

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Raise the Fuzzy Factor

I was passing through my local Jack in the Box drive-thru around 9:00 the other night when I received surprisingly great customer appreciation. The drive-thru employee asked me, “How are you doing tonight? Do you want me to fix your coffee the way you like it? Here’s a coupon for a free taco.” I left feeling really good and somewhat shocked that it was from a trip to Jack in the Box.



The next morning, I went to a nearby Office Depot to stock up on supplies. An employee asked me how the back-to-school season was going, and I left with the same feeling.

Later that week, I went to the Chevron gas station to get a fill-up and buy a coffee, and the same thing happened. “How’s things at the music store?”

Then I remembered a Summer NAMM session I once sat in on that looked at the importance of being personable with customers. My big takeaway was we need to be warm and fuzzy. These fuzzy feelings help retain customers and create new ones through word-of-mouth and “mouse.”

So, how warm and fuzzy is your store? When was the last time you stood back and looked at what interactions were going on with your staff and students?

START A CONVO

I felt fuzzy while visiting these other businesses because it was unexpected. I felt as if they knew and appreciated me. So, I got thinking about the hundreds of music stores that I’ve visited. Offhand, I can only list about 10 that delivered the fuzzy feeling. Most music store employees ignore students when they come in, even if there’s no business going on.

If the Jack in the Box drive-thru can make me feel appreciated, how come a music store can’t? Students and their families visit your store each week. You can look at a schedule and see their names in case you can’t remember them. So, initiate a conversation. Ask them, “How are the lessons going? What are you working on? How’s school? What’s on your iPod?”

Start with these questions, and see where the conversation goes. Do the same with parents.

Did you recently hold a student event or concert? If so, let students know what you thought of their performances. Tell them, “Dude, you rocked last Friday!” Or, “I really loved the way you played that Bruno Mars song at the showcase!” Compliments are a great way to make students feel appreciated. We all like it when someone tells us we played well.

MAKE FRIENDS

It sounds silly to ask, but are your students and their parents your friends or just customers? Do you know your students’ names? Personally, I want everyone in town to know me, my name and what I do. So shouldn’t I know the students who come through my store?

I get a fuzzy feeling when I’m out in public and someone tells me I should run for mayor because I know everyone or when students at a local school tell me I’m like a rock star.

Everyone enjoys compliments, so hand them out to your customers. And don’t forget to thank them for their business — thank your students and their families for taking music lessons at your store. Start a convo, make new friends, and raise the fuzzy factor. **MI**

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Creating a ‘fuzzy feeling’ is a crucial aspect of customer service