



**DEALER VISIT
★ PROGRAM ★**

Dealer Visit Handbook

***A GUIDE FOR DEALERS TO CONDUCT SUCCESSFUL
DEALER VISITS WITH THEIR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS***





Thank you for your participation in the Dealer Visit Program

Dear Auto Dealer,

We at the American International Automobile Dealers Association created the Dealer Visit Program to provide opportunities for our members and their employees to interact with their federally elected officials.

There is no better way to foster a meaningful relationship with the policymakers who make decisions critical to our industry than by inviting them to your dealership to see first-hand the economic and civic impact your business has in their district. By participating in this program, you are investing in the long-term success of your business, and creating lasting relationships to ensure Washington hears your voice.

Thank you for hosting your member of Congress at your dealership, and please know your involvement truly makes a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cody Lusk'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'C' and a long, sweeping 'L'.

Cody Lusk
AIADA President



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

- Dealer Visit Program Mission Statement
- Why Host a Dealer Visit?

The Dealer Visit Process

- Not as Intimidating as It May Seem
- Inviting Your Member of Congress to Your Dealership
- The Art of Scheduling

Conducting a Successful Dealer Visit

- Be a Prepared Host, Know the Issues
- Town hall Forum with Your Employees
- Smile! Don't Forget the Camera and Thank you
- Snacks
- Media Coverage
- Other

Sample Agenda

Additional Resources

- Get Involved
- Contact Us
- Make a Note

Dealer Visit Feedback Form

For Your Member of Congress: Take With You Packet

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement

The AIADA **Dealer Visit Program** serves to connect international auto dealers with their Members of Congress, to facilitate important relationships between constituents and their elected officials, and to generate advocates to voice the legislative position of AIADA and auto dealers nationwide.

Why Host a Dealer Visit?

At AIADA, we rely on the involvement of our dealers to make an impact on legislators and policy makers. The best way to forge a meaningful relationship with an elected official is through the Dealer Visit Program.

The AIADA Dealer Visit Program allows Members of Congress to see first-hand the challenges and rewards of running a successful dealership. It is an opportunity to jump start a vital one-on-one relationship between dealers and elected officials and provides the members with a look into how the decisions made in Washington affect the daily lives of dealers and their employees.

The DVP consists of a one-hour visit where your Member of Congress will come to your dealership, conduct a mini town hall forum with you and your employees, and tour the facility. By opening the dialogue between dealers and Members, both parties can learn about each other's respective businesses.

THE DEALER VISIT PROCESS

Not as Intimidating as It May Seem

Hosting a Member of Congress may seem intimidating however; they are generally more relaxed because they are at home. They are usually dressed more casually, are less stressed, and are able to spend more time with constituents. It is important to remember Representatives and Senators are real people who want to serve the constituents that elected them into office.

Inviting Your Member of Congress to Your Dealership

The invitation process is simple – the AIADA Government Relations & Grassroots Team facilitates everything for you from start to finish! Once you have signed up to host a Dealer Visit, the GR Team will be in touch with you to discuss the details of the visit, find out when you would like to host, and answer any questions you might have.

Then the GR Team will submit a letter of invitation to the appropriate staff member in the Congressman or Senator's office, outlining the date(s) you are available. The GR Team regularly follows up with offices and keeps you informed about the status of your request.

The Art of Scheduling

AIADA's GR Team has outstanding experience dealing with staff on Capitol Hill. We know how to accommodate Members of Congress while still meeting the needs of our dealers.

The GR Team tries to schedule Dealer Visits during upcoming Congressional District Work Periods; however, sometimes the Congressional offices contact us to schedule an event on a day when Congress does not have votes or is not expected to be back in Washington, D.C. until late in the evening. We will always okay proposed dates with our dealers before confirming with a Congressional office.

CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL DEALER VISIT

Be a Prepared Host, Know the Issues

AIADA will provide dealers with all the information necessary to be prepared for the visit. These items include a suggested agenda for the event, a biography on the elected official and AIADA position papers on auto issues. Additionally, each dealer will receive a “Take with you Packet” exclusively designed for the Congressional member with the latest AIADA publications and reports. As always, the AIADA Government Relations and Grassroots team will be available to provide a more in-depth briefing on the auto industry issues and answer all questions so each dealer feels prepared and confident while hosting their visit; we are available via phone or email for any questions.

Town Hall Forum with your Employees

The Town Hall Forum during the Dealer Visit is a chance for the Congressional member to hear directly from the dealer and his employees about issues affecting his constituents. While the Forum should primarily focus on the international nameplate industry’s hot-button issues, it can also be a platform for discussion on policy issues that affect everyone from education to the environment. However, AIADA dealers and their employees are truly subject-matter experts in the automotive field and Congressional members will benefit most by learning more about AIADA’s position on Trade, Taxes and Regulation.

Smile! Don’t forget the Camera and Thank you

Don’t forget to take some pictures- candid and formal- of your visit. If your dealership is on social media, this is a great opportunity to tweet or post about your visit. After you meet, it is important to send a thank you letter. You can include these pictures in your note or simply just say thank you. Again, the Dealer Visit Program was developed to help you forge a lasting and meaningful relationship your federally elected officials.

Snacks

It is recommended that the dealership provide beverages (water, coffee, soft drinks) and a light snack.

Media Coverage

If you plan on inviting the local media the Congressman’s office must first approve. If you are interested, let the AIADA team know and they will run it by the Congressional office. If approved, AIADA will gladly assist with media invites.

Other

It is recommended that the dealership provide name badges for attendees.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Note: this is a sample agenda and your should adjustit to fit your situation and location.

- 9:00 a.m.** Member of Congress arrives and welcomed by Dealership Host (owner, GM, etc.) and senior staff.
- 9:05 a.m.** Dealership Host introduces Member of Congress to individual senior staff members.
- 9:10 a.m.** Town Hall Forum - *Q&A session on issues pertaining to the auto industry and auto dealers.* Congressman speaks to group – focusing on current issues impacting dealers and the auto industry. This can be held in your showroom or a large conference room – you want to include as many employees as possible.
- 9:30 a.m.** Dealership Host concludes Q&A session with a thank-you to Member of Congress for speaking and a thank-you to the employees for participating.
- 9:35 a.m.** Dealership Tour Begins (Note: Most Members of Congress have never been behind the scenes at a dealership. Discuss how each department works as you give the tour)
- Highlight finance and administrative staff.
 - Visit service bays and technicians.
 - Conclude tour in showroom.
- 9:50 a.m.** Photo opportunity and Farewell
- 10:00 a.m.** Member of Congress departs dealership.

Dealer Visit Program: Dealer Feedback & Summary

Dealer Name and Dealership: _____

Date of Visit: _____ with Senator/Rep: _____

Brief summary of visit (topics discussed, questions asked): _____

Did you feel adequately prepared for your visit? _____

Please offer feedback on how we can better improve our program for future dealer visits: _____

Would you be interested in hosting another visit in the future? _____

Additional comments: _____

Thank you for participating in the Dealer Visit Program. If you have any pictures from your visit, we would love to include them on our website or in future AIADA publications. Please email any photos to Ashley Burch, Senior Advocacy & Grassroots Manager, Burcha@aiada.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Get Involved



The *L.A.N. Resource Center* is the central location for all of AIADA's grassroots activities, including letters to Congress, learning about critical issues, tracking key Congressional votes, locating lawmakers, and preparing for local and national elections.

Visit our Legislative Action Network's *Resource Center* at www.AIADA.org/get-involved/lan-resource-center for information on all of AIADA's grassroots programs and government relations updates.

Contact Us

Please feel free to contact the AIADA Government Affairs and Grassroots Team with questions at 1-800-GO-AIADA or email us directly.

Rachel Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations
Robinsonr@aiada.org

Ashley Burch
Senior Advocacy & Grassroots Manager
Burcha@aiada.org



American International Automobile Dealers Association

500 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

T: 703.519.7800 • F: 703.519.7810

www.aiada.org