# REALTOR Difference – Blog Entry

ARA would like to thank Dan Wilhelm for his contribution to the REALTOR® Difference Campaign. Please use the article below to make your social network aware of the difference between a REALTOR® and an agent.

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**Should your real estate agent be a real estate professional?**

A seemingly logical question might be, aren’t all real estate licensees professionals? One would hope so, but how does one distinguish this? A dictionary definition would likely say that professionals of any stripe are those that make a living in a particular trade. In that sense, any licensee actually working in the trade could be considered a professional. But can you afford to leave it at that?

By a more critical standard, real estate professionals are those that truly commit themselves to their trade. Not only do they strive to make a living out of the trade, they spend extra effort assuring competency in the work they do. They find themselves among a fellowship of like-minded people that take exceptional pride in their work. And there are plenty of statistics available that indicate that REALTORS© are far more productive, better servants.

So for a consumer to determine if their prospective agent is a professional, they might begin by asking if the agent is a REALTOR©. REALTORS© are licensed tradesmen that have committed to serve and be bound under a professional code of ethics. Licensees that do not choose to be REALTORS©, choose not to be bound by those high ideals—although surely there are some among the uninitiated that philosophically subscribe to the professional standards of the REALTOR©, they just don’t want to officially commit, for some reason.

Maybe that’s the question to ask. Why is a licensee not a REALTOR©? It’s a fair question, and one that consumers might want to ask, because if consumers become unhappy with the licensee’s work, they have a singular, logical recourse for remedy—through the judicial process, ideally via the office of the state’s real estate commissioner. On the other hand, REALTORS© have a formalized process for addressing grievances though state associations and local boards. At the associations and boards, a consumer may choose to mediate or arbitrate the matter. In such cases, a panel of REALTOR© professionals may be appointed to judge the behavior of the REALTOR© in question, and decide whether that person should be allowed to continue serving in the brotherhood. Then, if the consumer remains unsatisfied that sufficient atonement has been achieved, there is always the court system to fall back on.

Finally, please don't forget to thank a REALTOR©, if you know one, because REALTORS© are your advocate in government.  The fellowship they comprise represents the most influential voice in the entire country committed to protecting individual property rights for homeowners—from the White House all the way down to the local municipality. REALTORS© are the consummate professional.

Just remember that not all real estate licensees are REALTORS©, and there is a difference. So ask the question. Are you a REALTOR? And if you suspect a devious answer, asks to see a membership card. There really is such a thing.