

MUSIC RETAILERS GO BACK TO SCHOOL AT NASMD CONVENTION **PAGE 46**

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

music i n c

JUNE 2011 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

How I Boosted My Piano Sales by 40 Percent

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Kenny Smith's Prospecting Strategy

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Rap videos, JumboTrons and mega sales in a down market.

Meet Cathy Krubsack of Lacefield Music

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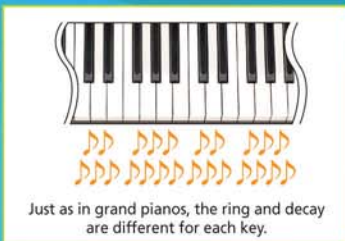
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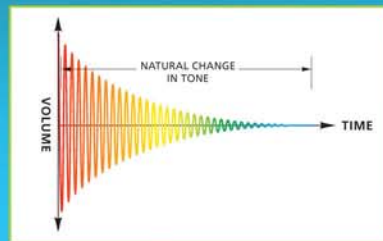


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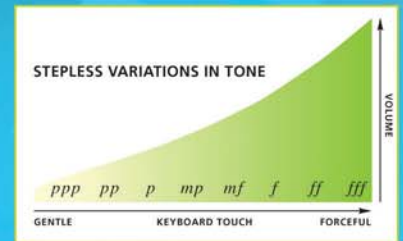
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Cathy Krubsack

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Lacefield Music saw its best year when the rest of the piano industry collapsed. Here's how Cathy Krubsack and her crew use their family-fun personalities to connect with customers.



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Music Inc. takes you through four of the most important sessions at this year's National Association of School Music Dealers convention.

Photo by David Torrence

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

A PIANO REBOUND?

When's the last time you heard good news in the piano industry? Well, I'm happy to say that after five years of down sales, no sales, and seemingly endless pain and suffering, there's good news to be had.

In early May, I checked in with a cadre of top U.S. piano merchants to ask about business. I expected bluer skies in light of Steinway's recent report of an 11-percent sales bump in the first quarter. What I got was a revelation.

Such terms as "large uptick" and sales growth of "40 percent," "44 percent," even "60 percent" year-to-date were thrown around. What's more, a few dealers cited acoustic grands as their biggest growth area.

Say what?!

It's too early to call, but the piano industry may be in for a rebound.

OK, I get it. Those numbers look stellar partly because they're compared to such a down year. And many dealers still bemoaned sluggish foot traffic, as well as having to prospect harder and look deeper for business. That said, any good news is a sharp glimmer of light after such dark times.

So what's working for this group?

For starters, e-mail. The piano business of yesteryear was built on personalized phone calls and face-to-face interactions. That still holds true but with a digital component for good measure. And not just any e-mail will do. Short, targeted messages are king, especially with so many customers reading their e-mail by smartphone. For more on this, check out Grant Billings' fascinating column on how he boosted his piano business by 40 percent last year. (See page 28.) Plus, see Fred Forshey's response in this month's *Ask the Retailer* on page 74.

With slashed institutional budgets, several retailers are also finding an alternative revenue stream in houses of worship. This month's cover story subject, Lacefield Music of St. Louis, entices churches to purchase by offering free group piano lessons to as many as 10 members of a congregation at a time. Horine's Pianos Plus, profiled on page 12, has bolstered its bottom line by catering to this crowd. Again, e-mail is a big component of its prospecting. The Bloomington, Ill., retailer also creates reports for potential clients detailing their current piano's condition and a replacement plan.

And, of course, getting outside the store still yields rewards. Bruce Bannister, president of Samuel Music in Effingham, Ill., said he saw a 44-percent spike in his first-quarter piano business — an upward trend that began last fall. His secret? Consistent marketing.

"Whether it is creating prospects through lesson programs, working with teachers and technicians in the area, doing outside events that showcase products, being a part of the community, assisting live music performances in the area, supporting school music programs, all are important," Bannister said. "It's more a matter of getting out and doing them on a regular basis that makes the difference." **MI**



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Tips to Curb Entitlement

As I do nearly every month, I marked several great ideas from the last issue of *Music Inc.* for our store's crew to consider. After reading Billy Cuthrell's May 2011 column, "Curbing Entitlement," we have some ideas for avoiding some of the problems Cuthrell describes. Here's what we do:

1. We collect résumés from everyone who inquires and keep them on file. When we need to hire, we go back to our file first.

2. We let the colleges in our area screen our employees. We keep in touch with the folks who head up the college's music programs. They've sent us some great candidates over the years.

3. We give each potential candidate a short summary of the job. We word the summary carefully to emphasize qualities, such as punctuality, willingness to accept responsibility and follow-through. By the time the candidate walks in the door for the interview, he or she already knows what the store owner is expecting — a smart, motivated individual who is ready to learn how to support our customers, young and old.

Note that I didn't mention Craigslist. I wouldn't buy a used instrument on Craigslist, and I wouldn't look for my employees there either.

Nancy Vernon
Cadenza Music
St. Paul, Minn.

Right On

Billy Cuthrell's May 2011 column, "Curbing Entitlement," nailed it. Thanks for letting me know that I'm not the only one banging my head against the wall over the current sea of applicants.

Josh Vittek
Joshua Paul Vittek and
Associates Public Relations

Billy Cuthrell brandishes his new drumsticks, the Entitlement Busters



From the Outside Looking In

I always enjoy receiving *Music Inc.* Reading about many people I know, as well as the up-and-coming shows, products and how-to's that address today's challenges, all make this a favorite read.

Being involved with supplying products to many industries, I sometimes believe that we are on the outside of the music industry looking in. While we don't go through the daily music retail issues from an in-the-trenches experience, I do think our perspective adds value to what's going on in the music industry.

I thought Zach Phillips' May

2011 *Perspective*, "No Fear & Loathing in Louisville, Ky.," made a great point. Phillips' observation that Guitar Center and Sam Ash are now involved [in music lessons] isn't surprising, as this may be a sign of a business model change. For another interesting model change, I look at the evolution of Starbucks. Once the market was saturated, the locations became meeting places. They are now an active part of communities.

According to V2V, Starbucks' social entrepreneurs fund, Starbucks recognizes the importance of relationships from a philosophy to a business model to an application, and this may be the

similar path that GC and Sam Ash are on.

To state the obvious, the parallel is the focus on relationships. For larger corporations, this direction offers many challenges, but it may be good news for some music retailers. To be involved in their communities and to make the communities better is a symbiotic benefit, and music lesson programs offer an excellent avenue towards this.

Is it at a cost and/or effort? I would say yes, but let the *Music Inc.* columnists, such as Alan Friedman and Pete Gamber, offer their input on the mechanics of this. My observation is simply the validity of this relationship-based model to the benefit of the business. Establishing a personal relationship is not only very effective but also crucial.

The business model of simply being a music product supply resource is difficult to sustain in the present market.

Art Livingston
President
Marlo Plastics

Gamber's No. 1 Fan

Music Inc. columnist Pete Gamber probably hears this all the time, but I've been to several of his seminars at MIAC and NAMM and I always love what he has to say.

I try to keep up to date with Gamber's articles in *Music Inc.*, and now I am diving into back issues.

Renée Boulanger
Music City
North Bay, Ontario

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RETAIL

HORINE'S PIANOS PLUS | BY HILARY BROWN, PHOTO BY SIMON BRUBAKER

PIANO MARKET REVIVAL

When times are tough at Horine's Pianos Plus, owner David Horine heads to church.

Early this year, he watched lucrative school music sales dwindle and the university funding well run dry. So how did the Bloomington, Ill., Steinway dealership manage to stay afloat?

"February and March were good for us," Horine said. "The church purchases added to our bottom line."

Horine also abides by a gospel of streamlined costs. He employs three other full-timers and, more recently, forewent a cleaning crew and began tuning his piano inventory himself. The lean-and-mean business model has helped combat recessionary woes but not without the help of the untapped house of worship market. And for Horine, soft marketing and strategic relationship-building have been the trick to generating leads among this crowd.

MAXIMIZING OUTREACH

He regularly sends out e-mails to interested churches and has even brought a part-time employee on-board to maximize outreach. Horine tries to visit six churches a week and hosts a wealth of community events —



the store's "Doctor's In" charity piano recital in April packed a 350-seat venue. According to Horine, it's the "traditional techniques that have proven effective throughout the years."

"We send out letters of introduction, along with [a list of] the services we provide, and invite them to contact us," he said. "Most of the time, [pastors] don't realize how substandard their piano is until we point it out, or the choir director has wanted to complain for years and we are the impetus to get a discussion started."

For this reason, the staff also assembles an inventory analysis for potential clients: an easy-to-comprehend report about a piano's condition, age and purchasing history, as well as a replacement plan. It's a slow process that requires "a lot of time and travel," Horine admitted, but it's paid off.

"We still do the nuts-and-bolts demonstration, taking the piano apart and showing them the construction and materials," Horine said. "This gives us time to get to know each other a little better and start building relationships.

Now that the client has a chance to determine what features are important to them, they begin to understand the importance of purchasing a higher-quality piano, and the value is justified in their mind — most of the time."

CREATIVE SUCCESSION

Horine said he believes this philosophy will carry on when he retires. He has formulated a succession plan for his son, Joshua, who's currently the store's sales manager. Horine intends on implementing the plan in a couple of years, patterning his exit after a colleague's retirement from the jewelry business. Per the six-month plan, Horine's Pianos Plus would offer various promotions to clear the sales floor while Joshua secures loans and formulates a future business plan.

"Banks don't like to hold inventory, whether it's a Steinway or a diamond," Horine said. "They don't like to buy anything that has been on the floor or has been repurchased. So everything has to move out, and all the new has to come in."

The market is still unpredictable, but Horine said he's optimistic. He's not trying to be all things to all people. He's focused on keeping costs down and interest up. And he practices what he preaches. **MI**

GUITAR CENTER, MUSICIAN'S FRIEND | VENUES

GC EXPANDS, MF PLANS TO RELOCATE

Guitar Center and Guitar Center Professional (GC Pro) — the company's outside sales division — expanded into new markets this spring, while GC's Musician's Friend business announced a planned relocation to Southern California in 2012.

On April 14, GC opened an 18,000-square-foot store in Omaha, Neb., featuring Guitar Center Studios, the retailer's music lessons and rehearsal facility. It marks GC's third retail-based lessons operation. The store also has GC Garage, which offers on-site guitar repair services.

To celebrate, GC kicked off its grand-opening weekend with a performance from local funk nine-piece Satchel Grande, exclusive savings and Thursday-only gear giveaways. GC also celebrated throughout the weekend with guitar and drum essentials at up to 89-percent off list price and free events, such as a workshop with *Guitar Hero's* Marcus Henderson.

GOING TO CALIFORNIA

On April 28, GC announced plans to relocate the operations of its Musician's Friend business. The exact location has yet to be announced. Musician's Friend will continue to operate at its current location in Medford, Ore., through the end of 2011. Facilities operated by Musician's Friend in Salt Lake City and Kansas City, Mo., will be unaffected by the relocation.

"Our customers increasingly



Customers stand in line for the grand opening of GC's Omaha, Neb., store



Inside the Omaha store's drum department

appreciate our ability to serve them across our various brands through every potential channel — in-store, online, or from a smartphone or call center," said Greg Trojan, CEO of Guitar Center. "This relocation will enable us to have our e-commerce experts working side by side with our retail experts for the benefit of our customers."

Musician's Friend currently employs roughly 225 staff at its Medford facility. According to a statement from the organization, it plans to offer some associates the opportunity to move to Southern California. Associates who

choose not to move or are not offered the opportunity to move will be given retention packages and severance payments.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GC Pro is following up a banner year and celebrating its 10th anniversary with new locations, personnel and market-expansion initiatives.

