
Dealer response saves "SuperSale"

Kia Kelowna's heavily advertised "massive inventory liquidation" was saved from public embarrassment only as a result of quick action to correct several violations of motor dealer regulations. Had this not been done, MDC would have shut down the sale. While conducted on dealer property, the promotion had the style of off-site sales blitzes that are presently causing so much concern province-wide.

Rules for off-site sales

Off-site sales have become a principal MDC focus, the source of complaints, controversy and frequent improper behaviour. Some dealers seem to think that selling at a remote location, using sales blitz techniques (often with imported high-pressure sales teams) does not require any additional fees or licensing.

Please note:

- A motor dealer's licence is valid only at the designated location as noted on the motor dealer licence certificate. A licensed dealer may apply to the MDC for permission to participate in an "off-site sale" event such as a consumer show, exhibition or special sale.
- Any dealer participating in an "off-site sale" event is required to request and receive a special permit for their participation from the MDC prior to attending the event. Contact the MDC office for information about fees and regulations.
- All salespersons working at the event must be licensed in British Columbia by MDC and all rules regarding posting of prices, advertising and other regulations applicable at the dealership, apply off-site as well.

The sale was advertised from February 7-11 inclusive, and in full swing when the MDC investigator arrived early in the morning of Friday, February 10. Balloons were tied to many of the new cars - bearing manufacturer's stickers - lined along a boulevard fronting Highway 97N. But none of the 43 "sale" vehicles in the regular display area were properly priced. Scattered through the dealership were 11 folding banquet tables, with forms titled "Supersale" and "Supersale Registration Survey." The latter was simply a credit authorization, alongside a bank's loan application form.

The name "J&W Automotive Consulting Inc." was on some of the forms, an outside consultant that had been retained for the sale. None of the representatives of the consulting firm could demonstrate that they were properly licensed in B.C. Other irregularities were noted, such as inaccurate pricing information.

Once Kia Kelowna management was confronted about these irregularities, the dealer and the consultant were co-operative in addressing problems. All unlicensed people left and all vehicles were properly priced. Three violation tickets were handed out and the dealer principal was advised that these were serious matters. When these were corrected, the sale proceeded.

Far better it would have been had everything been done right from the outset.