

Customer OR Client

Explore the differences between customers and clients in this clarifying document.



What are Customers?

1. Customer means a party to a real estate transaction who receives information, services, or benefits but has no contractual relationship with the REALTOR® or the REALTORS®' brokerage.
2. A person who receives only statutory duties from the brokerage/agent as described by your state. Typically, these include:
 - **honesty**
 - **accounting**
 - **reasonable skill and care**
 - **disclose material facts**
3. With the exception concerning material facts, Agents cannot provide advice or counsel to customers if doing so would cause the Agent to breach their fiduciary duties to their client. Agents may, however, provide information regarding third parties such as lenders, inspectors, surveyors and other similar information. Agents may also provide market information or other information from a property listing service or public records.



What are Clients?

1. The relationship formed between the agent and the client is called a fiduciary relationship.
2. A real estate agent must safeguard the client's interests by protecting them through:
 - **obedience**
 - **loyalty**
 - **disclosure**
 - **confidentiality**
 - **accountability**
 - **reasonable skill & care**

and all other duties provided in Ohio law unless waived by the client.

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Buyer is a Customer	Buyer is a Client
"I represent the seller"	"I represent the buyer"
Complete loyalty to Seller's needs	Complete loyalty to Buyer's needs
Obligated to relay all information received from the buyer to the seller	Confidentiality - Buyer can speak freely
Must provide material facts but cannot offer advice or opinion regarding the property	Advice and opinion along with material facts; can educate the buyer
No price counseling (Cannot provide a CMA unless it supports seller's price)	Provide price counseling and a CMA
Suggestions made regarding financing or any other terms must benefit the seller	Suggestions will be made in the buyer/client's best interest
Negotiate on behalf of the seller	Prepare offer and negotiate on behalf of the buyer
Will work to close the transaction to satisfy the seller	Will work to close the transaction to satisfy the buyer

Ohio REALTORS® advocates for property rights, representing ethical real estate professionals statewide. With services like legislative advocacy, legal, and professional standards, it evolves to meet the needs of REALTORS® and property owners. Learn more at: www.ohiorealtors.org

