

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# The Lesson Snatchers

What would you say if I told you that over the next 10 years your retail store will lose its music lesson market share? So dramatically, in fact, that you'll no longer view music lessons as that untouchable source of income that keeps your store safe from economic variations. Just as music dealers have lost retail sales to the Internet and non-MI retailers over the last decade, there is a new threat to your music lesson program — the invasion of the music lesson snatchers a.k.a. non-retailer lesson studios.



**Non-MI retail lesson studios have popped up all over the country. Make sure your program is ready**

These studios are popping up all over the country and are becoming “the place” to take lessons. They will be successful because they focus solely on teaching music lessons and offer creative programs that appeal to the “new music lesson needs.”

These snatchers, which feature business models similar to franchise educational tutoring centers like Sylvan and Kumon, market a new contemporary approach to music lessons and often cover traditional types, such as rock lessons and technology lessons, while offering non-stop performance opportunities.

Don't wait for the invasion. Refresh your lesson program now. Here's what you can do:

## 1. REDESIGN YOUR TEACHING METHODS TO INCREASE RETENTION.

Retention is the biggest challenge to your music lesson program. Convert what you are doing into shorter term goals rather than long term ones. Pretend that every student that starts only has a 90-day life in your lesson program. How would you reformat what you do? Remember you are teaching students that are used to “instant everything,” so you need to get them musically up and running ASAP.

## 2. OFFER NEW CLASSES TO YOUR MUSIC LESSON PROGRAM.

Add new classes to the mix, such as a recording class, song-writing class or music software class. These are great additions to your mix of traditional lessons. Add Stomp-style percussion

classes or vocal Glee-style classes. What about a one-month special appeal class like blues guitar?

## 3. MORE PERFORMANCES!

One student recital a year doesn't cut it. Neither does a one week summer rock band class. Student's are taking music lessons to learn to play. Your student recitals need to be every other month. Kids playing soccer don't play one game a year, so why do we only have one or two recitals a year?

## 4. IMPROVE YOUR FACILITY.

Is it time for some new paint or carpet? Windows on the lesson room doors? Flat screens playing video clips of your teachers, student recitals or rock camps? Add some cool gear to the lesson rooms. It's all about your vibe.

## 5. DON'T KEEP WHAT YOU DO YOUR BEST KEPT SECRET.

You need to let everyone in your market know you're the place to take music lessons. Don't be all hype. Make it happen in public. Hold performance activities at a park or shopping center. Seeing is believing, and the more your community sees your students perform, the more students you'll have. **MI**

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