

Certified Door Dealer Consultant

Getting to Know the Door and Access Systems Dealer



Acknowledgements

Many dedicated individuals have played a role in the development of this study guide and the Certified Door Dealer Consultant program. Numerous organizations have generously contributed the talents of their human resources, which have been essential to the completion of this important professional credential. We deeply appreciate everyone who played a role.

The Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation wishes to especially recognize the organizations and industry professionals who have made the completion of this project a priority in their industry objectives and professional careers:

Sponsoring Organizations

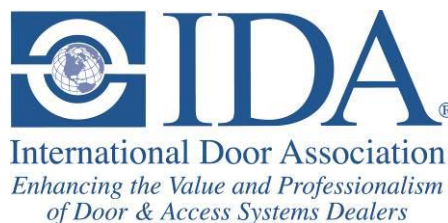
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Section One

Getting to Know the Door and Access Systems Dealer

Introduction

It would be inappropriate to pigeon hole all door dealers into one singular definition; however, there are some consistencies among those who sell and install door and access systems to the general public. These similarities can be used to help a manufacturer's sales representative gain an appreciation for this group of business owners.

Most door dealers are small businesses. Even the largest independent door dealers are categorized as *small businesses* in comparison with other corporations that operate on a national or global level. Many owners of retail door companies entered the industry as installers, learned a viable trade and at some point, went into business for themselves. Typically, this type of door company owner has a strong technical background and possesses a great deal of expertise on installation methods and products, and many of them have little or no formal business management training.

One of the most compelling advantages to this type of dealer is a strong work ethic. An individual who has built a company from scratch into a competitive and successful business should be viewed as having the best form of education, real life experience. Other common characteristics among self-starting dealers are a strong sense of pride in customer service, individual responsibility and company image.

Another common type of door dealer is the multiple-generation, family-owned company. These types of businesses are often two or more generations old. It is not uncommon to

find husband-wife, father-son, brother-sister and other family relationships acting together as the management team. In these companies, it is ordinary to find one or more of the family members handling the financial and business management responsibilities while the other(s) oversee field operations.

There is generally little difference, and often much overlapping, among the characteristics of the multiple-generation family-owned business and the type described previously. In any type of professional, community-oriented door company, there is a personal reputation awareness that pervades the company. Deeply rooted in their communities, these door dealers recognize that their businesses are an extension of themselves, and they depend on their image in the marketplace for short-term and long-term success.

In the door and access systems industry, size really doesn't matter in most cases. A one-person, one-truck operation may be the precedent to a market dominating enterprise. The term *tailgaters* are a frequently spoken pejorative that established dealers use to describe competitors who go into business for themselves. Such individuals are plentiful in the door industry, and some can create problems within any given market. However, since many well-established, professional installing door companies started in this same manner, the sole proprietor should never be discounted. Many, if not most, independent door and access systems dealers operating today began, at some point, as one-person operations. Those who see themselves as professionals and offer customers quality products, expert installation and service, and stand behind their work, can compete as

effectively as their largest competitor in many cases.

Another type of door dealer that is growing in scope is the investor-initiated company. This industry has become attractive to many business investors and individuals possessing college degrees in business administration. Companies founded by parent corporations or by entrepreneurs have become successful players in the door and access systems market, and there is no reason to anticipate there will not be more of this type of activity in the future. Many of the suppliers and manufacturers of industry products are attempting vertical integration and are actively buying up door dealers.

One generalization that can legitimately be made about door dealers is that few *pencil pushers* exist in the dealer segment of the industry. Most door dealers have no non-essential personnel. Margins are typically tight and competition is ever present and always expanding. Even with family-owned and operated door companies, every family member involved with the company plays an essential role.

Competitive Forces

Competition is good. Competition is the heart and soul of the free enterprise system. That does not mean it is always welcomed by those in its path.

Nothing contained herein should be construed to suggest that competition in any legitimate form cannot be useful in a market for existing door dealers. Instead, dealers can benefit and grow by understanding competitive forces and how to leverage those pressures in a positive manner.

Sales representatives should be prepared to discuss competitive issues with dealers, some of whom will bear resentment that a manufacturer will sell to a direct competitor

whether that competitor is another independent door dealer or some other form of retailer, wholesaler or franchisee. Sales representatives need to be aware of anti-trust laws and must fully comply with them.

