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Dynamic action by AutoCanada

Co-operation pays dividends

An impressive example of what can be achieved through co-operation started as a series of consumer complaints to the VSA about a Victoria dealership that is part of the AutoCanada group. Rather than focus on one dealership and simply satisfying specific consumers, AutoCanada's Chief Executive Officer, Pat Priestner, and Tom Orysiuk, Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer, conducted a national internal review of their procedures.

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A checklist every dealer should note:

AutoCanada's internal systems review led to multiple issues and changes for the group's B.C. dealers. The changes are as follows:

1. On top of the VSA's required training and any manufacturer training, AutoCanada will provide sensitivity training to all salespeople to assure they understand the special needs of some consumers.
2. Instigate a consistent process to ensure all used vehicles for sale are inspected for safety, damage, out-of-province and other declarations.
3. Establish fair and appropriate gross-up policies.
4. Expand the current code of conduct and require employees to certify compliance with that code on a quarterly basis.
5. All B.C. dealerships are to obtain prior head office approval for all special advertising.
6. Certain head office staff will take the VSA Salesperson Certification course to better understand the requirements of selling motor vehicles in B.C.
7. Create a simplified disclosure statement to ensure that a consumer is fully aware of all charges related to the purchase of a motor vehicle and the required disclosure statement. A consumer who does not

understand these disclosures will have an opportunity to ask someone they know for assistance. The consumer will sign the disclosure statement only when both are satisfied the consumer is fully aware of the disclosures.

8. There will be more frequent individual dealer inspections by senior personnel of AutoCanada.
9. Any complaints involving B.C. dealerships are to be brought to the attention of the newly created compliance position.
10. Hire a "compliance officer" to oversee compliance with the regulations in the provinces in which AutoCanada operates. Holly Childs, the former VSA Compliance Officer for the Victoria region, resigned her position with the VSA and joined AutoCanada in Edmonton at the end of October.

"Naturally, we are sorry to lose Holly from our Compliance team, but wish her well in her new position and applaud AutoCanada for its initiative," Christman said. "They have acquired a known person of trust and integrity whom the VSA can work with in the future."

The Deputy Registrar added: "The VSA is hopeful we have established a means to obtain voluntary compliance with these (groups of) dealers in a co-operative rather than a confrontational manner, if future issues arise."

... "Co-operation" ...continued from Page 1.

They personally met on several occasions with each consumer affected and resolved all their monetary concerns. AutoCanada Inc. is Canada's largest multi-location and first publicly-traded franchise automobile dealership group, with 23 locations in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

The VSA's Deputy Registrar, Ian Christman, pointed out that this case demonstrates the difficulties faced by inter-provincial dealer groups who must abide by different laws in different provinces. "This became an outstanding collaborative effort between AutoCanada and the VSA," he said.

AutoCanada's Orysiuk added: "As an interprovincial group of dealers we are always looking to improve our business practices. With our increased head office focus on compliance we believe that we have added a further tool to support our dealers which will allow us to improve customer loyalty to our dealerships and the Brands that they represent."