Several GC stores recently added GC Pro locations, including San Jose, Calif.; Tempe, Ariz.; Clackamas, Ore.; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Plano, Texas; Indianapolis; and Country Club Hills, Ill. GC Pro also recently promoted

several key employees and added additional management, sales and support staff positions. Dan Scalpone, previously senior account manager at GC Pro's Chicago location, has been promoted to business development manager for the South-Central territory, which expands GC Pro's team to three full-time regional sales managers. Chad Evans, who has served as account manager at GC Pro's Nashville, Tenn., location, has been promoted to senior account manager. GC Pro will also continue expanding into the area of engineered/installed sound and plans to hire two new full-time engineered/installed sound professionals, who will be based in New York and Hollywood.

"In 2010, we had significant growth across the board, and we are now poised for a real breakout year in 2011," said GC Pro Director Rick Plushner. "The professional audio marketplace is evolving at a rapid pace, and GC Pro is changing and adapting with it, effectively staying just ahead of the curve. GC Pro could not have grown to this size without the support of our loyal customers and long-term vendor relationships, and as we expand into new markets and tackle new market sectors, our dedicated sales team will continue to provide our customers with the unmatched service they have come to expect. What better way to celebrate our anniversary than by expanding our services, for the benefit of our customers? If you think these first 10 years have been great, just wait." **MI**

TRIBUTE

Remembering Manchen

Piano dealer Gunter Manchen, founder of Euro Grand Piano Gallery in Naples, Fla., passed away Jan. 30 at the age of 75. Gunter was born in Halle (Saale), Germany, where he became a cabinet maker and church organ builder. After immigrating to Toronto in 1965, Gunter founded Manchen Pianos and established a reputation as a concert piano technician. In 1994, Gunter and business partner Wayne Chen co-founded Piano & Keyboard Centre in Toronto. The Euro Grand Piano Gallery in Naples, established in fall 2001, was the culmination of Gunter's lifelong dream. Along with his support of the southwest Florida music community, he actively supported the reconstruction of the Evangelische Johannesgemeinde Halle in Saale.

EVENT

Listening Party

Front End Audio in Columbia, S.C., recently hosted a listening event with Neumann to debut the company's KH 120 studio monitors. It's the first studio monitor to come out after the rebranding and redesign of the Klein + Hummel line. Attendees spent time listening to their own reference CDs and received direct training from product managers.



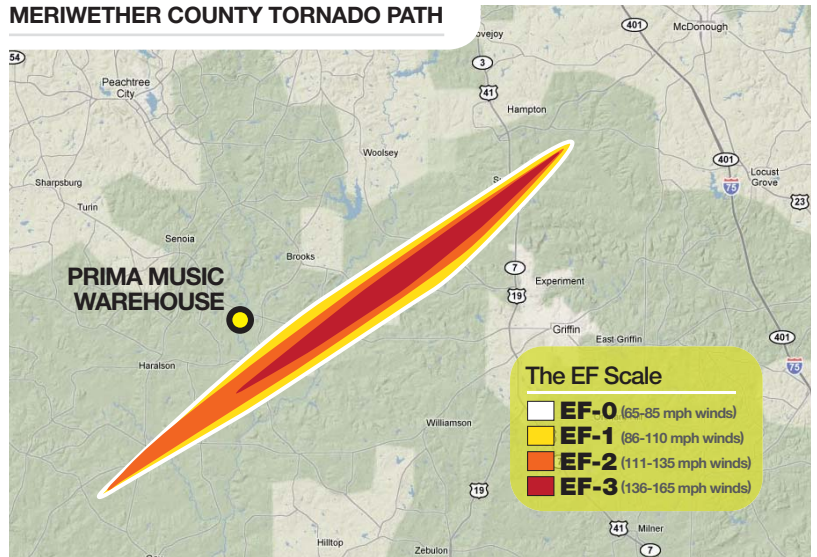
"I think that we were all initially quite shocked by the compact size of the KH 120s," said Alan Moon, sales manager of Front End Audio. "However, once the music started coming through them, it became really apparent just how special these monitors are and just how popular they really are going to be with our customers."

CATALOG

Astronomical Autographs

The astronauts of the shuttle Atlantis recently gifted Sweetwater with a signed copy of its *ProGear* catalog. The crew, who blasted off May 11, 2009, was responsible for the final repairs on the Hubble Space Telescope. Unfortunately, the group couldn't take an entire copy of the 1-pound-plus catalog into space due to strict weight restrictions.

MERIWETHER COUNTY TORNADO PATH



PRIMA MUSIC | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

Prima Music Escapes Disaster

On April 28, Prima Music became a near-casualty of the tornadoes tearing through the southern United States.

Bobby Mitchell, owner of the Brooks, Ga., online print music dealership, hunkered down with his family in their basement as the storm broke. Watching the news, he realized a tornado touched down near his company's warehouse and offices.

"After the storms passed, we drove to the warehouse around 2 a.m. to see if there was any damage," he said. "The way that we normally drive to the warehouse did not show significant damage, so we did not even realize that there were many local residents who were digging out their collapsed homes only a few miles away."

In fact, two people had been killed by the tornado a quarter-mile from Prima Music's facility, which didn't sustain any damage. Still, the company closed for two days and suffered several more without electricity or communications. No employees were harmed.

In the following days, Prima's employees helped with disaster recovery, bringing food and water to the hardest-

hit areas. Mitchell's oldest daughter, Katy, a firefighter and EMT, was even in charge of volunteer activities for the entire county.

"For some of the citizens, our employees were the first people that they had seen [since the tornado]," Mitchell said.

DISASTER PLAN UPGRADE

The April tornado served as a much-needed wake-up call for Mitchell. "As a management consultant for many years, I preached regularly to Fortune 500 executives about the need to have a disaster recovery plan," he said. "After this near miss, I realize that I am not following my own advice very well."

He acknowledged that he has adequately planned for technology- and data-related issues but said he's underprepared for physical damage to his facilities.

"In the coming weeks, I am going to reach out to other retailers to see how we can help each other in the event of a natural disaster. While our physical assets are insured, we need a better plan to make sure our customers' needs are met in case our operations are down for an extended period of time." MI

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Robert M. Sides Family Music Center's Williamsport, Pa., showroom before (left) and after the lighting renovation



ROBERT M. SIDES FAMILY MUSIC CENTER | RENOVATION

BRIGHT IDEA

A recent lighting renovation at Robert M. Sides Family Music Center in Williamsport, Pa., brightened up the store while reducing the electric bill by nearly 60 percent.

Sides partnered with Energy Controls Group for the \$47,000 initiative and swapped out incandescent and T12 fluorescent bulbs for LEDs and T8 fluorescents. The project is expected to pay for itself in a little over two years.

According to Peter Sides, president of Robert M. Sides, the company increased coverage and lumens by 25-50 percent in its shops, offices and showroom, helping reduce eye strain for repair techs and office staff. The LED bulbs are designed to last for

an average of 50,000 hours.

“For a few years, we’d been talking about how dull our main store looked compared to our three stores that were new or remodeled since 2008,” Sides said. “The costs in the past made updating a 52,000-square-foot store all at once unrealistic, so we kept putting it off. Once we knew that we could do it all in 45 days while saving money, promoting sustainability and making for happier customers and staff, it was a no-brainer.

“It’s hard to put numbers on things like eye fatigue for repair and office staff, but the before-and-after results to those areas are just as impressive as the impact it’s had on the retail floor.”

FINELY TUNED MUSIC | OPENING

Fine-Tuned Passion Project

Longtime musician Frank Moran called his new music store a “converted passion.”

Last St. Patrick’s Day, Moran took his hobby of collecting guitars to the next level, opening Finely Tuned Music in Wharton, N.J. The store specializes in guitars and amplifiers, including vintage gear, as well as accessories and P.A. equipment.

“I sell a lot of my own collection and some new ones I’ve picked up from other parties,” Moran said.

Finely Tuned Music’s in-store merchandise ranges from \$100-\$1,500, but the owner has brought in guitars on special request worth as much as \$4,000. He’s also attracted nearly 20 new students ages 6-18 for the store’s lesson program since the grand opening.

Moran maintains a store on eBay and also regularly updates a Facebook page. He also said playing in his own band



Frank Moran

on weekends generates a lot of word-of-mouth interest in music lessons.

“A lot of people see me play and want their kids to learn from me,” he said. “I’ve been a musician my whole life.”



Jesse McCormick (left) and Richard King

ALL COUNTY MUSIC | EVENT

All Things Horn at All County

French horn players recently traveled as far as 100 miles to pack All County Music's Tamarac, Fla., store. The event, French Horn Day, gave them a chance to learn from the Cleveland Orchestra's principal French horn, Richard King, and second chair, Jesse McCormick. Conn-Selmer and the Cleveland Orchestra sponsored the program, and it served as the first time any of the Cleveland musicians appeared in a Florida music store, according to a statement from All County Music.

King and McCormick performed several duets and explained the music to the audience. Afterwards, several school-aged audience members played prepared pieces for the duo, who offered them pointers. One of the performers, a 6th grader from Miami, said, "I was a bit nervous at first, but they were really nice about my playing and really encouraged me to become better." Participants were then invited to play along with King and McCormick.

The clinicians also answered questions about technique, performing, teaching and equipment and stayed to have their pictures taken. Conn V8D Vintage French horn T-shirts were given away, and eight people won tickets to attend the Cleveland Orchestra's performance that same evening. Those winners were invited backstage during intermission to meet the rest of the Cleveland horn section.

"Richard and Jesse are incredible musicians who love what they do and are willing to share their talents," said All County Music's owner, Fred Schiff. "Regardless of performance ability, they were able to relate to everyone at the event and make this a very special day."

MUSIC & ARTS | OUTREACH

Students Inspired by Music & Arts

Music & Arts recently launched Pass the Music On!, a regional community service campaign designed to inspire kids to be community service leaders. The campaign, which benefits local public school music programs, runs through June.

Founded by Frederick, Md.-based Music & Arts and YesKidzCan! in support of Music 4 More and in partnership with Yamaha, Pass the Music On! will encourage 8- to 18-year-old students in 200 Washington, D.C., and Baltimore public schools to donate band and orchestra instruments. Music & Arts will repair and redistribute the instruments to local schools in need.

Students can also make online donations at passthemusicon.org with 100 percent of proceeds going to school music programs. Music & Arts' 19 regional stores are currently promoting the campaign.

"Music & Arts has a great affinity to the Greater D.C. area because our



first store was located in a small house in Bethesda, Md.," said Music & Arts President Kenny O'Brien. "We want to help give all schools in this area greater access to music."

The campaign aims to empower and unite students with the common goal of making music more accessible to the less fortunate.

BEAVER'S BAND BOX | CLOSING

Beaver's Closes Broadway Store

Beaver's Band Box of Tucson, Ariz., closed one of its two locations in late April.

The store was located at 4570 E. Broadway. All operations are now based out of the company's other store on Oracle Road in Tucson.

Michael Santander, store manager, told *Arizona Daily Star* that a drop in school and walk-in business and private lesson sign-ups were the reasons for the closure.

Prior to the closure, he said that one or two part-timers would be laid off,

along with all teachers who worked at the store as subcontractors, but none of Beaver's full-time employees would be affected. Some inventory, particularly print music, was liquidated for as little as \$1 a title, but he said that Beaver's held onto as much stock from the Broadway store as it could.

He added that the Oracle Road location remains profitable, and Beaver's may open a new store at some point.

