

My Turn



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Boost Lesson Enrollment

A lesson program can be a great source of revenue for a music store. And if you already have a program, you understand how important it is to keep new students coming through the door. But how do you find these new students? Is it just luck, or do you have a plan in place?

Let's face it. You want to increase your music lesson sign-ups, but you can't devote 100 percent of your efforts to doing so. I have found a few quick, low-cost, easy-to-implement ideas that can really increase the number of students in your lesson studios.

These ideas are based on the following premises: let people know that you have music lessons; make it easy for people to sign up for lessons; and make sure your staff is actively promoting lessons and asking customers to sign-up.

Consider the following ideas:

1. Hang "We Teach Music Lessons" signs. Do people know that you teach music lessons at your store? Can you tell just from looking at the outside of the store? Can you tell from the inside of your store? Don't assume people know!

Use paint or stick-on vinyl lettering to place the words "Music Lessons" on your store's front window. With the help of your computer and the "zoomer machine" at your local copy center, you can easily create a sign for your window.

These signs are great advertisements to customers and potential customers passing by your store as well as to those already inside.

2. Create a Music Teacher/Lesson Information Center. Do you have a camera and a computer? Great. Make some fliers with lesson information like availability, time and teacher bios. Place them in empty sheet music racks with a header sign that reads: "Music Teacher Information." You now have a Music Teacher Information Center.

This is a great sales tool for lessons. The teacher is now a real product and easier to book because you "really" teach lessons—you don't just say so. Make the flier easy to read with a photo of the teacher, brief bio and why they are a great teacher (i.e. "John has a degree in music and can teach you the style you want!"). Of course, include your store's information.

3. Have a master lesson schedule for your staff to do sign-ups. How easy is it for a customer to sign up for lessons? Do they have to talk directly to the teacher to get on the schedule?

Let's face it, teachers are musicians, often not great business people. Relying on them to follow-up and follow through on lesson sign-ups is not a good idea. It's amazing how many stores will say, "The

guitar teacher is in on Friday, call back then." And when the potential student does call back, they interrupt the lesson to get him to the phone. Stupid! Let the teacher teach. You do the lesson sign-ups.

Have a master schedule of all the teachers and their availability. If your store is open, so is your ability to sign up new lessons. People will sign up for lessons with whoever makes it the easiest. Make a sheet for each day of the week. Down the side, list available hours. Across the top, have the lesson rooms with the teacher names and the instrument they teach. Student, salesperson and teacher will be able to see what classes are available at a glance.

4. Track your sales staff's lesson sign-ups. Just like sales stats, you need to track each salesperson's lesson sign-ups. You need your entire staff to promote your lessons.

Make a "Lessons" column on your monthly sales stats chart. When a new student signs up, have a "Signed Up By" area on the form. This will make everyone accountable for promoting your lessons program. If you have a staff member that isn't booking lessons, you will know and be able to work with them on improving their "lesson sign-up chops." Doing a "lesson spiff" is a great way to get this new stat going. Set monthly goals.

Give these ideas a shot. You'll be surprised at the improved number of lesson sign-ups.

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