

## SALES: Interview first impressions are important

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90 seconds, and it takes over four months to overcome that first impression," said Angel, Grajales, sales manager of Lone Star Chevrolet.

"The job interview is so telling. If people do not look me in the eye, or they speak so low I can't hear them, that is not impressive. If you have a weak hand shake, that says a lot.

"The average car sells for \$40,000, so in short period of

time you are asking someone to put down a lot of money. They have to trust you and believe in you," he said.

### Character matters

Integrity also is important.

"We have people who come in with \$20,000 cash in crumpled up \$20 bills and hand it over to the sales person to give to the finance person. I have seen sales people walk off with \$35,000 cash instead of giving it to the finance person.

"We do background checks and drug checks. We don't hire just anyone. We are very careful," Grajales said.

"The car industry is all about performance. If you have a bachelor's degree, it shows that you can make a commitment and finish. But you can't come in as a manager simply because you have a degree in business. Gender and age don't matter. Everyone here starts out selling cars and works their way up."

Yvonne Cardin, regional recruiting manager for Autonation Inc., prefers to hire people who first apply online.

"This way you can apply for

one dealership but be considered for all 17 Champion dealerships in Houston," she said.

"All candidates in this industry must have a valid Texas driver's license and be able to pass criminal-background and drug tests."

A high school diploma or equivalent is required. Some college is a plus, but it is not required for employment.

"A minimum of six months retail-sales experience typically is required. Candidates coming out of food service, retail, wireless sales and the mortgage fields historically do well in this industry," Cardin said.

"A standard up-to-date resume highlighting the candidate's experience and dates of employment is helpful."

Cardin agrees that appearance is important. She prefers candidates choose business attire — a suit for men or at least a sport coat and tie.

"Always arrive 15 minutes early for your interview with two resumes in hand," she said.

"Be professional but outgoing, and don't be afraid to ask questions."



JERRY POWERS: AC STUDIOS

**TRAINING:** Anthony Surface, left, works with Frank Duharte.

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