"We're taking a step back and focusing on doing what we're really good at," Santander told *Arizona Daily Star*.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CENTER | PROMOTION

SPRING CLEANING

The staff at Instrumental Music Center spent the April 29–May 1 weekend peddling old, slow-moving stock in the store’s parking lot. The occasion? The company’s annual Rummage Sale, which, according to Leslie Faltin, co-owner of the Tucson, Ariz., dealership, drew about 500 people and grossed roughly \$15,000 in sales.

The event is part of the company’s ongoing effort to keep its inventory current and boost turns. A few of the sale items included old horns customers

used for trade-ins, \$30 violins and a Gene Simmons bass.

“[Music retail accountant] Alan Friedman says that if anything in your store has a birthday, you should sell it at any cost,” Faltin said. “The cost of that item is small compared to the lost revenue that you could be earning if you moved the bad merchandise and replaced it with inventory that will sell.”

She added that the sale cost roughly \$200 to host, and that covered its promotion. Staff hung fluorescent signs in the neighbor-



Instrumental Music Center's Rummage Sale signage

hood and a banner on the street corner. Beginning a month before the sale, Faltin also placed a “fun ad” on Craigslist and refreshed it weekly.

“The number of musical instrument stores has declined in

Tucson, with three closing in the last three months,” Faltin said. “Although the economy has required some changes and adjustments, we are happy to announce that our store is doing well.”

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Note from Joe

changed their buying habits in the wake of the Great Recession. They predict that 50 percent of all retailers—and the brands they carry—will disappear as the next phase of retail unfolds. Pretty scary stuff, especially if you're still running your store like you did even a few years ago. The flip side of that coin is that music making is more popular than ever and those who adapt to the new marketplace will reap the rewards of the industry growth predicted to come our way.

Our goal is to make sure that NAMM Member Retailers do not become a statistic. As Jon Haber from Alto Music said during his Breakfast of Champions interview at this past NAMM Show, "no one wants to go into a lousy music store and see four guitars hanging on the wall." That's why we encourage our Members to get out of their stores and sharpen the skills necessary to succeed. There are so many resources available—you can join a sharing group, attend seminars, take night classes at a local business school and go to Summer NAMM in Nashville.

For this year's summer show, we've assembled the best and brightest retailers in the business who will be sharing their ideas and illuminating your path to success. We will also highlight the winning strategies of the "Top 100 Dealers." You can even get free one-on-one consultations from business experts through NAMM. If you can't justify a couple of days out of your store to network with your peers, attend NAMM U sessions and strengthen relationships with your key suppliers, then how do you plan on competing with those who do?

Retail has changed forever. And that is not necessarily a bad thing, just different. Some will adapt and thrive, others will choose not to change and fail. And you don't have to like it for it to be true.

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

Retail is in a State of Rapid Transformation... What is *Your* Game Plan?

According to Wikipedia, the word retail comes from the Old French word "retailier" which, in terms of tailoring, means "to cut off, clip, pare, divide." It was first recorded as a noun in 1433 with the meaning of a "sale in small quantities."

I'm not sure what "Ye Olde Retailier Shoppe" might have looked like back then, but I'm guessing it was a relatively simple affair. Today, NAMM Members are competing in the world's toughest marketplace: U.S. Retail. A place where unlimited product selection is available from your cell phone, where customers are still hesitant to spend, thinking that another recession (or maybe the loss of their own job) may be right around the corner, and where tax laws and other government regulations throw up roadblocks that favor one over the other. What will retail look like in five years, three years or for that matter even next year?! I don't know, but I do know it will look different than it does today. You could say that the Great Recession has only accelerated the rapid transformation occurring in retail.

The current best-selling business book *The New Rules of Retail* by Robin Lewis and Michael Dart explains how consumers have

Summer
NAMM

REAL TAKE-HOME VALUE

AT SUMMER NAMM, YOU WILL OBTAIN THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO...

- Learn the Top 10 Web Marketing Trends and How to Use Them
- Get Out in Your Community to Help Your Business Thrive
- Sell Music Lessons as a Retail Item
- Capitalize On Your Greatest Source of New Business!
- Stake Your Claim! Make Your Google Place Page Work for You

- Use Facebook to Market Your Business: The Do's & Don'ts
- Hook Them with Your Home Page!
- Build Your Own Buzz—And Grow Your Business

And don't miss Thursday morning's **Retail Summit**, where a panel of music retailers will discuss the state of the industry and what they're doing to beat the odds following the Great Recession.

NAME

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June

No. 2011

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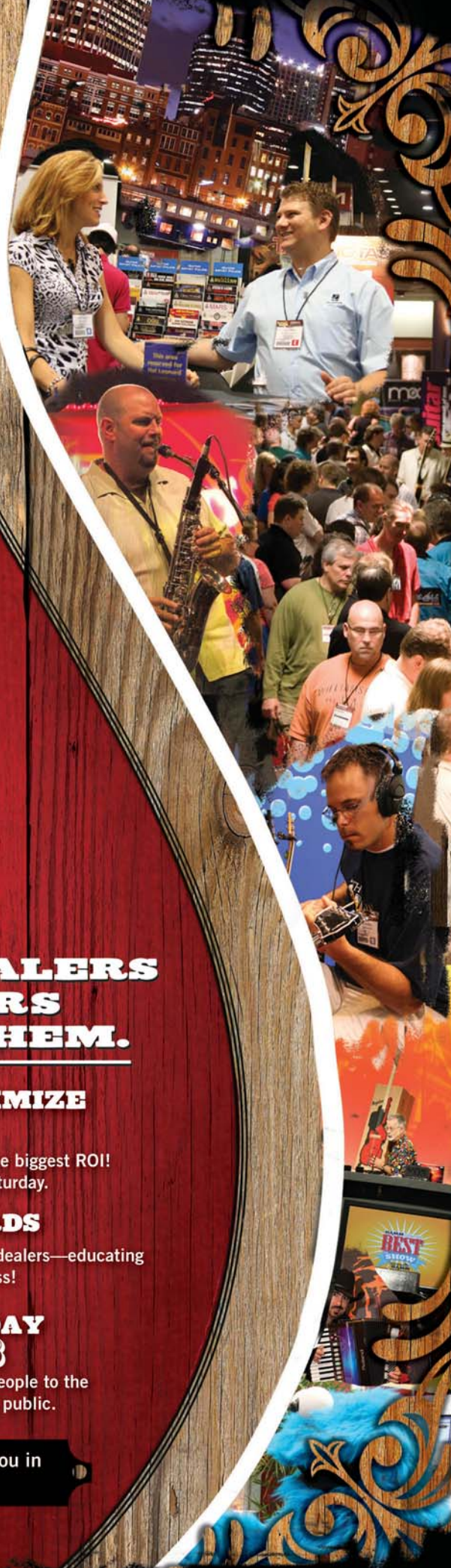
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Continuing the industry's work to introduce more people to the
benefits and fun of playing music. Open to the public.

Mark your calendar now and we'll see you in
Nashville, July 21-23, 2011!



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SUPPLY

ROLAND | BY SARA FARR

REINTRODUCING ROLAND

For nearly 40 years, Roland has developed tools that define musical movements and let imaginations run wild. It's been all in a day's work for the Japanese company, but more recently, Duane McDonald decided to toot Roland's horn a little louder.

Last year, McDonald, the national training manager, hand-selected a group of music retailers and launched Roland University, an intensive-two day event at the company's U.S. headquarters in Los Angeles.

"We felt strongly that we needed to reintroduce people to Roland — not just the products we have now but the legacy, technologies and innovations that Roland has been responsible for," McDonald said. "We wanted a chance to introduce people to that message but also give them a chance to meet the people who work here, which is another really strong asset of our company."

Roland has since hosted a handful of Roland University sessions. These included a general seminar on all Roland products, plus individualized sessions focusing on the company's piano/organ, Boss and drum divisions. Participants learned about company history and product lines but also got hands-on training



Roland University attendees get hands-on experience with the company's products

Roland University's total retailer immersion experience

with Roland gear in small clinic-type settings. A "living museum" session let attendees learn about and demo key products, providing a link between Roland's past and future.

The latest session, held March 22 and 23, focused on the com-

pany's drum gear. During the event, Roland Corp. US CEO Chris Bristol told the approximately 40 attendees that knowing Roland's broader history will help them put together a compelling story for their customers.

"Roland is a company of innovation," Bristol said. "Knowing that broader history will help give you an idea of who we are and how we think."

EXCLUSIVE TRAINING

Dealer education isn't a new concept for Roland — the company has hosted regional

dealer training sessions for years. That said, McDonald pointed out that Roland University offers a more exclusive hands-on approach.

"I think there were some positive benefits from doing [regional] training, but we felt strongly that the part we were missing was the chance for [dealers] to come see Roland, learn about us and meet our people," he said.

McDonald added that the program — which is all-expenses-paid, including airfare, transportation, meals and lodging — isn't limited to owners

or managers. Roland's sales reps focus on bringing people out who will most directly benefit from enhanced training.

"We want to send the best guys out there because those are the ones who are going to get the most out of it," McDonald said.

ALL THINGS DRUMS

At March's Drum University session, attendees included managers and sales staff from a mix of chain and indie dealerships, including Sam Ash Music, Columbus Pro Percussion, Instrumental Music and Lone Star Percussion.

During the event, presentations served a dual purpose. Roland execs demonstrated products in a fun, engaging way but also included lots of selling points and marketing materials that dealers

could integrate into their sales pitches. This included sessions on Roland's V-Drums and the Octapad SPD-30.

"Even though it's difficult to set up some 20-odd drum kits, we feel it's important," McDonald said. "We want to give [dealers] a chance to experience all the particular aspects of a product. We want to give them a chance to do this for themselves."

At lunchtime, drummers crowded around clinician Didi Negrón in the cafeteria as she demonstrated one of Roland's new products, V-Drums Friend Jam. This app lets V-Drums users around the world interact with one another through Twitter. V-Drums Friend Jam also downloads a suite of practice songs that feature full-band arrangements minus drums. By



Roland artist Didi Negrón (right) discusses the company's latest drum products

connecting their V-Drums kits to computers via a MIDI interface, players can record and evaluate individual performance elements.

McDonald added that the Roland University programs have resulted in some direct sales for the company, but the goal is more about long-term benefits, such

as dealer education and relationship building.

"This is about spreading the message, educating people about why Roland is different from other manufacturers," McDonald said. "We believe in the long run, this will be very beneficial to us." **MI**

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OUTREACH

A Czech Masterpiece

The annual Beseda Ball was recently held at the Grand Ballroom of the Bohemian National Hall in New York. The event showcased a Petrof P2 grand piano, built in the Czech Republic. Petrof USA provided the handcrafted instrument.

“We are so pleased that a Petrof piano has such a place of prominence,” said Aja Vrzanova, the driving force behind this year’s ball. “It is fitting that this wonderful example of Czech craftsmanship and engineering excellence is a part of our gala celebration.” petrof.com



From left: Warwick's Hans-Peter and Florence Wilfer and Korg's Norio Iwasaki and Shiho Nakatsura

DISTRIBUTION

Korg Distributes Warwick in Japan

Korg is now the exclusive distributor of Warwick basses and amplification in Japan.

“Warwick is truly excited to be working with a world-class organization such as Korg to establish the Warwick brand as the leader in bass and bass amplification products in Japan,” said Hans-Peter Wilfer, president and CEO of Warwick.

korg.com; warwickbass.com

PARTNERSHIP

Loud Joins AVnu Alliance

Loud Technologies recently announced its membership in the AVnu Alliance, an industry forum dedicated to the advancement of professional-quality audio video by promoting audio video bridging (AVB). Through its AVnu alliance, Loud will engage in setting standards and compliance programs for the pro audio community and will integrate these standards into its brands.