This curriculum cannot address specific issues related to distribution methods. Business decisions are made daily by manufacturers, distributors and retailers that all act in their own best self-interests as they perceive them. However, there are some principles that manufacturer representatives should adhere to in serving the dealer segment of their markets:

- Education will prevail over vacant persuasion. Having the ability to candidly and clearly explain competitive issues to dealers, with an accompanying means of responding pro-actively to the situation can result in growth and increased profitability for both the manufacturer and the dealer. Putting a vague or meaningless spin on a condition of the manufacturer's creation will bring no confidence to the dealer customer.
- Information beats admonition. It is a mistake to chastise a dealer for not understanding that a manufacturer must meet goals, sales quotas, market share, etc., instead of explaining that multiple distribution channels – if that's the issue – is essential to maintaining pricing levels, brand recognition and competitiveness in the market. Dealers are smart business people and can respond responsibly when they have the facts.
- Pre-emptive strikes can prevent wars. When possible, if a competitive issue is approaching that will impact a dealer directly, the manufacturer sales representative should prepare that dealer for the event. This is not to say that dealers should be given proprietary information before its date of release, but when company policy permits, the dealer should get a heads-up. Failure to do so can be seen as a betrayal by the dealer, and certainly can have a negative impact

on the dealer's relationship with the manufacturer's representative.

- Helping a dealer helps the sales representative. Dealers are generally open to good ideas about how to sell smarter, and most have genuine need for training on selling quality, higher end, and more profitable products. Use sales expertise to help dealers move these higher end products and explore new methods of opening new markets, and both sides will win.

Door dealers understand and accept competition as part of the system in which they work. Most will readily acknowledge they approve of competition when it is based on a level of quality they consider equal to their own. Competition is not to be feared in and of itself, but most professional dealers resent less qualified competition being given equality in the marketplace by their own suppliers.

This is an area where a manufacturer's representative can serve his or her own company's interests while providing a high level of guidance to the dealer. Giving the dealer quality advice, particularly in the areas of marketing and service, can create a bond between the dealer and the manufacturer sales representative, and make winners of both, despite the competitive issues that will always exist. Sales representatives who cover large territories may be able to share successful ideas from other dealers that are separated by distance and hence are not direct competitors.

Selling to and Through the Door Dealer

The goal of a professional salesperson is to sell. This goal can be achieved in a variety of ways. The variety of ways is determined by the number of professional salespersons in the marketplace. The successful sales professional performs a basic task better than anyone else. They know their customer and they have built a strong relationship with them. To be successful

that relationship must be based on shared goals and mutual trust. Selling is a mutually beneficial transaction done *with* someone and not *to* someone. People will buy from *friends*, but a distinction must be made that this does not mean they buy merely for that reason. A friend, in this context, is someone who supports the dealer and genuinely seeks to help that customer succeed in the marketplace. It is irrelevant whether there is a social component to this relationship. Dealers look to make *friends* in the industry to help them grow, solve difficult problems when necessary, and whom they know they can trust. This is often referred to as a consultive sales approach.

Get to know your customer. A professional salesperson will never know as much as possible about their customer; however, there are certain things that must be known. On the following page is a check list of information. Use this list to keep track of important information that will help to establish and maintain a professional relationship between the sales professional and their customer.

While this list is not totally comprehensive, it will provide enough information about your customer to begin to build a successful long-lasting relationship. It will take some time to gather all of this information; during meetings and telephone conversations take reliable notes in order to complete your list and to record anything else that would help you to build this relationship. Do not send this list to the customer and ask them to complete it; that would be equivalent to ask your customer to do your work. Remember, friends should know this information about each other. It will take several meetings and telephone calls to complete your list.

Keep this list updated. If a change occurs in the information on the list, make sure and update the information immediately. Nothing would be more embarrassing than to call a customer's second wife by the name of his first wife. Remember friends should not make this mistake.

