



Professional Development a Priority

One year after bringing professional development efforts "in house," the VSA can report that ending the historic partnership with the community colleges and restructuring staffing at the VSA to make professional development a priority has been a success. Input from dealers, salespeople, program facilitators, consumer organizations, government, VSA staff and Directors helped create a much more relevant and practical Salesperson Certification Course. And now, the "Learning Division" is ready to pilot the long-planned recertification course for those who participated in the original course prior to significant changes in legislation, including the creation of the Motor Dealer Council (MDC), now the VSA, and the introduction of the Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act.

"The new course focuses heavily on legal behaviour and process for the salesperson with a view toward providing consumers with good reason to have confidence in a licensed salesperson. Participants soon realize that retail vehicle selling in BC is changing for the better – a very good thing for both dealerships and consumers."

- Glen Ringdal, President and CEO, NCDA.

The redesigned Salesperson Certification Course

38 classes to date, 900 new salespeople

The VSA's redesigned Salesperson Certification Course continues to receive positive evaluations from new salespeople. Feedback from nearly 900 students who participated in 38 class sessions in 11 different cities province-wide has been uniformly positive. Successful students have included 30 VSA staff members, three members of the VSA Board of Directors and representatives from the Automotive Retailers and the New Car Dealers Associations.

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Pilot Project Announced: Salesperson Recertification Course"

The second project of the "Learning Division" is the development of the long-planned industry refresher course. Everyone who had voluntarily taken the Salesperson Certification Course before it became mandatory in 2004, will soon need to be recertified.

Curriculum development for the Salesperson Recertification Course is well underway and a pilot project has classes scheduled for March, April and May. The classroom format will be similar to the redesigned basic certification course, but the content will be based entirely on actual cases for maximum relevance and challenge. It is likely that 90 per cent of the

course time will be spent reviewing and applying the legislation applicable to the motor vehicle sales industry.

The first pilot locations will be in Burnaby and Nanaimo. You can be a part of finalizing the course design and content - particularly if you are one of the 2,400 of the 4,000 who took the voluntary course before 2004 who are still in the industry.

Please phone Doug Longhurst at 604-293-3536. Those who participate in the pilot project will receive a 50 per cent discount off the final expected course fee and full recertification credit.

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Individual participant comments about the course help to explain the favourable response. Comments from course participants indicate that the course is:

- **Highly relevant:** Real life case studies, including video examples keep the course lively and easy to apply to the work environment.
- **Practical:** Course sessions review the Motor Dealer Act and the Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act, the provincial legislation with the most direct impact on the sale of motor vehicles in BC. Over 80% of the course time is devoted directly to legislation review and discussion.
- **Challenging:** The course also covers the Sale of Goods Act and Contract Law in detail, recognizing that salespeople, even those with little industry experience, have the ability to understand complex legal concepts and apply them to sales transactions.
- **Highly interactive:** Course content is tackled in small group activities, allowing every participant to add to the learning in their group and to the knowledge of the other course participants.
- **Designed for success:** The interactive format, carefully focused subjects and the tailored resource binder all serve to reinforce the required legislative knowledge, and help even the reluctant participant to succeed. One measurable result is that the failure rate has dropped with the new format, but the comprehension of critical legislative knowledge has increased.

Important reminders

- An application for a salesperson licence must be received prior to registration for the Salesperson Certification Course. The current policy of awarding conditional salesperson licences for 90 days, a period during which the compulsory Salesperson Certification Course must be completed, will soon be shortened to 45 days.
- A conditional licence will no longer be valid if a salesperson fails the course (so pre-course preparation, mentoring and English language proficiency are encouraged).