

What Makes a REALTOR® Different?

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Dave Robison

By Dave Robison

What is the difference between a REALTOR® and a regular old Joe with a real estate license? Can anyone you've asked from the public answer that question correctly? Better yet, can all of the REALTORS® in your office answer that question? I feel like it was indoctrinated in me through continuing education classes. So, from what I've been taught, a REALTOR® is this: **A REALTOR® is held to a higher standard because they're a member of NAR and must follow the Code of Ethics.**

Our MLS recently had [WAVgroup.com](#) do a survey on behalf of our members. Marilyn Wilson from the WAV Group spoke at a recent meeting about the research they discovered regarding our industry. First, she said that 99.9 percent of the public doesn't know the difference between a REALTOR® and a regular old Joe real estate licensed agent.

What does that say about our strategy for educating people about what makes REALTORS different? It says that it doesn't work. Our Code of Ethics is what we think makes us stand apart from other real estate agents. But if the public doesn't know... then it's not working.

So why is it not working? She exhorted that the level of service from one REALTOR® can be drastically different from another REALTOR®. This is actually the reason why I never considered joining a big brokerage... I didn't want to be in a group where my level of service was drastically higher than the guy/gal with the same brokerage name on his or her name-tag. There's no minimum level of service at the big brokerages, and the service level varies between agents.

As long as there isn't a minimum standard of service, no one is going to know what sets us as REALTORS® apart from licensees. The public doesn't even recognize us as a club. We will continue to remain commodities.

Do we want to be recognized differently? Is it a benefit to be viewed differently? With all of the [REThinking](#) this year, it seems to me there could be a good opportunity for REALTORS® to figure out what they want to happen on this topic. I'll admit, I'm not really sure what [REThink](#) is thinking about. Most the people I talk to are confused about it as well. But as an association, if the very reason why we are different isn't working, maybe we need to adjust our vision on what we are trying to achieve that makes us different?

How would you adjust it?

Dave Robison, known as "Utah Dave," is a broker/owner of Robison & Company Real Estate.
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