Selling With Software

I recently went head-to-head with one of my local rivals in a fierce competition over a grand piano sale. The client liked both pianos, she was comfortable with both companies, and she was satisfied with the items and service included in each package. In the end, what helped me win the $12,000 deal was a brief conversation I had with her about — of all things — software.

After a short demo of the Artist Lessons in Garage Band, I showed her how her piano could be upgraded "down the road" to include a USB port. With this affordable upgrade, she could connect her piano with popular software tools like Garage Band, Finale or Piano Marvel. Finally, I demonstrated how playing along with a MIDI file would make her piano much more fun without diminishing its tonal quality or the sensitivity of its action. The entire conversation took 10 minutes and, though she didn't decide to add the USB package that day, she later told me that she decided to buy from me because I understood her piano's future.

INCORPORATING SOFTWARE INTO A PITCH

There are many lessons here. Certainly, we don't want to get so caught up in today's sale that we forget to prepare our clients for future add-ons or upgrades that could bring them back into our stores. But, the most important takeaway for me was how much perceived value I can add to my products with basic software.

I have often said that clients don't really care what an instrument can do. They only care what they can do with it. Taking the time to demonstrate how a saxophone can become so much more with a simple microphone and SmartMusic software might just make the difference between a sale and "see you later." Demonstrating how a drummer can practice at home with headphones and instant feedback (using Roland's V-Drums Tutor Software) could transform your drum set prospect into profit. Showing that first-time guitar player how to use Ampli-Tude Fender (Fender's feature-packed iPad app) might mean the difference between selling a cheap, starter guitar and something your store can make money on! In time, software can become our secret weapon. It can be the magical piece of our product portfolio that helps us sell more and higher profit instruments if we only take the time to learn how to demonstrate it.

Have you been eyeing some high-end products or higher-profit items in your store that don't seem to move as quickly as you'd like? Why not set up a test program? Train yourself and your staff on the companion apps or software titles for that item and work through some quick, punchy demos that add high-tech fun to your presentation. Then — as you implement your new software demo — see how it helps you communicate added value to your clients. Refocus your presentation on value instead of price and invite your clients to enjoy a musical lifestyle rather than just a new instrument.

If you take the time to learn and demonstrate software that will surprise and awe your clients, you'll fill your stores with enthusiastic shoppers who want to buy from you and no one else. Your business will grow and your profit margins will soar. **MI**

James Harding is the president of Gist Piano Center, a freelance Web designer, pianist and avid blogger. Email him at jharding@gistpianocenter.com.

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