

The Word 'Realtor' Is Misused as Much as 'Kleenex,' Including by Realtors

The National Association of Realtors® (NAR) spends millions of our dues dollars on educational ads urging consumers to "make sure your agent is a Realtor," but it's clear to me that it hasn't sunk in with the general public, which continues to use "Realtor" as a synonym for "real estate agent — as do many Realtors!

"Realtor," like "Kleenex," is a brand name — a trademark — and, just as not all facial tissues are Kleenex tissues, not all real estate agents are Realtors.

It costs about \$500 per year for a licensed real estate agent to join his or her local Realtor association, which also makes the agent a member of the state and national associations. As dues increase, more and more agents are wondering whether it's worth paying those dues when they could save that money and still be allowed to

join the MLS. Our MLS, Metrolist, unlike some MLS's around the country, does not require an agent to be a Realtor in order to be a member of the MLS.

Although I don't consider it a smart move, each year more and more Realtors are dropping their Realtor association membership and joining non-Realtor companies such as Home Real Estate Colorado LLC and Brokers Guild Classic. (If I were a Realtor with Home Real Estate or Brokers Guild Cherry Creek, I think I would be upset that my Realtor status was being compromised in the minds of the public by having these like-named firms.) As far as I know, no one at the Realtor associations or NAR is tracking how many ex-Realtors quit the business or merely quit being Realtors. When I was on the board of the local Realtor associa-

tion, I suggested that the organization do exit interviews to answer this question. I volunteered to do it myself, but simply never had the time to devote to that task.

As NAR and the local Realtor associations attempt to educate the general public that "Realtor" is a trademark and should be capitalized (like Kleenex), I'm sure it must be frustrating for NAR to see Realtors themselves not capitalizing the term as well as using it as a synonym for "real estate agent."

Ann Turner, the executive director of the Denver Metro Association of Realtors, taught me several years ago that one should only use the term "Realtor" when it can be replaced with "member of the National Association of Realtors" without changing the sentence's meaning. That explanation has served me well, and if you look at my previous columns, you'll notice that I rarely even use the word Realtor.

This Week's Featured New Listing

Every Now & Then, I Get to List a Perfect Home

I love my sellers at 690 Canyon Point Cir. in the Village at Mountain Ridge! They contacted me months ago about downsizing and selling their home, but they didn't want to put it on the market while there was anything to fix. Everything I suggested, they took to heart and acted on — and more. They replaced light fixtures, tiled bathroom floors, replaced any double-pane window that showed the least hint of fogging, repainted rooms in neutral tones, replaced deteriorated wood in the full-width deck, and this week had the exterior painted. Well, finally, the home is perfect, and showings begin with our first open house this Sat., 1-4pm.



REAL ESTATE TODAY



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