

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Midyear Checkups

Do you perform a midyear evaluation of your music lesson program at your store? Just as you crunch the numbers on your other departments and look for ways to improve profits and sales, you should be doing the same in regard to your music lessons. A healthy growing music lesson program is based on two actions: acquiring new students and retaining said students.

That's what this midyear lesson evaluation is about.

As for rental customers, a simple, "How is Joey doing on the trumpet? Do you know about our music lessons?" conversation can help.

Visit schools with information on your program. Promote an open house to meet the music lessons teachers. Or, get online: with email, social media and a strong website, digital options are endless.

GAIN & RETAIN

How is student retention with your music lesson students? Statistically, how many months do your students stay in lessons? Find out by breaking down all of your students and then by teachers. What's the number? Personally, I generally want a lofty retention goal of 16 months (78 weeks). Take your retention rate and come up with a goal for a higher retention rate. Develop a plan on how you are going to accomplish this. Evaluate your teacher's retention rates.

Do you have under-performing teachers on staff? Find out why. Show them what your high-retention teachers are doing. See if they can (or will) try to use these ideas in their own lessons. If the low-retention teachers don't want to change, they shouldn't get more students to burn out.

GROW TEACHERS, GROW STUDENTS

What's your plan for obtaining new teachers? Do you have teachers to cover all the potential lesson times? Do you need to replace low-retention teachers before the new year lesson sign-ups happen? You need to evaluate this, too.

Similarly, what's your plan to find more students? I use an "always looking for new students" format, not a "waiting for new students" approach. Every customer is a potential student.

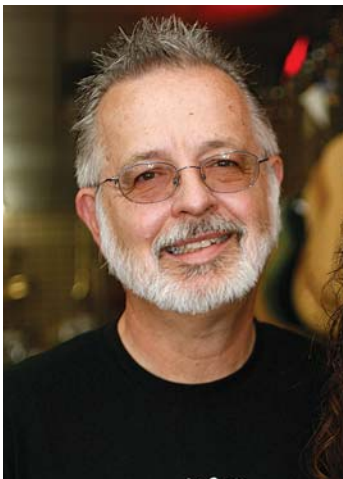
Consider these ideas for your own lesson growth plan checklist: making flyers to hand out to every customer, creating a customer database via sales, rentals and repairs (just get their name, email and phone number), or create customer call lists to contact all back-to-school customers that have come in asking about lessons.

STAY IN THE LOOP

What's your plan for everyone knowing the plan? Plan a meeting so everyone knows what's going on. Keep your teachers in the loop. You can't complain that teachers don't participate if they don't know what's going on. The reverse is also true: Your staff needs to know what your plan is about, not just the teachers. Include everything you're evaluating. Get everyone involved with your social media posts. Make it fun!

Having an evaluation will really make you focus on improving your music lesson program at your store.

Rather than being a music store that purely gives lessons, you will have an exciting and thriving place for your community to become musicians. **MI**



Check in and check up on your lessons to ensure a healthy, hearty program

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