

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Tabletop Holiday Sales

Do your holiday customers know that you offer music lessons? Do your students' parents have any idea what might be "cool" and useful gifts for junior? My "music teacher gift idea table" has helped me with both of these problems in the past.

Here's how it works. Have your teachers make a list of cool and useful gifts ideas. Compile a master list with all the answers from your different groups of teachers (guitar, piano, woodwinds, etc.). And hey, you're an expert, so include what you think would make a great gift, as well.

Then make a marketing piece out of the list. For instance, mine had a large title and said, "Here's a list of what we recommend for our students to help them in their Guitar Playing and Lessons. These items also make a GREAT Christmas Gift, and they're all available at Alta Loma Music."

Beneath the intro, I listed the names of the products and, in some cases, a very brief description of what it does or why it's important. (For example, on the drum list, next to "Drum Sticks," I put "No drummer ever has enough!" Next to "Drum Heads," I listed two brand/model suggestions.) Beneath all of that, I listed the names of the teachers for that product group.

With the list, we make 8.5- by 11-inch fliers to hand out, and then blow up and laminate two. One goes in the lesson area where parents hang out. The other becomes a POP poster, which I put next to my king of holiday displays: the gift table.

parents, I point out their teacher's name; if the student likes the teacher, parents usually feel similarly. Plus, parents are always looking for gift ideas. Typically, they aren't musicians, and they don't know what to get. Here's an endorsed list of reasonably priced products!

I also encourage my salespeople to direct walk-in customers to the gift table. (Chances are they're looking for gifts if they're walking in this time of year.) When we hand them a list, we say, "Here's some great gift ideas that our guitar teachers came up with."

To them, it's a better endorsement than a salesperson. But even better, it opens up the opportunity to talk about music lessons. You might be able to sell them the lessons as the gift.

Beyond these two types of customers, the gift tables also make it easier for inexperienced sales staff to make recommendations for a specific musician.

This idea is a template. It's worked great for me, but think about how to complement your own lesson program with accessory gift purchases. You can even set up a "Music Lessons" table, with photoboards of your 2006 student events and lesson information fliers. **MI**

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## THE TABLE

For each list, I set up a 4-foot folding table and put a red or green cloth on it. Then I merchandise the items on the list. I tape the poster list to a mic stand behind the table and use stick-on bows and wrapping paper to draw attention to the products. Since all the lists include at least one print music suggestion, I put plastic sheet music racks next to the table to display books. I also put the fliers in a stand on the table, so parents or students can grab one. And I put them in high-traffic areas.

As a side note, before setting up the table, order the gift items in quantity. It's silly to promote an item and not have it in stock.

## THE IDEA BEHIND IT

To me, this is a dual-marketing approach. With current students, it's about validity and name recognition. When I hand out the fliers to students or

