



Salesperson Advisory Committee – April 9, 2008

Summary Report

The VSA Board of Directors and Management established Advisory Committees to represent unique industry segments and to effectively carry out its mandate. The purpose of the advisory committees is to provide the VSA Board and management with ongoing advice, commentary on issues and recommendations on the Authority's activities.

The first Salesperson Advisory Committee meeting was held April 9, 2008, at the VSA office with a VSA Board member acting as Chair, and the VSA President/Registrar and senior management in attendance.

The committee has seven members, selected through a public process conducted by management, with province-wide representation as a goal. Committee members represent a cross-section of their industry segment through their individual industry backgrounds, skills and experience, gender, type of dealership and interest in serving.

Initial appointments to the committee are for a one-year term. Following the first year, three committee members will be asked to serve a three-year term, two members will be asked to serve a two-year term and two members will be asked to serve a one-year term. Committee members who serve less than a three-year term will be eligible to serve one additional term.

Salesperson Advisory Committee members are:

Peter Burrell	Morrey Nissan	Surrey
Ken Charnetski	Brown Brothers Ford Lincoln	Vancouver
Colleen Ferrante	Peace Country Toyota	Dawson Creek
Grant Gregson	Parker's Chrysler Dodge Jeep	Summerland
Guy Moody	Capilano Volkswagen	West Vancouver
Jeff Polo	Deer Lake Chrysler	Burnaby
David Thompson	Cranbrook Dodge	Cranbrook

At the first meeting, members of the committee enumerated a list of issues they felt needed to be understood and addressed by the VSA in order to make the Authority more successful.

Following the meeting, an outline of issues discussed with their recommendations and decisions, were recorded in the meeting minutes (a summary of the discussion).

Following approval of the minutes by the members of the committee, a report was prepared and circulated to the VSA Board of Directors. The committee Chair (VSA Board Member John Ratel) made a verbal report to the Board of Directors at their May 30, 2008, meeting.

The content of the report follows. It is a précis of the principal issues and concerns raised by the committee members. The remarks in *italics* that follow each issue reflect actions taken or being actively considered by management.

Summary of Issues and VSA response - Salesperson Advisory Committee:

Level II Certification Course

- Questioned that this is required so soon after initial licensing.

Management has distributed a Bulletin which sets out in clear detail the timing of this advanced level programme for all current licensees. (Attach the link)

Communication

- Some expressed concern that communication by the VSA with salespeople was not as effective as it could be, or not received at all. Where possible personal e-mail addresses should be used to ensure receipt and readership of bulletins.

Management will take steps to improve the collection of salesperson e-mail addresses to supplement or replace dealership emails supplied by all salespeople

Hearing decisions and compliance orders

- Committee members strongly favored greater publicity of hearing decisions and compliance actions to help promote improved ethics within the industry.

Management is currently enhancing our web site information in this regard.

Public awareness of the VSA

- The committee recommended more publicity for the VSA, its purpose and activities. They applauded the recent media advertisements, but expressed the hope that in future these advertisements would promote buying from licensed salespersons.

Management assured the committee that more would be done next year in advertising to the public

Vehicle damage declarations

- Committee members asked the VSA to lobby for a higher damage declaration level in sales contracts.

Management explained the opposition consumer groups have for this issue, but assured the committee the question would be raised again at the next meeting of the Legislation Review Committee.

VSA course fees and licence fees

- This was committee members greatest concern. The angst over fees paid by salespersons to the VSA was universal and most strongly expressed by those employed in sales; it is perhaps the prime cause of an often negative attitude towards the VSA expressed by salespeople.
- There were appeals for the VSA to reduce the financial burden being borne by sales personnel, either by shifting the emphasis onto dealers or by establishing a consumer-pay system that could fund some VSA activities; subsidize the cost of licensing, and lower enrolment fees for professional development programmes.

Management assured committee members it was aware of this issue and that some form of consumer-pay system associated with vehicle purchase was being discussed. A consumer-pay system would require government approval which may or may not be easily obtained.

Competition and misleading advertising

- Committee members expressed concern at the misleading advertising present in the industry, and urged the VSA to do more to end this practice.

The VSA now has a full-time compliance officer to review advertising, issuing warning letters and promptly take other actions. In addition to the advertising content in the Level II course, the VSA will continue to hold workshops on advertising rules and regulations.

Curbing

- The issue of ‘curbers’ was discussed at some length with some committee members hoping the VSA would move more aggressively in this area.

Management detailed the effort that had been undertaken to close down several prime non-licensed ‘dealers’ but cited the frustration of little support from police or the Crown in prosecuting these offenders.

Course length and time from work

- The committee suggested that ‘on-line’ training programmes be developed

Management advised that on-line training was under consideration

VSA benefits

Committee members questioned the benefit the VSA afforded them as front line salespeople.

The President explained that the value of a licence is largely determined by the conduct of the people who hold it. The goal is a respected industry serving an informed and confident public. The VSA will continue to do all it can to help motor vehicle salespeople become more professional, and, at the end of the day, it is the people in the industry who will create value, not the VSA.

Committee members were asked what each of them is doing to help the industry’s reputation. Were they advising consumers that they were licensed? Are they explaining what it means to be licensed? Are they abiding by the legal and ethical expectations of the industry?

The VSA was created by industry to help the industry become more professional. It is up to industry members to use this opportunity to earn the respect of the public.