

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Get Teachers Selling

It's common practice to get product feedback from your sales team. Their thoughts matter when it comes to hot, new gear and what to stock. Do you let them take a piece of gear to band rehearsal for a test run? I'll bet you do — their knowledge of gear drives sales and better service.

But what about your teachers? Do you do the same with them? Your teachers are a great resource. They build a unique trust with students and parents. Sometimes, teachers have an even better sense of new trends in gear and print music because they're further removed from the retail operation. Your teachers often have more playing expertise than your sales staff and can offer an expert opinion when evaluating new products. Use this resource and develop it.



## WHAT DO TEACHERS WANT?

What small goods do your teachers want to sell to their students? Ask and find out what print music would benefit students, and give it a try. When a new product comes in, let teachers know. You'll probably hear, "Great, I'll tell my students." Next, inform the other teachers. Say, "Hey, guitar teacher Joey talked to us about stocking these. Can your students use them?" Then, tell your staff which books guitar teacher Joey is using with his students, so they can incorporate that into sales presentations to other customers.

Got some new music books in? Pass an extra copy around to the teachers. Tell the teachers why you're stocking the book and why it will benefit their students. Once again, use the drill I mentioned above.

I did this with Christmas play-along books this past October. I got the teachers' input (most of them didn't know the books existed), ordered what they wanted and ended up selling more Christmas books.

Also, ask your teachers what books they have in their personal libraries, that you don't have in stock. Many times, teachers don't realize you can get these books. This will help curb photocopying and PDF transfers to students. It will also curb their excuses for handing out copies.

This process works with accessories, too. Just got a new tuner? Pass it out among the teachers. Ask them what they think of it. If they like it, they'll sell it to their students. If the product's a dud and several teachers dislike it, don't reorder.

## DEALING WITH BRAND ISSUES

When it comes to larger gear, you'll need a different approach. You won't be able to stock all the brands teachers want. You need to explain to them why that brand isn't in the store. In today's Internet age, your teachers probably don't realize you can't go to buyallgear.com and stock every imaginable brand they want. Instead, have your teachers try the brands you carry. Every guitar teacher should have a loaner guitar from your store.

Find out what their students' needs are, and show them the appropriate product you carry that fits those needs. You may not even know what students are looking for.

When company reps come out to show you new products, invite your teachers. Make sure each one gets the rep's card and catalog. If the rep leaves samples, have the teachers check out the product, and get their input.

Take these steps, and teachers will better know your products and store. They'll feel better about recommending your products to their students. That's powerful.

You may not see benefits immediately, but it works. Watch what it yields next February. **MI**

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**Introduce new gear to teachers, and they will feel better about making recommendations to students**