

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Building Your Team

Having a fantastic music lesson program at your store is way more than “giving” music lessons, but unfortunately, that’s what goes on at music shops and lesson studios. Inside the walls of the retail store are lesson rooms where teachers provide music lessons to students, day after day. This process is OK, but it’s nothing spectacular. Many times it even seems like the “retail crew” and the “lesson crew” are at odds with each other in regard to their day-to-day operations. Teachers don’t support sales in the store, sales staff doesn’t support music lesson sign-ups in the store. Even worse, students and parents are ignored because they are viewed as “here for lessons (only) customers.” This is due to not having a team.

You work at building a great sales and customer support team. But what do you do to build a great music lesson team? You can’t assume it’s just going to happen. Here are some ideas to start developing an awesome music lesson team that will benefit every aspect of your business.

US VS. THEM

Start with getting rid of the “us and them” vibe at your store. Sales and teachers are both equally important to your success. Of course, this is easier said than done. Many times, an invisible wall has been built between sales and lessons.

You’ll need to start an open line of communication in order to get rid of this. How does your sales team feel about the lesson teachers, both good and bad? Write these items down. Same goes for music lesson teachers. Now you have something to use as an improvement list on the “need-to-fix” issues as well as a list of positive issues to enhance.

TEAM UNITY

Now, let’s look at your teaching team. Start by setting up a teacher advisory board, and ask all your teachers to participate. This is not only a great way to keep them in the loop, but it also serves as an opportunity for you to listen to their feedback.

During these monthly meetings, fill the teachers in on new products coming in and upcoming sales events. Invite them to meet product reps and to help at sales-related events, such as back-to-school recruiting assemblies, school rental nights and petting zoos. Not all teachers will participate in these meetings,

and that’s to be expected. But don’t give up on this process. It might take some time to succeed.

SALES SYNERGY

Next, you’ll need to turn to your sales team. Schedule a meeting to discuss current issues and to get input.

Once you begin this conversation, training should come second. Too many stores assume lessons are going to automatically happen. To avoid falling into this trap, hold a teacher and lesson sign-up training. Invite teachers to attend and give a quick overview of who they are and what they do, especially when you add a new teacher. Offer an incentive to your sales staff to book more lessons. You can’t ask teachers to be committed to help sales if your sales team isn’t committed to getting them more lessons.

When planning music lesson events, be sure to include your sales staff. This will get them more involved and encourage them to interact with your teachers. It will also help your sales team connect with your lesson families and improve sales with them.

As new sales staff and new teachers come on board, you should add them into this process. Remember to keep communication open and continue developing your team. Your store will see fantastic results in all areas of its operation. **MI**

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To strengthen your music program, break down the walls between the lesson and retail crews