“Through our AVnu partnership and thoughtful migration to AVB, Loud will position our brands and our customers well for the next phase of growth in the install, A/V and P.A. markets,” said Mark Graham, Loud CEO. loudtechnic.com



MUSIKMESSE | SHOWS

Musikmesse 2011
Attracts 75,221

Musikmesse 2011, held April 6–9 in Frankfurt, reported 1,511 exhibitors representing a record-breaking 55 countries. The show also attracted 75,221 attendees, a slight decline compared to last year’s 77,609. However, the proportion of international visitors remained unchanged at 33 percent.

During the show, Musikmesse also reported that 75 percent of exhibitors regarded the current economic situation to be satisfactory or good, an increase of 3 percent over 2010.

“The musical instrument sector, which came through the recent crisis very well, is taking a very positive view of the future,” said Detlef Braun, member of the board of management of Messe Frankfurt, the convention’s organizer.

“Although the impact of the crisis is still being felt in the U.S. market, exhibitors are confident of being able to increase their sales this year.”

MORE MESSE STATS

Of the 75,221 visitors, 24,688 came from outside Germany. Following Germany’s attendance of 50,533, the best represented visitor nations were The Netherlands with 2,424, France with 1,996 and Italy with 1,843. The United States had 606 attendees.

The show featured more than 1,000 concerts, workshops and product demonstrations. According to Musikmesse,

96 percent of visitors surveyed said they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with Musikmesse 2011. Compared to 2010, 2 percent more visitors said they “achieved their goals for the fair.”

MESSE PARTNERS WITH NAMM

In related news, Messe Frankfurt and NAMM have partnered to co-produce new shows in Russia. The shows, NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia, will take place at Moscow’s Expo Centre from May 16–19, 2012.

“With its events in Frankfurt and Shanghai, Messe Frankfurt has a vast experience of the industries concerned and in the organization of fairs and exhibitions,” said Cordelia von Gymnich, vice president Messe Frankfurt, entertainment/media & creation. “Moreover, Messe Frankfurt has an extremely good international network, which provides a solid base for the expansion of our activities.”

NAMM’s president and CEO, Joe Lamond, said the partnership is good for the global industry as a whole. “As partners with Messe Frankfurt in this new venture, we look forward to serving our global NAMM membership by increasing the size of the market and helping more people there experience the enjoyment and many proven benefits of playing music,” he said. musikmesse.com

LOS CABOS DRUMSTICKS | CHARITY

Think Pink

Longer

With April 2011 signaling the end of Los Cabos Drumsticks' Think Pink breast cancer awareness campaign, the company has decided to extend the fundraiser for an entire year, now ending Oct.

31. The campaign was launched in November 2010 as a way to keep awareness in the media following October's Breast Cancer Awareness month's fundraising events.

"Think Pink has been a great success," said Matt Carter, director of marketing and artist relations for Los Cabos Drumsticks. "We're pleased to be able to help spread awareness for breast cancer research and charities throughout the music community, and the support we received has been overwhelming. In fact, the unexpected demand delayed us in getting our pink sticks out to many of our distributors in Europe and parts of the United States." loscabosdrumsticks.com



NAMM | LEGAL

1099 Provision Repealed

Congress has taken final action to repeal a requirement that all businesses file Form 1099 for virtually all purchases of goods or services from individuals and corporations beginning in 2012. The filing requirement was contained in last year's health care reform legislation and was estimated to generate more than \$15 billion in revenue over a 10-year period. However, the reporting requirement would have forced many small businesses to increase their record-keeping responsibilities.

For example, had the 1099 requirement remained, music retailers would have had to file 1099s for all suppliers, as well as landlords and other vendors, according to a statement from NAMM.

NAMM worked with the National Retail Federation, National Federation of Independent Business and other business organizations to urge Congress to repeal the provision.

In other news, NAMM has announced it will support three upcoming music festivals to demonstrate the fun and benefits of playing music to enthusiasts of all ages.

Through its support of Vans Warped Tour '11, Country Throw-down Tour 2011 and the 2011 Rockstar Energy Drink Mayhem Festival, NAMM will be highlighting its message on the festivals' websites and in various communications. namm.org

Congress takes final action to repeal the 1099 provision from health care legislation

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SERVICES

Signage US Offers Help

Signage US is now offering its services to music retailers. Signage US ensures that exterior signage meets all required safety standards and specifications, including installation. The company also helps with signage contract conception and inspection. signageus.com



CHARITY

Godin Teams With Arcade Fire

Godin Guitars has teamed up with Montreal-based rock band Arcade Fire in its continuing efforts and charitable contributions to aid Haiti following the country's 2010 earthquake. The manufacturer has donated numerous acoustic guitars from its Seagull, Norman, Art & Lutherie and Lapatrie brands.

During a visit to Haiti in March, Arcade Fire performed multiple shows and played three of the guitars donated by Godin. Following the concerts, the guitars were given to local musicians in need.

"We are proud to support the great work that Arcade Fire is doing alongside organizations such as Kanpe and Partners In Health by helping the people of Haiti after such a catastrophe," said Richard Bunze, Godin's press and artist relations representative. godinguitars.com

PROMOTION

Taylor Offers Zero Interest

Taylor Guitars recently partnered with GE Money to offer customers zero-percent interest on the purchase of select new Taylor models if paid in full within 12 months.

The financing program, which kicked off April 1 and ends Aug. 31, is available through participating authorized Taylor dealers. It's open to qualified buyers in the United States and applies to many Taylor models, including all 500 series/Acoustic 5 series models and select limited editions. taylorguitars.com

HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

HAL LEONARD STRIKES DEAL

Universal Music Publishing Classical (UMPC) and Hal Leonard have announced that Hal Leonard will provide UMPC exclusive services for worldwide print distribution and for-hire (i.e. rental) rights fulfillment for UMPC's classical music catalogs, beginning July 1.

UMPC's Universal MGB Publications in Milan oversees publishing, sales, marketing and distribution of printed editions and hire (rental) parts for the music publishing catalogs, including Ricordi, Éditions Salabert, Éditions Durand and Éditions Max Eschig.

Under the terms of the new deal, Hal Leonard will manage print distribution and hire operations and jointly develop new publications with UMPC for global sale.

"We feel confident entrusting the support of our printed music and hire rights for our classical music publishing catalogs to Hal Leonard," said David Renzer, chairman and CEO of Universal Music Publishing Group.

"Our companies have enjoyed a solid relationship for many years, and we have been very pleased with their representation." universalmusicpublishingclassical.com; halleonard.com

STEINWAY | FINANCE

STEINWAY REPORTS RISE IN Q1 SALES



Steinway Musical Instruments has reported first-quarter sales of \$73 million, up 6 percent from the first quarter of 2010.

Gross margin decreased to 30.7 percent from 31.1 percent, and earnings per share was also down to \$0.06 compared to last year's \$0.17.

"Our piano business had a nice quarter, with sales up 11 percent and divisional profits up more than 70 percent," said Steinway CEO Dana Messina. "We are seeing a nice recovery, and the steps taken to lean out our cost structure are having a noticeable effect on our results. We delivered solid growth in sales and gross margins, both domestically and overseas."

While gross margin and earnings per share were down, sales of grand pianos were up 18 percent and mid-priced pianos were up 12 percent.

Overall, the company's band segment sales were even with last year, as a revenue increase from

professional brass instruments offset decreases in percussion products and accessories. Gross margins, which were exceptionally high in the prior year period, decreased in the first quarter.

"Our band division saw excel-

'We are seeing a nice recovery.'
— Dana Messina

lent order flow, but sales did not meet our expectations for the first quarter," Messina said.

"Many dealers began scheduling their deliveries for later in the year. Our open order backlog, which was up 14 percent compared to March 31 of last year, is a good indicator of the sales pickup we will see in the second quarter. We are expecting a strong increase in band revenues for 2011." steinwaymusical.com



ENGL's new North Hollywood, Calif., showroom

ENGL | SHOWROOM

ENGL's New Digs

German-engineered ENGL Guitar Amplifiers recently opened a new showroom in North Hollywood, Calif., that will let players see, hear, try out and feel these boutique amplifiers in a comfortable, hassle-free environment.

"The new showroom allows guitarists of all levels to really experience what the ENGL line is about," said Michael Berger, ENGL's U.S. artist relations director. "Plus, we've set it up as a salon, so guitarists can come hang out and just relax in a calm, classy atmosphere. I look forward to sharing ENGL

'We've set it up as a salon, so guitarists can come hang out.'

amps with any guitarists that live in or come to the Los Angeles metro area."

Players can also purchase amps at the showroom, and to celebrate the grand opening, ENGL is offering an extended two-year warranty for a limited time. [{engl-amps.com}](http://engl-amps.com)

BLUE MICROPHONES | ACQUISITION

Blue Takes on Summit Audio

Blue Microphones has acquired the assets of Summit Audio. With the acquisition, Summit Audio's production, sales and support will continue under the ownership of Blue Microphones.

Blue will be expanding the availability of Summit Audio products through improved supply and distribution, in addition to continuing new product development under the Summit brand.

"Acquiring Summit was a natural next

step for Blue Microphones as we continue to grow and expand our studio and live microphone lines," said John Maier, CEO of Blue Microphones. "Now with Summit's high-quality mic pre-amps and signal processors, we can bring a more complete offering to market and further our mission to deliver the highest-quality sound to our customers."

Production of all current Summit product lines will continue under the Summit name.

[{summitaudio.com}](http://summitaudio.com); [{bluemic.com}](http://bluemic.com)



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HERCULES | LEGAL

HERCULES SUES ULTIMATE SUPPORT

On March 23, KHS Musical Instrument, parent company of Hercules Stands, filed a patent infringement lawsuit against Ultimate Support Systems for allegedly infringing on its patented Auto Grip System yoke. The yoke automatically secures the neck of a guitar using the instrument's own weight.

Hercules files suit, claiming infringement of AGS yoke

The lawsuit involves U.S. patent number 7,105,732, owned by KHS, and claims infringement by Ultimate Support on its GS-1000 guitar stand, which includes a grabbing system called the Self-closing Yoke.

After failing to resolve the infringement issues with Ultimate Support, KHS filed suit against the company for its manufacturing, supplying and selling of the GS-1000 in the United States. khsmusic.com

APPOINTMENTS

Wanamaker Promoted

Fender Musical Instruments recently promoted music industry veteran Jay Wanamaker to senior vice president of KMC Music sales and global percussion.

Since joining KMC in November of last year as the organization's senior vice president of percussion, Wanamaker has played a major role in creating a global percussion vision and aligning KMC percussion brands, which include Gretsch, Latin Percussion, Gibraltar, Toca, Sabian and Protection Racket. In his new role, he will continue to lead the percussion team and oversee domestic sales. fender.com



Jay Wanamaker

The Confederation of European Music Industries has elected Antoine Beaussant to serve as its vice president. Since 2007, Beaussant has headed Buffet Crampon and Antoine Courtois, which specializes in the manufacturing of wind instruments.

Aphex recently tapped Jonathan Parker and Michael Hurwitz as national sales managers and Jace Nuzback as a product specialist. The company has also added pro audio veteran Charles Boehm to its engineering staff.

EAW has appointed Jerrold Stevens as director of the EAW Application Support Group.

Grant Henry recently joined Antigua Winds as the director of sales and marketing.

D'Addario has named Don Click percussion business unit manager.