Door Dealer Profile

1. Name _____ Nickname _____
2. Title _____
3. Business Name _____
4. Business Address _____
5. Business Telephone _____ Fax _____
6. Cell Phone _____ E-mail _____
7. Date of Birth _____ Hometown _____
8. Name of person answering the telephone _____
9. Home Address _____
10. Spouses Name _____ Spouse Date of Birth _____
11. Children (if applicable) _____
12. Educational Background _____
13. Hobbies / Family Interests _____
14. Years with Company _____ Years Company in Business _____
15. Favorite Lunch Location _____ Dinner Location _____
16. Special Recognition or Offices Held _____
17. Long-term Business Goal _____
18. Who else in your company should know this person as well as you do? _____
19. Additional Notes and Observations _____

Now what to do with this information?

1. Send a birthday card. Sign the card yourself.
2. Call them on their birthday. Invite them to lunch.
3. Search the internet for information on their hometown prior to a phone call or visit.
4. Always ask about the spouse and family.

5. Look for common areas of interest – hobbies, sports, music, food, etc. This list could go on and on. The more a sales professional knows about their customer, the more comfortable the relationship will become. The more comfortable the relationship, the more they will seek advice and aid from their sales professional in their business decision making process. Once the relationship has reached this level, then the parties have entered the successful win – win

atmosphere. In this arena, both parties should feel the mutually beneficial aspects of the relationship. The sales professional has now achieved a very important step in their plan – getting to know their customer.

As discussed earlier, the concept of mutual-respect is of great importance in establishing a successful business relationship. One of the most important areas of mutual-respect is in time management. The customer's time is very valuable. As a professional salesperson it is your responsibility to utilize the time with the customer. To maximize the time with the customer, keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. Have a scheduled meeting time. Plan the meeting in advance and confirm the meeting time and place prior to the meeting day. Customers typically do not like the salesperson that drops in to visit. Do everything in your power to keep the appointment on time. There are times when circumstances are beyond your control. When these situations arise, notify the customer as soon as possible in order to reschedule and allow the customer to rearrange their day.
2. Have an agenda. Send correspondence to the customer prior to the meeting asking for input for the agenda. The customer will have issues that will need to be discussed. The sales professional will also have issues to discuss. An agenda lets everyone know what the meeting will cover and helps to keep the meeting on track in terms of time management.
3. Be a good listener. The customer will provide insight into areas of their business that are impacted by the products and services provided by the company you represent. The sales professional should listen for both positive and negative comments made by the customer. Positive comments

should be noted so they can be easily recalled to offset buying objections by the customer. Negative comments should be seen as an opportunity to resolve an obvious problem that the customer has with their supplier. These issues need to be resolved immediately. Do not allow this issue to grow into something that could jeopardize the relationship between the customer and supplier.

4. Take copious and detailed notes; however, ask permission before starting. Sales professionals need to be able to take good notes during any meeting with a customer. There will be times when the sales professional will need to refresh their memory on certain aspects of a meeting or conversation that was held with a customer. Well-kept notes will help to eliminate any miscommunication and or misunderstanding between the customer and supplier. It is acceptable to readback your notes to the customer to ensure that you have heard exactly what your customer was communicating to you.
5. Many sales professionals use a tool called a "call report". A call report is a document that may include the meeting agenda, any notes that were taken, and any other pertinent information regarding the visit with the customer. The call report allows the sales professional the instrument in which to communicate with other members of their organization. The call report would include both positive and negative issues that were discovered during the visit with the customer. The call report brings those issues into the organization and gives the opportunity for those issues to be addressed by the organization.
6. Following-up with the customer after a meeting is very important. This should be done within a couple of days following the meeting. The customer

should be thanked for the time spent with the sales professional. Remember, time is money. Also, any issues that needed to be resolved should also be addressed at this time. If the customer feels their issues fell on deaf ears, they will be reluctant to share information in the future. They will also perceive that the sales representative doesn't care what they have to say. The trust of a customer is something the sales professional can never afford to lose.

7. Always have the next meeting scheduled. Even if the date is tentative, this keeps the relationship between

customer and sales professional moving in the right direction. Planning the next meeting is a good time management tool.

As you go through this material it will be evident that door dealers must wear a series of hats and have a working knowledge of a variety of business, management and labor disciplines.

