

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Campaigning for Music

Being a presidential election year, there has been plenty of finger pointing and calling for change lately. Add to that this thing called the economy. Each party has been hitting the road and the airwaves to promote its cause. Yet, how many people will vote in the election? Not enough.

It reminds me of the music products industry. We all know that if more people play music, all of us will benefit. But how many of us are “Gonna Play” when it comes to creating more players?

Not enough.

MY CAMPAIGN

Right now, I’m campaigning for NAMM’s Wanna Play? initiative. Seeing as all of us believe that we need to grow the industry, all of us need to cast our vote. By that, I mean get involved.

I was recently talking with Scott Robertson at NAMM, and he gave me a shocking statistic: Among NAMM’s retail members, only 1,500 claim that they offer music lessons. If you belong to NAMM and your store offers lessons, drop the staff an e-mail and let them know.

NAMM promotes Wanna Play? at the Vans Warped Tour, Drum Corps International, AARP Life@50+ convention and many other events. Visit wannaplaymusic.com if you need to be convinced. Has this program reached its potential? Not yet,

and that’s where retailers need to help. NAMM is our association, and we can help shape the Wanna Play? program.

MY PLATFORM

If you offer music lessons, put the Wanna Play? logo on your store’s promotional materials. Put it on your Web site, and link it to your lesson info. If you don’t offer lessons, then get started.

Develop some type of program, even if it’s through a parks and recreation program or a church or a YMCA. Network with indie teachers in your community.

Pro audio and niche retailers need to get involved, too. So you install sound systems. Do your clients know where to take guitar lessons? Put the Wanna Play? logo on your Web site with a link.

Manufacturers and distributors only need to put a Wanna Play? promo card in every instrument that gets shipped. Put it in at the factory level —

what’s another two cents? I discussed this in “The Unknown Beginner,” my June 2007 column. You can download the article at musicincmag.com.

MY ECONOMIC PLATFORM

What’s the hang up with this? All of you have bitchin’ Web sites that consumers visit. Where’s Wanna Play? When someone’s drooling over your latest product, it might be a good time for them to hit the Wanna Play? link.

It costs nothing to add the logo to your Web site. It costs nothing to give NAMM your info. It costs nothing to help NAMM develop this program by providing your input.

What’s our economic return? Every sector of the music products industry grows tenfold. It’s better than Wall Street, but we need the people on Main Street to Wanna Play?

Ever heard the phrase, “If you don’t vote, don’t complain?” Well, if you don’t promote developing new music makers, don’t complain. And suppliers shouldn’t complain either. Making this work takes very little time and money. Put your action where your mouth is.

Who wants to join me in keeping our industry alive and well? Wanna Play? **MI**

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



Wanna grow this industry? Promote Wanna Play? on your Web site and in your music lesson literature