Drummer Craig Blundell has joined Premier drums as an international ambassador and clinician.

Ace Products recently added Brian Dahlgren to its sales team.

Steinway Musical Instruments has appointed Michael Sweeney, Edward Kim and Don Kwon to its board of directors.

Universal Audio has named Amanda Whiting its new communications manager.

ALFRED | PARTNERSHIP

Alfred to Distribute BBE

Alfred Music Publishing recently reached an agreement to distribute music products by BBE Sound, a developer of advanced sound technologies. Alfred will distribute BBE's various lines of effects processors, guitar effects pedals, direct boxes, instrument pre-amps, compressors, stereo crossovers, graphic equalizers and software plug-ins.

BBE's best known for its Sonic Maximizer, an audio processor that enhances the audio quality of instruments and recordings through phase correction. alfred.com; bbsound.com

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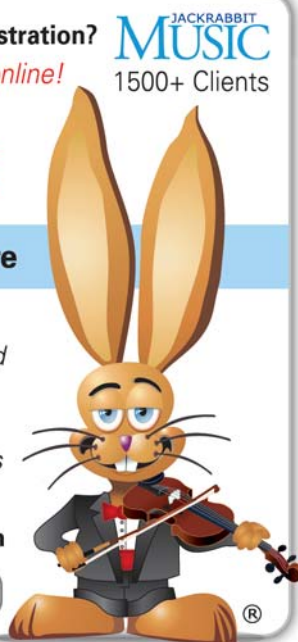
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MUSICORP | DISTRIBUTION

Musicorp to Distribute Hamer

Musicorp is now distributing Hamer XT series guitars in the United States. Hamer's XT series features a selection of guitars and basses inspired by Hamer USA's solid vintage design principle. The series includes the Monaco, Sunburst, Vector, Standard, Special and Velocity Bass models.

"Musicorp customers have come to expect us to carry the best products in the industry, and offering the Hamer XT series is our latest effort to deliver on that promise," said Dan Roberts, Musicorp's vice president. "Hamer's legacy of innovation, craftsmanship and brand strength, combined with the sales and profit opportunity for our dealers, makes this an exciting program for Musicorp." musicorp.com

MIPA | AWARDS

MIPA HANDS OUT 2011 AWARDS

The 12th annual Musikmesse International Press Award (MIPA) ceremony, held April 7 at the Musikmesse show in Frankfurt, recognized outstanding contributions throughout the industry.

Here are a few of the winners:

- Zildjian Gen16 AE Cymbals** — Most Innovative Product, Best E-drum Product
- Blackstar Amp HT-1R** — Best Guitar Amp Combo
- HK Audio Elements** — Best Portable Sound
- Korg Kronos** — Best Keyboard Workstation




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IDEAS

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MY TURN | BY GRANT BILLINGS

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, BREAK IT

A few years ago, I received an unexpected gift from one of my salespeople when he began to complain during a training session.

"Customers are always in a hurry," he said. "How can we get them to spend the time they need to spend to learn about our products? It's always rush, rush."

His point was valid, but his perspective was flawed.

During this period, all of my piano retail peers were reporting dismal sales. Several of my mentors said, "This is the worst market I've ever seen." Discussions focused on bringing people into the store, but my father's take was different. "You can't advertise your way out of a down market," he said.

I started to think more and more about today's customers. Are people really busier than they were 20 years ago? Probably, but they're also more distracted. In the end, that salesperson couldn't change his perspective and had to move on. Still, his question propelled me to make alterations to cater to customers of the new millennium. I decided that our priority would be to improve the experience for customers already



How I boosted sales by 40 percent in a down market, without new lines or expenses

coming in.

My team began working together to find ways we could do this without taking on more lines, increasing expenses or leaving our store. What we came up with ended up increasing last year's sales by 40 percent.

SHOWROOM RE-EVALUATION

The first step was to make our store more dynamic. Today,

websites feature automatic slide shows, coupons dispense when we walk down grocery aisles and billboards change in front of our eyes. Piano stores can be pretty static places. Even MI retailers that frequently change their displays often overlook dated, faded posters and clutter. Customers need to see change, or they'll get bored.

My staff and I discussed our showroom layout. Did it look interesting from the front door? Were complementing products near each other? I asked my people, "If you could change anything about the showroom, what would it be?" They turned out to be an information gold mine.

We started by redefining the entry area. Instead of spotlighting one particular piano, we now have a representation of everything we offer — a used piano, a digital piano, a new upright and a new grand. We also brought our accessories from behind the reception desk to the front. This simple change made it more convenient for customers to browse and reminded staff to offer add-ons. We had portable walls built that we designed for proper acoustics, letting us feature upright pianos anywhere in

the showroom. No longer were we limited to placing uprights against permanent walls.

Customer response was so incredible that we knew we had to work to keep the store fresh. My old rule was if something doesn't sell in 90 days, move it. After our remodeling, it was more like 30 days. We began re-evaluating the entire area regularly to make sure everything made sense, including posters, accessories, props and plants. It seems like a small change, but now, nearly every repeat visitor responds positively to the dynamic environment.

REACHING MOBILE CUSTOMERS

We also decided to make two specific changes in how we communicated with clients. A 2009 Nielsen study found that e-mail represents more than 40 percent of mobile Internet time. That told me our customers are more and more likely to read our e-mails standing in line at the grocery store or walking on a treadmill. We began limiting our e-mails to 100 words.

Plus, we began sending hyperlinks instead of enclosures. In today's business-to-consumer world, e-mail enclosures are a crashout. Consumers have grown

more suspicious of them, and if the recipient doesn't have the right viewer on his or her phone or computer, the message is weakened. Most people also associate enclosures with work — opening them is something they have to do, not something they want to do. On the other hand, we know that people love surfing the Web.

Since making the change, nearly 20 percent of our website traffic comes from links we send directly to customers. If we need a webpage that doesn't exist, we create one in our own domain. The result: We have quickly built an extensive website that's easily shared with our next prospect *and* every new site visitor.

Because my website's dynamic, my search engine rankings are very strong. Last year, more than 90 percent of my store's visitors had started their research online before walking through the door, and 80 percent had already been to my website. Since my site's the first impression most people have of my store, we started consistently promoting sales and events with simple banner ads. Our most effective ads sent only one message, such as "12 Months Deferred Interest" or "Free Accessory Package With Any Digital Piano."

Visitors then clicked the banners to be directed to a page with full details and sometimes additional offers — that's the key. The fewer the words in the banner (we try to keep it to seven or less), the better. Once the customer shows interest by clicking, it's safe to offer more options. Rarely a day goes by that someone doesn't tell us they came in because they saw our online promotion.

To build on their excitement and reinforce our message, we displayed matching signs throughout the showroom. Instead of putting a stale manufacturer cardboard cutout on a beautiful piano, personalized full-color posters were presented in attractive freestanding frames.

15 MINUTES A DAY ...

The easiest change was to focus even more on customer service. We believed we were on the right track and treating our clients far better than our competitors. Still, we committed to do more.

In the past, I believed that I should make personal follow-up calls to every client, but it rarely happened. So, I turned the task


over to my support staff. They committed to call every service and delivery customer the following day. I was pretty confident it would bring some good karma, but the true effect was completely unexpected.

Immediately, my employees began spending the first 15 minutes of each day hearing how great we were — from customers! Contagious enthusiasm and excitement snowballed and became more powerful than any morn-

ing pep speech I could ever hope to deliver.

By focusing on the customer experience, my customers now motivate my employees, my employees take more pride in our company and more initiative in their work, and I have more time to do what I like best: help my customers. **MI**

Grant Billings is the owner of Steinway Piano Gallery in Madison, Wis.



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STREETWISE SELLING | BY KENNY SMITH

No Downtime in Sales

As a kid, I worked in my parents' music store, and another salesman always gave me a beat down on the floor. It seemed as if he had a magic touch with customers. He got one big deal after another, and I didn't sell squat. After a few days of humiliation, I went to my dad for wisdom. He said, "Son, people who work hard get lucky." And it hit me like a ton of bricks: I'd been relying on skill while the other guy worked harder.



No matter how well you play, how much product knowledge you have or how great you can sell, those who consistently try hard to make deals end up being the most successful.

PROSPECT DURING DOWNTIME

The greatest salespeople have one thing in common: They're either in a deal, writing to a customer or on the phone with one. It's downtime that kills you. Great salespeople know this and take advantage of these moments to prospect.

When I was 16, I used to clean my parents' piano store after school. I thought I was doing pretty well, so after six months, I asked my dad for a raise. He said, "No problem," and handed me the telephone book. "Someone in there wants to buy a piano, and if you sell them one, I'll pay you a commission." I made a bunch of calls and didn't sell anything. Still, I learned an important lesson that day: Drumming up customers was part of my job, and it wasn't going to be easy.

Today, there are multiple avenues for prospecting. Unfortunately, if you don't stay focused, especially when you're prospecting online, you can veer off course and end up focusing on something that has nothing to do with making sales. Come up with a daily routine for social media and sites like Craigslist. Give yourself

a time limit — say, a half-hour to 45 minutes a day.

Every music store has tons of customers who haven't been called in ages. Whether they're old clients, current leads or leftover from old salespeople, there's always someone to call. You don't want to make a prospecting call sound like a telemarketing call. If you're friendly and informational, customers will most likely

be glad you made an effort to touch base. I recommend calling 10 customers a day, throughout the day. If you do this consistently, I guarantee you'll see positive results in your sales.

GET RETAIL-READY

There's always something that needs to be done in a music store — just ask the owner. Patrons sense when you do or don't have your act together. Along with waiting on customers, which comes first, and prospecting for more customers, which comes second, salespeople have to make sure they're ready to sell and their products are ready to be sold.

I've been in countless music stores that aren't retail-ready, and it hurts their sales. Take advantage of the times when you're not selling to clean up displays and brush up on product knowledge.

WORK YOUR PLAN

If you want to be a better salesperson, start by writing a daily plan of what you're going to accomplish and look at it throughout the day. You can always mix items any way you want to. If you consistently work a plan that includes prospecting and merchandising, you'll find the slow times will get shorter, and you'll get lucky more often. **MI**

Kenny Smith dedicates this column to the memory of his father, Bob Smith. Find Kenny at kennysmithsalesguru.com.

Great salespeople always use downtime as an opportunity to prospect

NOT WHAT YOU THINK IT IS

Just a grand piano? Think again. PNOmation II is the next generation in player systems.

In this case, what you don't see is what you get. The PNOmation II system is out of sight, tucked discreetly inside your piano where it can't be seen. And now, along with improved sound performance, it can be controlled via any web-enabled device; an iPad, a laptop, even your smart phone. The music library? Completely self-contained. No CDs to hassle with and now customers can sample music before they buy, purchase songs individually or as albums, create their own playlists and more.

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THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Welcome to the Jungle II

It's easy for independent music stores to talk about what Guitar Center and other chain stores do wrong. I want to talk about what they do right — and how all of us indies can do better. Let's take a deeper look at GC Studios' approach to music lessons.

The GC Studios system is based on what it calls “a progressive advancement model.” It's basically a karate studio approach: Complete a packet of materials, and you advance to a new “artist pass” level (i.e. belt color). As you complete more packs, your binder gets bigger. (Note that GC aims to sell a new pack each month.)



GC Studios has a system for showing students how they're progressing. So should you

At first, I thought it sounded dorky, but how do you show progress to students and parents? GC is making it beyond obvious that the student's improving, which will also boost retention rates. Indies, on the other hand, often assume that students and parents know there's been progress. They don't.

You might think money is the No. 1 reason students quit, but most of the time, it's because they think they're not learning anything new and they're bored. And what do we use to market a student's improvement? Usually nothing.

