

# SanDiego **DEALER**

## NEW CAR DEALERS ASSOCIATION

### San Diego County



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SAN DIEGO COUNTY

## CALIFORNIA SALES TRAINING ACADEMY IS A LONG-TERM SUCCESS



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In 1994, a group of forward-thinking dealer members of the New Car Dealers Association San Diego County (NCDA) realized that they could all benefit from a consolidated salesperson recruitment and training program rather than pursuing solutions on their own. As a result, the California Sales Training Academy (CSTA) was created to recruit, train and assist in placing qualified sales personnel in San Diego County dealerships. After more than 20 years and several thousand graduates, the program has been an unqualified success.

“As I said after our first year, we are extremely pleased with the success of our innovative sales training program. It remains a benchmark within our industry,” says Dean Mansfield, president of the NCDA. “Other dealer associations have modeled their programs after ours to capture the success we’ve seen here in San Diego.” Over the past three years, the CSTA has seen a 45 percent increase in the number of graduates, helping San Diego dealers achieve record new vehicle sales.

For the past five years the California Sales Training Academy has been taught and shaped by Bob Heintz, and his passion for creating qualified sales professionals has made him a favorite of students who complete the course. Bob draws from his life-long career in the automobile industry, which began at a family dealership while he was still in college. After nearly a decade in a field position for Pontiac, Bob returned to the retail business in Minnesota with a Cadillac, Pontiac and Buick store of his own.

In 1987, Bob moved to San Diego where he worked as a general manager for three dealer groups, eventually retiring from Hoehn Motors in 2009.

With a mission of elevating the professionalism in retail automotive sales, the California Sales Training Academy teaches more than just how to close a sale. The curriculum places an emphasis on product knowledge, ethical behavior and customer service. During the four-day course, students participate in role-playing exercises and even mystery shop Academy-partner dealerships to get a real-world look at the process. At the conclusion of the course, students have the knowledge to present and sell a car professionally, create referral business and develop a prospect base. Additionally, graduates receive a certificate of completion and job placement assistance among the many dealer partners that support the CSTA.

The four-day class is free of charge to San Diego County residents, and students are recruited through a multi-channel marketing effort, which includes digital advertising, career fairs and social media. In addition, San Diego dealers that support the program, which includes nearly half of all NCDA members, send their recently or just-hired sales recruits to the CSTA for training.

“Having held upper management positions for dealerships in San Diego County over the past 25 years, I have a long history with the California



Sales Training Academy," says Eddie Binder, general manager of Weseloh Chevrolet & Kia Carlsbad. "I have always found their course to be very well received by students, and we not only utilize their graduate list to prospect for new sales consultants, but we also send every new sales hire that has no or minimal auto sales experience to the course prior to them ever speaking to a customer at the dealership."

With a history that spans more than two decades, the California Sales Training Academy has launched many successful long-term careers in automotive retail. Among those who have achieved great success is Mike Shackelford, general manager and partner at North County Kia. As Mike puts it: "In December 2007 I was in between careers, and at age 34, that's a scary thing. As I was applying for sales jobs, I was encouraged to go down to a 'free class' at the NCDCA so that I could learn the basics of the car business. The information that I learned while at the academy was invaluable to my career. Within the first 12 months after going through the training provided by the California Sales Training Academy, I was the top salesperson not only in my dealership, but also within the entire group of dealerships for which I worked."

"Because of that training, I was able to move into Sales Management within 14 months, and eventually became the general sales manager, and now, the general manager and partner at North County Kia. I consider the training that I received at the CSTA some of the most valuable information that I ever learned in this business. I often visit as a guest speaker to current classes, and I regularly send my 'green peas' down to be trained by Bob Heintz and the California Sales Training Academy."

Continuing education has also been a part of the CSTA history, and just this year an Internet Sales Training course has been added to the curriculum. This more advanced half-day digital success workshop covers a variety of topics useful to salespeople, BDC reps, internet sales managers, sales managers and anyone involved in the digital sales process. The course is intended to provide all of the tools and resources a store needs to achieve ultimate digital success

For dealers interested in joining the California Sales Training Academy as a partner, please contact the NCDCA at 858-550-0080. 

