

The Lesson Room



PETE GAMBER

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Marketing to Students for Holiday Sales

Your store might be the best place in town for music lessons. But do your students—and their parents—consider it the best place to buy holiday gifts? Maybe not.

To keep your students and their families from going elsewhere for their music-related purchases this Christmas season, you need to act. Following are eight low-cost, easy-to-implement ideas for boosting the number of sales generated by your lesson program.

1. The "Dear Santa" Promo. Non-musicians don't always know what to get their musician loved-ones. Give every student in your lesson program a "Dear Santa" wish list that reads something like, "This is what I want from ABC Music..." followed by empty lines for items. You can even have some items already listed.

Have the student fill it out with helpful suggestions from your staff. Give them a special Dear Santa envelope with "To the Santa of ____" printed on it. After the student prints his or her name and address, mail the envelope with appropriate sales fliers or discount coupons. Moms, dads, wives and husbands will recognize the envelope's handwriting, open it and know exactly what their loved one wants for Christmas and where to buy it.

2. The Trade-Up Plan. Make a list of everyone who purchased a student guitar that year, and

mail them a "Trade-Up Deal" coupon. Follow up a week later by calling every student/parent to discuss how the deal works and the benefits of purchasing a step-up instrument.

3. Student Discounts on Holiday Purchases. Give every student/parent a Holiday Student Discount Card. Clearly mark the "extra" discounts on the card. Also list other services—such as lay-a-ways and special orders—that you offer.

4. Teacher Lists. Get a list from each teacher of what they recommend as "cool" music gifts. Give the list a name like "Dave's List," identifying it with the teacher. Make copies of the lists with a holiday motif, store logo, teacher's signature and note saying "Bring this list in for your student discount."

Your teachers are a great resource for holiday sales. They know what they want their students to learn from and what your store has in the way of metronomes, tuners, stands, sticks, strings and so on.

5. Host a Student-Only Pre-Christmas Sale. Host a Sunday-evening sale in November just for students and their parents. Offer them the best deals—prices that almost hurt. Why? Because some other store will get their business if you don't.

Student-only sales are a great way to reinforce that your store is the only place for them to shop. Offer a layaway pro-

gram for pick up just before Christmas.

6. Make a Plan: What Promo When. Get a calendar. Pencil in the events you plan to host, marking dates and times. Make notes about any special supplies that are needed for the event. The season can be hectic. Keep on top of it.

7. Implement the Plan with Your Staff & Make Them Accountable. Copy and distribute the calendar of events to your staff for reference. Explain the purpose of each promotion. Set goals. Keep track of the staffs' contacts, such as how many "Dear Santa's" they have handed out. Create a contest for the most trade-ups contacted. Post results daily so everyone knows you are evaluating their performance.

8. Have Merchandise for Your Promos. If your teacher lists have chromatic tuners on them, make sure you have the tuners in stock. Have "Dear Santa" list items in stock and the instruments for customers to trade up to.

The Christmas season is right around the corner. These easy, inexpensive marketing ideas can be implemented right now. Remember, even last-minute marketing yields more than no marketing.

Pete Gamber is the owner of Alta Loma Music in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. He welcomes questions and comments at goalm@hotmail.com.