Understand, I'm not saying this will work across the board, but GC Studios has come up with a system that can work in multiple markets. It's cookie-cutter. Most indie music stores, on the other hand, have no systems.

THE PROGRESSIVE ADVANCEMENT MODEL

So here's the challenge. Like GC, indies need to set up their own progressive advancement music lessons systems.

Let's look at an existing music industry model: piano methods. Piano students always know when they've advanced, and so do their parents. The student finishes level one and buys the books for level two. Everyone's excited.

The problem is piano methods aren't designed as short-term, goal-driven methods. And for teens, they don't teach enough “fun” stuff.

Can you take a guitar method sold at your store and create a hip, fun system, so students can experience advancement? Can you create names for these levels and packets of exciting songs the students will enjoy learning?

GET STUDENTS PLAYING FAST

GC Studios touts that it teaches students songs from popular bands, so the students can ultimately perform solo or in a band. Good idea. Indies can start by asking guitar teachers for the top 10 rock songs they teach and when, skill-wise, they introduce the song to the student. You'll find that 80 percent of teachers are teaching the same songs. Develop a supplemental song packet from this list.

Level one could include four lessons in 30 days. It should include a skill set from the method book, a song from the book and a preview of the next song the student will learn, giving something to look forward to. For example, lesson one for guitar could be: Get through page 10 in *Essential Elements For Guitar*, learn to play “Sweet Home Chicago” and get ready for the next song, “Knockin' On Heaven's Door.” Now do the same for level two and so on. If you have these 30-day goals, students will learn lots of songs, and their progress will be visible.

You need a direction, but allow for flexibility with each student. This is where the “soul” of your dealership will help you blow any cookie-cutter lessons program out of the water. **MI**

Pete Gamber is the owner of Alta Loma Music in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. He welcomes questions and comments at pete@altalomamusic.com.

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

May I, Like, Help You?

“If you, like, still have your receipt, you can, like, bring it back in, and we’ll exchange it for you, or you can just, like, get a refund.”

I’m thankful that conversation didn’t happen in my store. I overheard it between an employee and a customer in another store not long ago. The word “like” has somehow outpaced “cool” and “awesome” in our social colloquy. So many people use the L word habitually — English majors, grandmothers, parents talking to their children, schoolteachers, my 3-year-old daughter. Even politicians use “like” in abundance.



I remember when I was growing up and everything was “rad.” I interjected “rad” as much as I could, and my mother said it drove her crazy. “Like” has since taken on a life of its own, and it’s more popular than rad ever was.

I now have a habit of counting how many times someone uses “like” in a sentence or in conversations. I know, it’s a little obsessive. But I’m not the only one who thinks uttering “like” is a nasty grammatical practice. Google “overuse of the word like,” and 1.5 million related topics pop up.

I started observing its overuse during a recent discussion with one of my part-time desk staffers. I then listened to her explain our music lessons program to a potential customer. When asked about our make-up policy, she answered, “Well, if you, like, miss a lesson without notice, there is no, like, make-up, but if you call or are out sick with, like, a cold or something, we’ll make it up for you as long as you, like, call to cancel.” She was answering questions correctly, but she came across as if she were unsure of herself. She would’ve sounded much more professional had she omitted the “likes.”

CURBING ‘LIKE’

There’s no place for “like” in the retail environment, so how do you combat it? I look for it in the initial job interview. I point it out during performance reviews. It’s not necessarily a nervous gesture. It may be a habit that will continue on the sales floor. I’ve found that I can introduce the topic during staff meetings.

Implementing proper grammar and eliminating improper terminology don’t have to be uncomfortable tasks. How about making it a game? Urge employees to chip in a quarter or dollar every time they use “like” in a sentence. Try it for a month. The person with the fewest infractions wins the entire pot, or you can donate it to charity. I’ve heard of retailers doing this for cursing. It brings to light how many times an offensive word gets used without someone having to point it out.

A few years ago, a friend pointed out that I used the word “right” to end a lot of sentences, as if I were asking for agreement. Once he called my attention to it, I monitored it and corrected myself. I was surprised how much I said it, how I’d never noticed it, and I was thankful my friend had the guts to point it out.

You wouldn’t text in the middle of a eulogy or sleep during church. There’s a time and place for everything, including proper communication. Imagine if President Barack Obama used “like” in his inaugural speech.

“My fellow citizens, I stand here today, like, humbled by the task before us, grateful for, like, the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors.”

Sounds ridiculous, right? **MI**

Billy Cuthrell operates Progressive Music Center and askourmusicians.com. Contact him at billy@ppdsonline.com.

Use of the word ‘like’ has taken on a life of its own. Best to nip it in the bud at your store

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Keeping Clients Happy

Back in the 1980s, the second-largest U.S. toy store had the slogan, “Let Lionel Kiddie City turn that frown upside down.” I loved that slogan. Sadly, it was only the products they sold that truly delivered on that promise. The store experience typically left people grumpier than when they arrived. Of course, Lionel Kiddie City is no longer with us.

No matter what, certain situations arise that cause customers to frown. Defective products, unavoidable delays and inadvertent mistakes all cause customers to come to us with their proverbial pistols drawn. How we address these situations often defines how we’re perceived. You can provide extraordinary service almost all the time, and you can be a pillar of the community nearly always. But it’s your grace under fire that will rate highest when customers draw up the report card.

So how do you deal with angry customers? Do you hide yourself away and let someone else deal with them? Do you try to invalidate the customer’s claim? Do you blame someone else? Do you make up excuses to explain away a mistake and try to save face? A lesson learned very early in my career was that doing any of the above only serves to agitate an already-edgy customer and makes a bad situation worse. The only right solution is to take complete ownership of the problem and use it to provide customer service that’s unreasonably good.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Here’s an example from the days when my company imported guitars directly from Japan. We received one shipment that included a few hundred classical guitars. Back in those pre-Ibanez days, a large percentage of those instruments got sold in our retail store. This particular batch had a problem with the nylon

rollers on the machine heads. Perhaps 10 percent of the rollers would suddenly crack. The scenario was often the same: A customer would come in angry because he opened the case to find a cracked roller on his guitar. He was fully prepared for a runaround, a delay or an excuse. What he got instead was something that won us many long-term customers.

We took this defective-part problem and turned it into an

opportunity to win customer support. While the customer waited, we removed the strings and machine heads, replaced all six rollers (even though only one was broken typically), oiled the fingerboard, restrung the guitar and polished it prettier than ever. Was it overkill? Perhaps. But we took customers who fully expected to be disappointed and exceeded their expectations. Quite literally, we turned their frowns upside down. In return, many of these customers still bought from us decades later — bringing the kids and sometimes even the grandkids in for their first guitars. And the cost to us was negligible compared to the benefits.

By contrast, I received an e-mail while I was writing this column from a company that puts on a special event. It was informing customers that one of the acts had cancelled. It didn’t have a replacement act or a make-good. No, the company was suggesting that we write to the act to complain. What?

Fixing problems isn’t always economical when taken at face value. But your primary focus should be on the long-term good that comes from doing the right thing. If you’re in the business of making customers smile, do you really have another option? **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is managing director of Wechter Guitars. He’s former president of Medley Music and a past NAMM chairman. E-mail him at gersonmusicinc@gmail.com.



The way we address difficult situations often defines how we’re perceived by customers

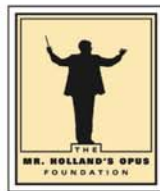
Dear

M.H.O.F, Thank you, not only for donating our instruments to us, but also for giving children like me the opportunity to learn music and develop a talent that we will keep our whole life. You give us something that will define us, make ourselves special, without you I would probably never ^{have} learned to play guitar. So
Thank you again

Sincerely yours Joseph Posey



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(Like, for instance, the above letter.)

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

How to Compete

Everyone has a different take on competition. Some cut and run from it. Others claim they embrace it until the challenge threatens their livelihood. Still, others take a more distant, clinical attitude toward competition, understanding that our modern standard of life is arguably better because of it.

I see three broad conditions the independent music retailer can embrace to create an environment that survives against any competitor, whether it's the fellow mom-and-pop down the street, the big-box (either department store or music chain) or the less-tangible foes, such as the Internet frontier, consumer indifference or the local classifieds. These conditions are very basic, but if you want to know what it will take to polish your armor, start here.

Be the best “you” you can be. Man, that sounds so Dr. Phil, even a little Saturday Night Live “Stuart Smalley” — but hey, he became a Minnesota senator. Still, it's an ongoing process of honest self-examination and improvement that offers genuine security in the marketplace. It means knowing your weakness and exploiting your strengths.

How's your buying power? If you can't turn product quickly, you shouldn't extend your inventory by taking on risky items, no matter how large the vendor discount. How good is your staff at selling? If you don't have the expertise to handle P.A. systems, don't stack the sales floor with costly gear staff can't twig. On the other hand, if you have a sales team that's good at working with band directors or quality acoustic guitars, you ought to have a healthy investment in those categories.

Unlike the retail of even a decade ago, today's successes are no longer broad but in niches. You need to know what those are for you, exploit them and cull inventory — and people — that aren't a good fit for what your store can do better than anyone else in town.

Make turns as important as margin — or more. Cash is king in good economies, indispensable in slower ones. Along with being honest with yourself about what you can sell, consider what you can buy and the time factor in which you can

sell it. The retail of the 1970s and '80s allowed for generous inventory miscues because we had (or thought we had) margins to make up for it. Not today — those margins are gone. The good news is we can make just as much money, if not more, by selling our wares several times in a year, even at lower profit.

This is critical with inventory but even more so with used gear. The beauty of recycled inventory is it's harder to compare with something else like it. If you can acquire it through shrewd trade-in policy, there's good money to be made but *only* if you can sell it right away.

Believe in what you sell. This has to be the easiest part of our business. As a rule, we hire people who sing in church choirs, former band and orchestra students, retired music teachers, and local rock stars. These are folks who not only use our products but *live* them. If our employees enjoy making music on their time, it stands to reason they'll want to share that passion with anyone who walks in the front door. If they care about customers as people, every sales transaction is an opportunity to better someone's life.

That's not a competition. It's a playground. **MI**

Ted Eschliman is a 30-year veteran of music retail and co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay published his book, *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin*.



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Lacefield Music saw its most profitable year while the rest of the piano industry collapsed. The secret to its success? It's all in the attitude

SELLING *Personality*

By Katie Kailus

On a dark, rainy morning at South County Center mall in St. Louis, Lacefield Music bursts as a beacon of energy and contagious enthusiasm. Clapping, laughing and chatting echo throughout the 4,900-square-foot piano and organ dealership. This energy is infused into everything the family-owned business does — retail, music classes and private lessons. And it's one of the main reasons Lacefield saw its best year in 2008 — when the rest of the piano industry was seeing its worst.

With locations in St. Louis, St. Charles, Mo., and Shiloh, Ill., Lacefield Music has emerged as a major force in the St. Louis market, competing against two of the area's dominating retailers: Steinway Piano Gallery of St. Louis and Piano Distributors.



From left: Steve and
Larry Lacefield, Cathy
Krubsack, Carolyn Mitchell,
and Dwayne Hilton

Take a visual walk-through of Lacefield's 7,500-square-foot South County Center mall location.



+ The Digital Zone

All of the digitals in Lacefield's showroom are promoted with the 5-minute lesson materials, so customers can sit down and learn a few chords.

"We are going to make your buying an experience, not just a commodity," Hilton said. "That's why we encourage sitting down and teaching how to play a little before we sell."