Section Two

Overview of Industry Organizations

Industry Organizations

Door & Access Systems Manufacturers Association (DASMA) is North America's leading trade association of manufacturers of garage doors, rolling doors, high performance doors, garage door operators, vehicular gate operators and access control products. Formed in 1996, DASMA member companies manufacture products sold in the United States, Canada and more than 70 other countries worldwide. DASMA members produce more than 95 percent of the U. S. market for the door and access systems industry.



www.dasma.com

International Door Association (IDA) is the industry's authoritative voice to dealers, and was formed in 1995 with the consolidation of the Door & Operator Dealers Association and the Far West Garage Door Association. IDA is the industry network for professional door and operator dealers and installers, along with their suppliers. While IDA represents the entire door and operator industry by promoting the use of professional dealers and installers, it is a membership driven association, relying on the input and feedback of its members to create and deliver programs of value.



www.doors.org

IDA Affiliate Organizations

The International Door Association maintains an alliance with other door systems industry



organizations, known as IDA Affiliates. These organizations are independent associations involved in a variety of educational, training and social activities. Many companies maintain membership in more than one of these associations, as well as with IDA. Each group has its own board of directors and annual activities plan. The IDA Affiliates are:

- Australian Garage Door Association
- California Operator and Door Association
- Canadian Door Institute
- Central States Door Dealers Association (U. S. Midwest)
- Florida Operator and Door Association
- Garage Door Association of Arizona
- Indiana Garage Door and Operator Association
- Michigan Door and Operator Dealers Association
- Northeast Garage Door Association
 - Northwest Door & Operator Association (Pacific Northwest)
 - Professional Door Association of New England

IDA also maintains affiliate status relationships with nine state associations in Mexico.

Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation (IDEA)

Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation (IDEA): A non-profit education foundation established by ARDI, DASMA and IDA to provide professional door, gate and operator dealers with the knowledge and skills required to be competitive in today's rapidly changing business environment. IDEA's goals

are to provide the educational resources necessary to develop and maintain a successful business, and to validate and accredit those door and operator dealers whose standards can meet IDEA's demanding criteria of business excellence. ARDI and DASMA have since merged, and AFA has added sponsorship, leaving IDA, DASMA, and AFA as the sponsoring organizations of IDEA.



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American Fence Association

(AFA): A trade association representing the fence, deck and railing industries in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1962, AFA, with its 31 member chapters, offer educational and certification programs, along with networking opportunities. AFA played the major role in developing the curriculum on which the IDEA Automated Gate Operator Installer Certification program is based, and continues to play a role in the maintenance and periodic updates of the curriculum. AFA and its chapters also host certification testing opportunities for automated gate operator installers.



American National Standards Institute

(ANSI): A private, non-profit organization that oversees the development of voluntary consensus standards for products, services, processes, systems and personnel in the United States. ANSI also coordinates U. S. standards with international standards so that American products can be used worldwide. The organization facilitates the development of American National Standards by accrediting the procedures for organizations who work cooperatively to develop voluntary national consensus standards.



Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA):

Created by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, OSHA promulgates and enforces safety and health standards in the workplace, and provides consultative services to businesses. OSHA regulations impact virtually every job site in America.



Underwriters Laboratories ® (UL):

An independent product safety certification organization, UL tests products and writes standards for safety. UL tests more than 19,000 types of products, components, materials and systems each year. UL is an important organization to the door and access systems industry, due to UL 325 – *Standard for Door, Drapery, Gate, Louvre, and Window Operator Systems*, which sets forth safety performance requirements for door and gate operator systems.



National Fire Protection

Association (NFPA): A non-profit organization founded in 1896, AFA's mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life, by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training and education. NFPA is the world's leading advocate for fire prevention and an authoritative source on public safety. This organization is important to the fire door industry due to *NFPA-80, Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives*. NFPA-80 regulates the installation and maintenance of door systems used to protect openings in walls, floors and ceilings against the spread of fire and smoke.



Consumer Product Safety Commission

(CPSC): A federal agency charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from thousands of types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers from products that pose a



fire, electrical, chemical or mechanical hazard or can injure children. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products includes door and access systems.

FM Approvals: An enterprise of FM Global, provides independent third-party certification of products for manufacturers. FM Approvals tests property loss prevention products and certifies those that meet rigorous loss prevention standards.



International Building Code (IBC):

A model building code developed by the International Code Council (ICC), the International Building Code has been adopted throughout most of the United States. A large portion of the IBC deals with fire prevention. It addresses fire prevention in regard to construction and design and fire prevention in regard to the operation of a completed and occupied building. The IBC applies to all structures in areas where it has been adopted, except in one and two-family dwellings.



