

FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

The Love Connection

“I’m just going to leave you two lovebirds alone.” That line was spoken the other day by one of my staff members, Michael Sweeney, when he was selling a guitar. The “two lovebirds” were, of course, the customer and the instrument he was playing. A little later he went back and said, “I think we have a love connection.” And, he was right — the customer bought the guitar.



‘Putting an instrument in the hands of a customer is paramount.’

Selling styles differ from one type of business to another, and in our business it’s even more important to approach the sale in our own way if we are going to be successful. I have always believed that buying an instrument is a very subjective experience. Yes, there are some customers who want to know all the specs on every guitar or piano or trumpet, but ultimately the decision will be based on their own sense of connection to that instrument: on love. If the customer loves the instrument, the process is complete and the instrument is sold.

More often than not, customers don’t know this. They think they need every bit of information on the instrument to make the decision. It is up to us to inform them, but also to free them so they will play and allow their emotions to kick in — so they will feel the love. Putting an instrument in the hands of a customer is paramount. Even when they say they don’t play, we can still help them make that love connection. There is never any pressure except the pressure to enable the customer to let go and become one with the instrument. And I have to tell you, it’s a beautiful thing to watch.

CREATING THE CONNECTION

When a customer comes in and wants to buy a guitar, but they insist that they can’t try it out because they don’t play, I very gently say, “Oh yes you can.” First, I set them up in the proper sitting position. I am a classical guitarist, so my sitting position of choice is left foot on a foot stool; that places the guitar

directly in front of them and allows them to hold the guitar without having to worry about balancing the instrument. Place their right hand over the strings, and put their left fingers in an Em chord, a very easy chord that anyone can play. Then I let them play, and I tell them to let me know when they are in love. They should try different guitars, but always play the same chord in the same position. It works every time. Even if they don’t buy at that moment — and most times they do — you have created a customer for life.

The same principal works for all the band instruments, although usually by the time they stop renting and purchase a stepup instrument, they know that they have to play several instruments before making the final decision. During this process, we always use the “love” word a lot.

And with the piano it works exactly the same way. Maybe better. Even if they are beginners buying for the first time or parents buying for a child, I make sure they play all the models we have in the store, and I say the same thing: “Tell me when you fall in love.”

Although now I might ask, “Do we have a love connection?” **MI**

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