+ Grandiose Elegance

The dealership uses its open showroom space to display its grand pianos. The wall of windows at the front of the store shows the grands in a bright natural lighting.



+ Lifestyle Lessons

With the ability to hold more than 100 people, Lacefield's lessons space is also home to its concerts, often put on by Lacefield's partners and staff. "At our last concert, we had over 100 people to see Dwayne [Hilton's] piano showcase performance," Krubsack said.

Cathy Krubsack co-owns the 15-year-old business with her two sons, Larry and Steve Lacefield, daughter Carolyn Mitchell, and business partner Dwayne Hilton. Together, their charismatic personalities grab attention and drive the company's focus: to create a positive sales experience. Lacefield, which was named the top large market digital piano dealer at the Kawai Awards Reception at this January's NAMM show, boasts a team-spirit mentality that asks customers to think differently about buying a piano or taking lessons.

"We keep the atmosphere in here so light that when people come in the first thing out of their mouths is, 'You guys are having so much fun,'" Mitchell said. "And they want to come back and visit."

"We are a piano store, but even more importantly, we are a lifestyle store," Krubsack said. "It's not about the product. It's about what the person is getting out of the product and their entire experience here."

THE EPITOME OF TEACH-TO-SELL

No one leaves Lacefield Music without learning to play a chord. Every customer who walks through the door is given a 5-minute lesson conducted by Lacefield's sales staff, who double as the teachers for its recreational music making piano lessons program.

"We take that person that's going to buy for their daughter, do our basic tutorial lesson and turn it into something the whole family can now do," Larry Lacefield said. "The reason that the family buys that big TV is because everyone can hit the power button, and that's what has to happen with our pianos. We take people who never thought they could play a musical instrument and

{LACEFIELDMUSIC}

turn them into a customer.”

While Lacefield doesn't make much on the lessons themselves, they are a vehicle that moves pianos.

“The program basically pays for only the advertising,” Krubsack said. “It's really used to generate sales. It is one of the things that other dealers don't want to get into because it takes up so much time and effort. And it does, but we've all got a little bit of ADD around here. We don't want to wait around for someone to come into the store. We would rather teach 10 people that might buy a piano.”

The teach-to-sell model has worked well for Lacefield. According to Krubsack, about 38 percent of its March 2011 digital piano sales came as a result of its group lessons program, with its organ classes accounting for 100 percent of its organ sales.

“Some people don't have any need or desire for a piano, and that's OK,” Krubsack said. “But sometimes, there's a surprise customer. Recently, one of our students purchased a fairly expensive piano. I had no idea that she was going to buy one. It wasn't even on her radar at first.”

Customers who do purchase at Lacefield can take its piano lessons for free, for life. For non-customers, the program costs \$29.95 for an eight-week session. The classes are based off a curriculum Krubsack and Hilton developed themselves after 15 years of trial and error. It stresses championing the students' smallest successes — and giving them room to celebrate.

“We want them to enjoy playing that C chord,” Larry said. “That is a massive accomplishment for someone who has never played music before. So our classes do not move too fast so they can't enjoy that.”

Lacefield is also a Lowrey dealer and gives lessons based on the organ maker's own curriculum. Last year, organs accounted for one-third of the dealership's revenue, proving that the organ is alive and well in St. Louis. Krubsack said she believes that the organ business is matter of exposure.

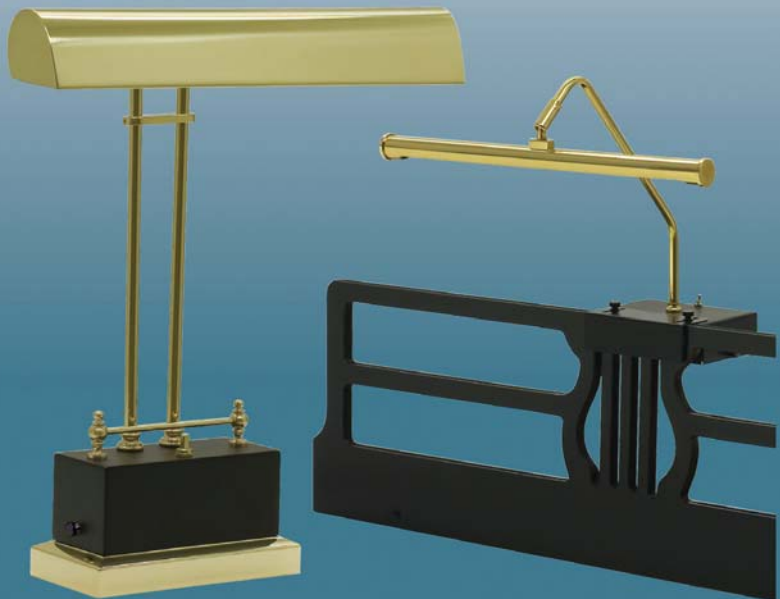
“A lot of our organ classes are made up of people that are bound and determined to play piano, but because of their schedules, they want to take classes during the day,” she said. “However, once they get into this organ program, they don't want to leave it.



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M11

I think it's all about the program. It's about being bigger than the product that you carry and creating a culture."

And Lacefield has created a culture. It connects with its students on a personal level through, among other things, the power of hugs.

"I'm a hugger," Larry said. "Most of the time when we start that hugging, it makes us happier, and it makes us better teachers and more wanting to serve them better. When you have an emotional connection with somebody, you want to make sure that they are happy."

Lacefield also offers a private lessons program at all of its locations. The lessons are conducted by teachers who aren't part of the sales team but still play a role in selling by getting customers into the store.

The layout of the company's St. Charles location, which is managed by longtime employee Howard Kessler, also exemplifies how Lacefield integrates sales and lessons through lifestyle retail. One area features

'We keep the atmosphere in here so light that when people come in the first thing out of their mouths is, "You guys are having so much fun." And they want to come back and visit.'
—Carolyn Mitchell

couches, coffee and water for customers and students wanting to relax. A toy box for kids and tables for those surfing the Internet make it hard to miss the activity going on in the store.

'FAMILY BUSINESS WITH A SMILE'

In 2007, Lacefield Music saw a 25-percent-plus increase in sales over 2006. That was the year it began branding itself.

"When we started branding ourselves as a locally owned family business, we saw it was a big piece of the success, and it changed our business," Krubsack said.

The company's marketing campaign, which included YouTube videos and radio advertisements, centered around promoting its family-fun persona.

"We did one commercial where all 13 of the Lacefield Music's partners' children sang a song with Larry," Krubsack said. "And then there was the rap video ..."

Krubsack laughed when she retold how the now-infamous rap took piano sales to a new level. Larry and a few store employees created the YouTube video, along with a rap commercial for the radio, which, as the video puts it, shows potential customers how Lacefield "gets jiggy with the classes we be teachin'" and even gets the store's RMM students involved.

Krubsack said that she hopes these videos hone in on the fact that Lacefield is a locally owned family business brimming with personality.

"We've branded ourselves this way, and we want them to know that," Krubsack said. "We have always said that you will meet a family member in each store. We want them to know that you get free lessons for life when you buy a piano here, and we are going to teach you to play. We decided to change the way we were marketing and brand ourselves."

Lacefield is no stranger to large marketing campaigns. In 2008, the store put one of its organs into Busch Stadium, and Lacefield partner Dwayne Hilton became the official organ player for the St. Louis Cardinals. A potential audience of 46,000 during any home game made it the perfect outlet for Lacefield to plug its stores.

"We get billboards at the stadium, along with ads on the JumboTron — not to mention free tickets," Krubsack said.

Billboards aside, the company's location also yields high visibility. Six years ago, Lacefield toyed with relocating its flagship South County Center mall location to a free-standing building due to its growing lessons

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program. The mall's management came back to Lacefield and offered to build a new space for a competitive price. Lacefield's management agreed, and the flagship now features a storefront connected to the mall, among such major chains as Macy's, Borders and Applebee's, creating steady walk-in traffic.

"If people are waiting to be seated at Applebee's, they may dash in," Krubsack said. "We may only have 15 minutes, but we still have an opportunity to expose them to our product and what we do and how we are going to enhance their lives."

The storefront also drives unexpected business.

"People think we are an entrance to the mall all the time," Larry said. "People then see music and everyone loves music, but they don't know what they are getting into at first."

BOOSTING ACOUSTICS

In 2008, Lacefield saw its sales evenly distributed between acoustic pianos, digitals and organs, but last year, digitals were king, leaving acoustics struggling. However, Lacefield Music hasn't waited around for this high-ticket business to return. It has gone out and found it.

"The piano industry is still facing some struggles," Krubsack said. "We are selling well, but high-end grands are still off. Low-end grands are doing OK, but they still aren't where they were in 2009. So we are going to work at getting out there more."

Hilton devotes a couple days a week to visiting local schools and churches to build relationships. By making these visits, Hilton said he believes Lacefield can generate a high enough volume of digital sales to make up for the dwindling acoustics sales.

"Smaller churches that can't

afford a \$30,000 grand piano can afford a \$5,000 digital piano," he said. "So we are getting a lot more smaller churches that way, and that does make up for it."

Giving churches the same lesson benefits as private buyers entices sales.

"When a church does buy from us, we give 10 people at that church at a time an opportunity to take the piano lessons for free," Larry said. "We just sold four pianos at one church doing that."

Such outside events as home shows and temporary Christmas stores at local malls also drive sales.

"Outside sales drive inside sales," Krubsack said. "The Christmas stores we have in other malls are only 25 miles away from us and that's not very far, but we were discovering that no one knew us out there. That is another reason we started our radio campaigns."

Hilton said the breakdown between outside sales and sales to students is about 30/70, but walk-in sales aren't dead yet.

"We get a lot of people still coming in that are just walk-ins," he said. "Walk-ins are not dead."

And when customers do walk into Lacefield, it's hard for them to leave without a smile and, many times, a new instrument.

"Fun is not something you have to pay for," Larry said. "It's a mindset. We abolish old sales mentalities here."

Hilton agreed, adding that Lacefield Music is all about making piano sales an experience.

"We are going to make your buying an experience, not just a commodity. We want to make it fun and relaxing."

Maybe the rap video says it best: Lacefield's "a family business with a smile that you don't see much anymore." **MI**

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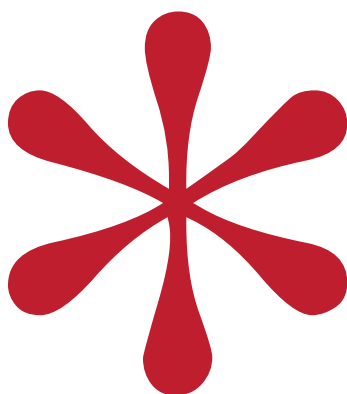
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BY FRANK ALKYER, WITH REPORTING BY ZACH PHILLIPS & HILARY BROWN



Back to School

2011 NASMD Convention delivers powerhouse educational and networking opportunities for the school music industry

When traveling to Palm Springs, Calif., most folks aren't thinking about hitting the books. But that's exactly what 320 members of the school music industry did at the balmy desert resort in March.

The National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) 2011 convention delivered a wealth of business-building information — from tips on motivating employees to hard-core statistics on music education to ideas for strengthening relationships with band directors. In total, the three-day event offered 38 educational sessions geared toward owners, managers and road reps at school music dealerships.

One key theme from the conference centered on concern over school budgets and the future of school music programs. John Benham, author of *Music Advocacy: Moving From Survival To Vision*, said that dramatic state and federal budget deficits have many school music programs on chopping blocks again.

“The methods I’m about to share with you are somewhere around 95-percent successful in saving school music programs, if two factors are present: a strong music coalition and unified educators.” Benham noted that retailers tend to be key in helping to organize both behind the scenes.

