If you like how they respond, ask them to meet up (if they haven't already). Even the most qualified professional may not be the right choice for you. This is an important step, so be sure you take the time to meet up to test your chemistry and ask follow-up questions. You may want to know how many clients they are working with at the moment and perhaps you want to see references from past clients. You might ask questions about the local market or their experience working in your desired area. As you ask questions, be sure to also look beyond the answers for a gut feeling and make sure you feel like you "click" with this person before making your decision. This may be someone you want to work with, but don't hesitate to meet up with other Realtors® before making a final choice.



# 6 QUALITIES OF A GREAT REALTOR®

*& how to spot them*



## **1 They always put their client's needs first.**

This should go without saying. A quality real estate agent understands that real representation means acting in the client's best interests at all times! There is a reason this is number one on the Realtor® Code of Ethics. It may seem obvious, but you may be surprised how easy it is to not.

A few examples of how an agent could act out of favor: they mislead the client about a home's value, place a listing on the back burner, selectively omit listings of a certain company, intentionally list a property too high or pressure a client into choosing specific ancillary professionals for a transaction. What can you do to ensure your agent is dedicated to YOUR interests? A good first step is to ensure they have their Realtor® designation and therefore actively maintain an oath to this standard. Next, you could ask them for a list of their last few clients or check for any negative reviews they may have.

## **2 They maintain excellent communication.**

This is key for many professions, but it's especially true in real estate. An agent who doesn't keep you in the loop in a timely manner through every step of the process



is not keeping your interests at the forefront. They should be contacting you with updates whether it's good or bad news. They should let you know what they are doing to get your listing seen or how they are searching for a house that suits your needs.

They should ask you questions and listen closely so they understand your specific wants and needs inside and out. They should also be articulate and professional in their communication with all other parties involved. Look for an agent who listens well, speaks confidently and shows signs of transparent honesty. Follow your intuition - this person should be easy for you to talk to.

### **3 They are informed and keep themselves up-to-date.**

Does your agent stay up on the latest market trends? Is their use of technology fully in the 21st century? Do they read up on industry news, locally and nationally? If not, you're doing yourself a disservice in your choice of agent. This career demands timely knowledge and modern practices.

So what can you do to test them out? Ask them for an opinion on a pertinent industry topic you read about or ask them how the market has shifted in the last month; look for confidence and insightful perspectives. You could inquire about the source of their data, too – they should be able to answer readily.

### **4 They have a large sphere of influence.**

To be effective at their job, your agent should have numerous connections with lenders, contractors, inspectors, other agents, specialists... the list goes on farther than you might expect because real estate requires a team. The more connections they have, the more prepared they are to recommend several high-quality options (and yes, they should give you options).

First, see if they are a member of a local Realtor® Association, as this is where the majority of agents build up their sphere of influence. You could also ask for a recommendation for a service and see how they respond. If you are the direct type, you might even ask how often they attend industry events, classes and meetings.

### **5 They go above and beyond in their education.**

All agents are required to meet a certain number of continuing education hours,

but many Realtors® make an extra effort. Advanced designations and certifications are a way for them to specialize in a specific area of real estate such as first-time homebuying, military relocation, foreclosures and many more. They are not obligated to earn advanced designations, so you know these Realtors® are serious about their careers.

Designations allow an agent to wear their specialties on their sleeve (and they probably have a string of letters behind their name), which makes it that much easier for you to find representation that suits your needs, but even if their designation doesn't directly pertain to you, it's good to know they are committed to a higher level of professionalism.

## **6 They have unwavering integrity.**

Admittedly, this is not quite as easy to probe for. Would anyone ever let on to a prospective client that they have a flexible moral compass? So what can you do to make sure you are being represented by an honest and ethical agent? The best way is to see if they adhere to the NAR code of ethics.

That is easy to find out because anyone with the Realtor® designation has to renew their oath with an ethics update every two years. That is certainly a strong indicator that they take their profession seriously and that they are current on the standards expected of them. Additionally, it shows they are part of a larger group that takes these matters very seriously, guaranteed.





## A GREAT REALTOR®

*makes all the difference*

You have several options when buying or selling property, and just like any choice, with enough research the best option reveals itself. In this case, you'll find the safest and smartest choice is to go through an agent, but ONLY if they are qualified and trustworthy. That point is crucial... so many people are licensed to sell real estate, but that's hardly enough.

**Choose an agent poorly and you risk exacerbating your headache; choose wisely, however, and you've buffed your investment with the best tool in the game: a great Realtor®!**

Remember, a Realtor® is not just anyone who practices real estate. This term refers to the top-class of real estate agents, those who are held to a higher standard of excellence through their membership with NAR. Above all, they are held to a very strict code of ethics. But the proof is in the pudding. Data shows us that Realtors® are not only less likely to engage in unethical behavior, but are also much higher performing on average. It's not enough to limit your search to Realtors®, you'll need to conduct further research to find the perfect agent. This will involve both online and face-to-face research.

If they meet these standards and click with you on a personal level, you've found a keeper! Congratulations on your new super-powered teammate!

**After that, relax and #ExperienceTheRealtorDifference.**