

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Why Are You Waiting?

It's after the holidays, and I'm going to presume your store is really slow — or at least slower than you want it to be. Your website and YouTube, Twitter and Facebook pages are all up-to-date, and now you're waiting for those customers to call or come into your store to buy and sign up for lessons.

Well guess what? It isn't happening. Why? Because consumers on the Internet are voyeurs and peeping toms. They check your website, browse around and leave, and you don't know they were there, let alone who they are. This means you can't talk with them or sell them anything until they call you. That's right — you're waiting. And the more information you have on your website, the lesser the chances are they'll call. The big rule in selling is don't give too much info over the phone — get the customer in the store. But what about websites?

I'm not going to wait. I'm going to reach out and use that old marketing tool: the telephone. Here's who I'm going to call:

Holiday purchasers. “How is the guitar you purchased?” Double checking on purchases is a great way to start the new year with customers. During the holiday hustle and bustle, the customer may not have remembered the cool stuff your store does, so remind them about the free services you offer with a purchase. Lessons are always first in my discussions.

Also, route them to your YouTube channel or website, so they can see the fun stuff that goes on in your lessons program. I also mention that we have a Facebook page that they can check out and join. Double check to see if you have their e-mail addresses — this is a must.

Current students and parents. “How are the lessons going?” This is really important, especially for those new students who started in January. Make sure they're enjoying

their experience at your store, and let them know about upcoming student events.

Rental customers. “How's school band?” This may be a great source for music lessons prospects. Students either want to get ahead because they enjoy being in school band, or they're ready to quit band because it's boring. I always say that for every kid quitting

school band there's a potential guitarist or drummer. Most of these parents don't want their student to quit band, or music, so your call may provide musical avenues they hadn't considered.

Customers who haven't been in for a while. Have they left the state? Quit playing? Or, do they not want to come to your store anymore? Best bet is they may have forgotten about your store or have developed new shopping habits via the Internet.

Former students and recent quits. Stay in touch with these customers. Many may have quit because of money issues. Keep your store in their thoughts. They may now be back on their feet and ready to sign up. They may have friends who are looking for lessons. Or, there may be a student who quit because of sports who has a sister looking for lessons.

Yes, I'm fishing for business. I can either stand behind the counter waiting, or I can be calling customers. I'm paying for a phone, so why shouldn't I use it?

Once you get a conversation going, listen to what your customers say. Look for any and all opportunities from these conversations. This is old school stuff, but it's new school if you're the only one doing it. **MI**



You're paying to have a phone, so why not use it to your advantage?

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