

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Building Lesson Culture

We often talk about building a culture in our stores. George Hines of George's Music has presented a great seminar on this topic at industry trade shows, discussing how he works with employees daily to develop and maintain his company's culture. It takes dedication, passion and hard work. No one's going to do it for you.

Other stores have been amazed by my company's music lesson program.

We have this program because we have a music lesson culture in place, similar to Hines' company. A music lesson culture involves a three-way effort between management, sales staff and teachers. Take away one of these parts, and it can't exist.

## THE MANAGEMENT

You can't have a lesson culture if management isn't passionate and dedicated to it. Management is responsible for breathing life into the culture, raising the bar and maintaining standards. As management, your actions and attitudes affect what happens. If you're all lip-service toward music lessons, that's all you're going to have. You need to be the real deal. Pass your passion for lessons on to your staff and teachers, and they will pass their passion on to others.

When you and your staff get excited about your lesson program and your music teachers, the teachers will get excited about teaching and, in turn, the teachers will get excited about your store.

## THE SALES TEAM

If your sales team isn't "into lessons," as I've heard it described at many stores, you'll never develop a lesson culture.

Does your staff sound like this? "Yeah we've got lessons. Call back later when Sally's in." Lessons should be everyone's responsibility. The sales team is

the bearer of the music lesson culture.

New staff members need to be trained on your lesson program's importance. They need to be taught that lessons are a part of every transaction, every call and every customer interaction. They need to be introduced to all the teachers during training, and they need to meet parents and students as they come in for lessons. Staff members should attend student events so they understand what goes on between teachers and students. This way, they can sell the excitement.

## THE TEACHERS

During interviews, ask yourself whether a potential teacher will fit with your culture. Explain what you do as a store, how it benefits the lesson program, and, in turn, how it benefits them, the store and the customer. Teachers should be introduced at the next staff meeting and should even play for everyone. It sends the message that lesson culture isn't a myth.

New teachers also need to be introduced to senior teachers and spend time in their lesson rooms observing. Integrate new teachers into student events as soon as possible. Hold a teacher concert to show off your teachers to current students, prospective students and your sales staff. A store that plays together stays together.

## THE STORE

What do customers see and hear when they enter your store? Do you have lesson signage? Pictures of student performances? Teacher fliers? Are you playing a video or soundtrack from this year's rock camp?

It takes work and dedication to develop a lesson culture. It won't happen overnight, and it will never happen if you don't start now. **MI**

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**Create a music lesson 'culture' by making lessons a priority among staff, teachers and management**