Canadian Standards Association (CSA): A not-for-profit membership-based association serving business, industry, government and consumers. The organization develops standards that address needs such as enhancing public safety and health, advancing the quality of life, helping to preserve the environment and facilitating trade. CSA functions as a neutral third party in testing products and developing consensus standards.



Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC):

An independent product safety testing, certification and inspection organization. ULC supports governmental product safety regulations and complements federal, provincial and municipal public safety initiatives. ULC also works with other government and international



safety systems to help further international trade. ULC is now merged with UL.

Warnock Hersey: A division of Intertek, provides independent third-party certification of product safety and performance for building and construction products. Warnock Hersey tests and certifies products to indicate compliance to relevant building codes, association criteria, and product safety and performance standards. Warnock-Hersey is a common listing agency for Fire Doors and Fire Rated Countertops.



Texas Department of Insurance

(TDI): An agency which regulates the state of Texas insurance industry and issues product evaluations for garage door windload performance for use in the state of Texas.



Florida Building Commission (FBC): A

government agency which issues State-Wide Product Approvals for windload and other products for the state of Florida indicating compliance to provisions of the Florida Building Code.



Miami-Dade County Product Control Division:

An internationally recognized government agency which provides product approvals through the issuance of a Notice of Acceptance (NOA) indicating building code compliance for windload and other products used in Miami-Dade and surrounding counties of Florida.



United States Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA): A US federal government agency created for the purpose of protecting human health and the environment. Most noted in the garage door industry for its regulations for Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (RPP).



The National Ornamental & Miscellaneous

Metals Association: NOMMA was formed in 1958 to serve the ornamental and miscellaneous metals industry. Today they have nearly 600 members across the U.S. and in over a dozen foreign



countries. Members produce the full spectrum of ornamental and miscellaneous metalwork, ranging from railings to driveway gates, and from sculpture to light structural steel.

Section Three

Helping the Dealer Sell

“Ask not what your dealer can do for you, ask what you can do for your dealer”- to paraphrase a famous line from John F. Kennedy’s 1961 Presidential Inaugural Address.

While the salesperson is getting to know the customer on a personal level, they should also be getting to know what selling tools the dealer is utilizing to market their business effectively. The better-equipped the dealer is with all the marketing tools that are available to them, the more the consultant is rewarded from a happy and loyal customer whose sales are on the rise!

Selling Aids

Manufacturers typically supply a host of selling aids to their dealers that can be utilized primarily in the showroom. For dealers with showrooms, full-sized display doors are ideal for their customers to inspect and imagine how it will fit their homes. Some displays can be mounted on a showroom wall or in a rack that either pulls out or pivots from a wall to show more product in a smaller space. Some dealers who have limited space may build display doors from sample sections 24- to 48-inches wide to achieve about the same appearance.

Many selling aids that are used in the dealer’s office/showroom can also be taken into the field when making a sales call to a customer. Among these are sample sections, literature, and color chips. All of these tools can aid a buyer in their purchasing decision.

Another less obvious selling tool is part of building the brand image for both the manufacturer and the dealer. Merchandise such as clothing, pens, coffee mugs, and manufacturer signage are some of the common items used for this. These items link the manufacturer and the dealer together as part of the brand image for both. Manufacturers might supply limited quantities of these items with a catalog that allows the dealer to purchase more. The dealer may also be able to use co-op advertising dollars for these items.

In today’s lifestyle of making sales aids instantaneously available via a computer or I-phone, many manufacturers are offering dealers, either through their website or through software, a door design system where the customer can select options and design garage doors themselves. Many of the existing software packages allow the retail customer to take a picture of their home and electronically insert a garage door that they have designed to see what a final purchasing decision might look like.

Sales Information

Most door dealers do not take the time to closely study what their product mix is - that is, they have a good idea of their most popular selling door and operator models, but they may not be able to readily recognize a new trend toward newer door styles, colors, and construction. The Certified Door Dealer Consultant, through sales reports generated by the manufacturer, has the opportunity to share information with the dealer that might make them aware that their customers’ preferences are changing.

Such detailed sales reports might also help the dealer recognize that selling higher end products is not only possible but has been occurring in theirs, and other dealerships around them. A sales consultant should be willing and able to share trends that are

occurring in their territory with other dealers as well as what is going on in other parts of the country.

Another important sales tool that the manufacturer might be able to share with the dealer is leads from potential customers who either call the manufacturer's customer service center for information, or make inquiries through their website. Timely contact by a local dealer after the customer has contacted the manufacturer can lead to a potential sale and might keep that customer from doing additional research on other manufacturers' products.

With the proliferation of new door models over the last few years, the sales consultant should plan to spend time with the dealer to go over all the choices that are now available and explain what some of the applications are for the new models. For example, the full-view glass/aluminum door, once only considered as commercial service bay doors, has a wide range of applications for dividing interior spaces and opening up a space to the outdoors when the weather is ideal. Some restaurants are utilizing these doors to open a dining space to the outdoors.

Commercial Job Quoting

In our industry, some door dealers start their businesses by working their way into the residential door market because the majority of jobs are not complicated to bid and sell, and for the most part are one or two-day projects. Some never expand their business into commercial sectional and rolling steel industrial products because it is out of the comfort zone of the business they are doing. In larger markets, there can be dozens of door companies chasing the residential install and only one or two serving the commercial market.

Some dealers may have considered entering the commercial door market but have never been informed about the assistance a

manufacturer and its sales representative can offer with commercial bidding. Many manufacturers have a sales department devoted to commercial quoting and go as far as reading and interpreting building plans to be sure that all the specifications are being quoted. If the sales representative is available, they can also visit the jobsite, look over the building plans and specifications, as well as work with the architects to get their product approved as an equal product if it is not listed.

Once the dealer has gotten an accurate quote for the materials, the sales consultant can make themselves available to walk the dealer through the final pricing process by helping the dealer make a list of ancillary products (backhang angle, weatherseals, wiring accessories, etc.). After that, the two can discuss how much time will be involved in the project, including such things as material transport to the jobsite, daily travel time, special equipment needs, and any mandatory wage rates for state or federal projects.

Marketing

Later in this study guide, there is an entire section dedicated to establishing dealer marketing and advertising plans. The topics mentioned here will be dealt with in greater detail.

In the case of new startup companies and many established door dealerships, the owner spends a great deal of time both doing the physical work and running the day-to-day operations of the business. When quizzed by the sales consultant, the consultant may learn that this customer spends very little time in promoting their brand image and getting impressions of their business' existence in the marketplace. Some dealers may admit that the primary advertising they do is through yellow page advertising because *everybody else* has a presence there.

In the interest of building business for both the dealer and the manufacturer, the Certified Door Dealer Consultant should ask questions to determine if their customer is familiar with all of the marketing mediums that are available to them and the associated costs of those mediums. The consultant should be prepared to expose the dealer to these mediums and suggest the dealer should establish a marketing plan and an advertising budget. They can then offer suggestions, based on what other dealers have done or suggestions from the manufacturer's marketing team.

Some of the topics that should be broached should be the dealer's internet presence in the form of a website and social media. Just because the dealer may not be comfortable with on-line marketing and advertising, that shouldn't rule out this consideration. There are many companies around who can develop websites based on the customer's ideas and can also manage social media based on the customer's budget. For example, one Wisconsin dealer, who had a vision for what she wanted to do but did not have the technical knowledge for how to do it, hired a college student for part-time work to handle her web presence.

Building *brand image* is important for a dealer to help build their business. Some examples of inexpensive brand image marketing include signage on the dealer's business and on their service vehicles. Company apparel that readily identifies staff is another important image builder and also stresses the neat appearance that every member of the company should strive for.

Another advertising assistance program that the dealer should consider utilizing is co-operative advertising offered by their suppliers. Many manufacturers offer co-op funds for everything from a television ad campaign to merchandising materials for the dealer's company.

Industry Participation

Industry Groups

For a brief history, the IDA was formed in 1995 with the merger of two organizations- the Door and Operator Dealers of America (DODA) and the Far Western Garage Door Association (FWGDA). The merged group membership is made up of manufacturers and garage door dealers whose primary interest is to raise the professionalism of the industry. One of its primary benefits is its publication *Door and Operator Industry Magazine*, which is published six times a year. It is a great publication for keeping up with trends and hot topics concerning the garage door industry.

Similarly, DASMA became the primary manufacturers' trade group when the National Association of Garage Door Manufacturers (NAGDM) and the Door Operator and Remote Controls Association (DORCMA) merged in 1996. Ten years later, the American Rolling Door Institute (ARDI) joined the group to become the single entity to represent the industry before governmental agencies and code bodies. DASMA, whose governing board of directors is made up of industry leaders and technical experts, is the leading initiator of industry product standards and research and development of technical data. This group's work, in conjunction with the IDA, makes the garage door industry one of the largest self-regulating industries in North America. Its trade magazine, *Door and Access Systems*, is also a great publication for keeping up with technical information and topics pertaining to the door industry.

In 1997, DASMA, IDA, and ARDI formed a coalition to establish a means of offering education and independent testing of garage door dealers and their technicians for levels of expertise and knowledge with the formation of the Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation (IDEA). The IDEA still receives sponsorship from DASMA and the IDA, but has

grown over the years to a nearly self-sustained group.

Its governing body is made up representatives from DASMA and IDA and is responsible for the educational materials and testing procedures for door dealers becoming accredited dealers, technicians for becoming certified in the various forms of upward-acting doors and operators, and, yes, the certification of door dealer consultants. In recent years, the IDEA also became the independent testing and certification group for the American Fence Association, and has added AFA representation to its board.

Websites for all three groups- IDA's www.doors.org, DASMA's www.dasma.com and IDEA's www.dooreducation.com - are full of the history of the organizations as well as valuable current and technical information.

Door Dealer Consultant Participation

Industry participation by salespeople allows them to increase both their circle of industry friends and the number of dealers they get to know that could one day become customers. If there is one aspect of our industry that may be most-often commented on, it's the networking experience that is shared by most of its members who are willing to talk freely amongst their peers.

The largest gathering of industry professionals and dealers is the annual International Door Association Expo. The IDA Expo is an event made up of educational workshops and exhibits of door systems products where most of the industry members display their newest products. The educational workshops are filled with professional and industry speakers coming from both the manufacturing side and the dealer side of the industry to share their experiences on topics such as sales, technical knowledge, and business practices. The Expo gives the door dealer consultant the opportunity to see their customers, their

competitor's products, and meet industry professionals from the manufacturing and customer side of the industry.

Many IDA Affiliate organizations sponsor regional conferences and trade shows during the year. Most trade shows will have exhibit hours for manufacturers and sales consultants to display their products in an informal atmosphere that allows for more one-to-one conversation. These regional meetings are held in many metropolitan areas and states as well as Canada and Mexico, are an excellent way to network with other manufacturers' sales people, industry technical people, and garage door dealers. Most affiliate groups will have guest speakers on the hot topics of the day or allow a manufacturer to sponsor a meeting in return for time for them to talk about their products. Affiliates are always eager to accept a program idea from a manufacturer if it has technical personnel willing to share information in a *generic* form.

Door Dealer Participation

The examples for a door dealer consultant to become an active participant in the industry apply to their customer, the door dealer, as well. The wealth of knowledge that can be attained by attending an IDA Expo or an affiliate meeting applies to the dealer, just as much, if not more. There are many door dealers who will attest to the fact that they learn as much from each other in a networking atmosphere as they will from a guest speaker.

An additional opportunity for participation would be for the dealer and their technicians to continually enhance their skills through an organized educational program that is available through IDEA. Owners and managers in an organization can become accredited dealers after studying for and passing a six-topic battery of tests on technical and business knowledge that is helpful in running a business. Technicians can improve their skills in multiple categories of their trade including residential

and commercial sectional doors, commercial rolling and rolling steel fire doors, train-the-trainer curriculum as well as gate systems design and gate operators. The IDEA also makes available continuing education units on commercial operator troubleshooting, garage door R-values, safety in the workplace, and a continuously growing list of other topics. These are available both online, and at IDA Expo workshops. The certification process instills confidence in a technician's skills and among many other advantages, assures the door dealer consultant that their product is being properly handled and installed in the field. These assurances to the manufacturer can

reduce disagreements between the dealer and their customers with the manufacturer's finished product.



*To learn more about the Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation,
please visit the IDEA website:*

www.dooreducation.com