At the same time, music education researcher Bob Morrison presented a keynote address

called “The Future’s So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades: A Decade of Growth.” He said he sees real opportunity for growth in school music programs as a result of one simple fact: School enrollments will rise during the next decade.

Noting that there’s a misconception that school music programs are shrinking in the United States, Morrison said that, during the last two years of recession, the number of school music programs eliminated totaled one half of 1 percent.

“It’s not a matter of, ‘Oh, my goodness, we’re losing all of our programs,’” he said. “No, the opposite is true. The expectation in the United States in public education is that children will participate and have access to

music as part of the basic education. That is what’s been set up in our culture. That is what’s been set up in our expectations in education. And it’s what’s actually happening in practice. This is a much more powerful argument to be talking about.”

So, is the glass half-full or half-empty? That was just one of the fascinating topics covered at NASMD. In the following pages, we break out four more topics from the convention. **MI**

1. Hal Leonard’s Bruce Bush with Long & McQuade’s Fred and Phyllis Theriault
2. Music education research guru Bob Morrison (left) presents NAMM’s Joe Lamond with a bottle of champagne in honor of Lamond’s 10th anniversary as NAMM’s top executive
3. From left: Pro-Active’s Bill Walzak, Alfred’s Iris and Morty Manus, Kincaid’s Is Music’s Rick Dustin, Alfred’s Andrew Surmani, and Pro-Active’s David Hall



1. From left: Beacock Music's Russ Beacock with Tarpley Music's John and Shelli Tarpley
2. Music retail accounting guru Alan Friedman (left) with Bandland's Evan Jones
3. The new NASMD board, from left: Draisen Edwards Music's Barry Draisen, Quinlan & Fabish Music's George Quinlan, Mississippi Music's Rosi Johnson, Menchey Music Services' Joel Menchey, Robert M. Sides Family Music Center's Peter Sides, West Music's Robin Walenta, White House of Music's Chris White and Music Man's John Jarvis
4. From left: Gemeinhardt's Jennifer Crowell and Brian Robinson, artist Ali Ryerson, Gemeinhardt's David Pirtle, and artist Shawn Wallace
5. Ted Brown Music's Jim Stevens competes in "NASMD Olympics"
6. Golf tournament winners, from left: Williamson Music's Mark Williamson, Summerhays Music's Scott Summerhays, Quinlan & Fabish's Alan Szafranski and D'Addario's Rick Drumm
7. From left: Senseney Music's Lori Supinie, Kincaid's Is Music's Rick Dustin, and Portman Music's Myra and Jerry Portman
8. From left: Michael Robinson, Andy Strayer and Tabor Stamper of KHS America, makers of Jupiter, Mapex and Majestic instruments
9. From left: West Music's John Feldman and Nathan Ersig with Ace Products' Jay Lawallen
10. Yamaha's Gary Winder (right) congratulates road rep Olympic champion Scott Taylor from Robert M. Sides Family Music Center
11. Summerhays Music's Cris Behrens gets just slightly excited about winning the gold and an Ace Products RocknRoller Multi-Cart in "NASMD Olympics"
12. From left: Music & Arts' Janelle Harlan and Ron Beaudoin with Eastman Strings' Saul Friedgood and All County Music's Fred Schiff
13. Kidder Music's Jim and Ede Kidder
14. From left: Rico's Jess Gonzales with Peterson Electro-Musical Products' Beth and Pat Bovenizer

Health Care Reform & Music Retail

How will health care reform affect music retailers? NAMM's legal counsel Jim Goldberg attempted to answer that difficult question and more during "Health Care Reforms: What I Should Be Doing and When." The following is what to expect, by year:

2011

- You're going to have to include on the W-2 form the value of health care benefits that you provide your employees. There's going to be another box that says, "This is what the company paid on your behalf for health care premiums in 2011."

To the extent that you use an outside payroll service, they are geared up to produce W-2s based on the salary check issued during the course of the year. They may not have the system to include in the W-2 how much benefit you pay for health care premiums during the course of 2011. You may have to send it to them in batch by employees, so they can manually put it into the W-2s. It starts now.

- Also, starting this year, there is a prohibition on eligibility for health care coverage based on compensation. So you can't say, "Only our employees earning over \$30,000 a year will be eligible for health care coverage."

2012

- For all employees, there is a new federal long-term care program that starts. What it says is any employee who pays a premium for at least five years becomes eligible for this long-term care insurance benefit later on.

But here's the catch: All employers — and this is subject to regulations — have to enroll all employees in the program. The good news is that there is no employer contribution required. So, you have to enroll everybody, essentially making Medicare payments, but you don't have to pay any contributions, taxes or fees.



2013

- All employers will have to provide notice to your employees of health [care] coverage options.

2014

- And now the big one: There is a new mandate on individuals to purchase health care insurance. This is a provision that's being challenged in court right now.

The flip side of the individual mandate is that if you are a company with more than 50 employees the law says you solve the individual mandate by providing health insurance coverage for your employees. If you don't, you have to pay a penalty.

- 2014 is also when the so-called exchanges kick in. Exchanges are designed as sort of a one-stop shopping place where you can compare policies.

- For all employers, there is a new

federal tax at \$2 per employee per year.

- If you have an insurance waiting period in excess of 90 days, there is going to be an additional financial penalty, which is to say waiting periods for health insurance coverage will basically come down to no more than 90 days.

- More reporting for all employers again, regardless of size. You've got to file an annual report with the IRS that says your waiting period, monthly premium information, employer share of total costs and number of FTEs [full-time equivalents] every month.

2017

- In 2017, if you have more than 100 employees, larger employers can buy insurance through state exchanges if the state prevents them. **MI**

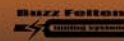
Note: One of the more controversial aspects of health care reform was repealed in April. This provision required that all businesses issue Form 1099 for all goods and services purchased over \$600.

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* Trackable Results

Jeff Hawley, Yamaha Customer Experience Group director, preached the value of product videos as a powerful, trackable MI promotional tool. The seminar, “A How-to Session to Teach You How to Create a Podcast or YouTube Video,” also walked attendees through the video-creation and editing process. Highlights:

WHAT TO SHOOT

If I have to say what I think the most impactful video is, it's on a product Web page. You've got a great reputation, do a great service, and by placing a video on that page, I'm going to bet the farm that you can take it up a notch.

If you haven't, check out Zappos.com. They have 6- to 30-percent higher sell-through on [products with] videos on their site.

Your goal is you're going to increase sales, decrease costs or increase branding. So what are you going to shoot? For example, I've got the Yamaha 20th Anniversary Xeno trumpet, and it stands into the case. So we set the goal: We're going to increase visibility of this product. Target your customer. It's not going to be the 6th

grade student. In this case, it's going to be a professional trumpet player. This would be a great college step-up [instrument].

We're going to say this pitch is for college kids that are playing in the jazz band. They're going to think that playing a high C is the key to success — whether that's true or not, it is for today. Every college player knows Wayne Bergeron, so we're going to mention that he plays it. We also have a free lesson included in this, and not really any of our competitors are doing that. With that much info, I could craft the video, do the quick voice-over, shoot it.

About 80 percent of our traffic for mobile — which is a sizable percentage of our total traffic — is on an iPhone or an iPad, so don't put Flash video on there. Whether Steve Jobs is right or not about not having Flash on an iPhone, I can't ignore [customers] getting on there and not being able to see it.

PREPPING YOUR VIDEO

could [edit] it in iMovie. I don't even think you have to pay for it. Or, [use] iMovie for iPhone. The app's even on the phone, so I can actually shoot and edit and do my titles and do my fade-

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ins and do the audio and add a music embedding.

So once you've got that uploaded to YouTube, you're going to upload it to your own Web server. You can upload it to Yamaha Paragon. Let Yamaha host it and serve it to everything and have metrics and analytics. If you're doing it internally with your own resources, take the extra time to tag it and make sure you're measuring.

If I'm a business and I've got competitors around me that I don't want to show my cards to, don't use bit.ly [to shorten the URL]. Any of my competitors or anyone in the universe could simply add a little plus sign to the end of that bit.ly [URL], and all of my metrics are totally visible. There are other shorteners like Yamaha Paragon

that can keep that private. On YouTube recently, if you don't flag it as private, it'll show where it's embedded and how many times it was played from embed.

METRICS ARE GOLDEN

If there's any point that you take away from this presentation today, it's the importance of metrics. This has been my mantra lately, and for Yamaha, even going as far as, "If you can't measure it, don't do it."

Now it's free. Google Analytics is actually great.

The key metrics, if we've only got enough time to focus on a few, really are "who" and "how." And "how" is becoming increasingly important. If you know someone's accessing your site on an iPhone in Duluth, Minn., and your storefront is

in Florida, there's someone that has obviously Google searched. That would actually be a pretty good customer, I think.

MEASURING RESULTS

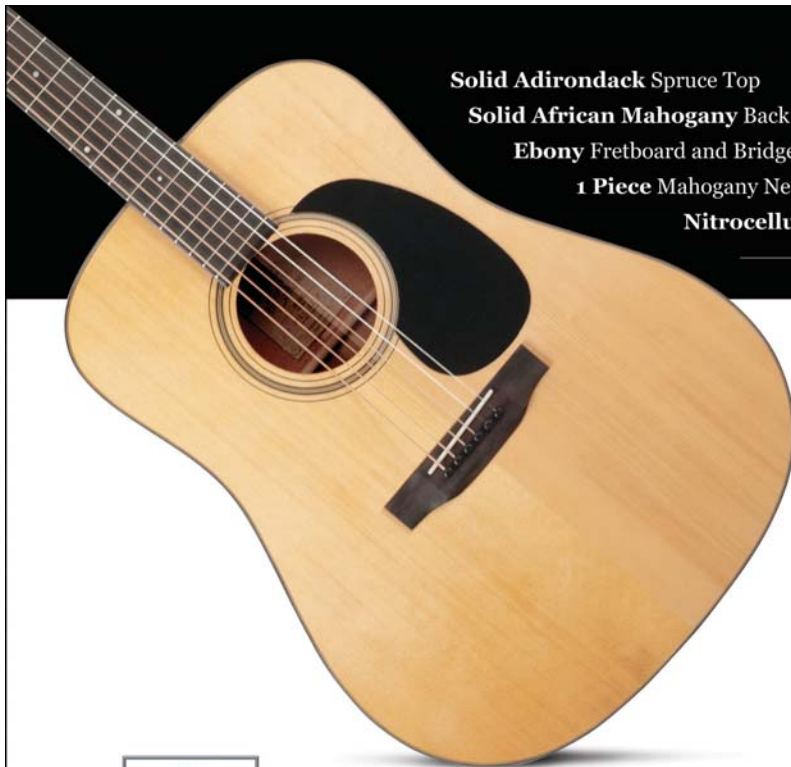
So now, we're going to review the results. It's been a month. We're going to look at demographic. We're going to see generally where people work. Is this a local audience that's watching this? Where are the people? Is this a targeted audience?

Tying this all together, you've hosted the video. You know where the URL is. You're going to have to shorten it anyway if you're going to Tweet it. You're going to generate a QR code in the process. What if you tied one and one together? So now, it becomes geo-tracking. How many people scanned it in my



Yamaha's Jeff Hawley (left) and David Suter

store versus how many people scanned it on the mailer? How many people saw it on my site versus how many people clicked on my e-mail? Now you've got this really cool collection of "which one of these channels is the best"? Which one costs what? So again, the point of video is to be driving sales and decreasing costs. **MI**



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Lean 101

D'Addario's Jess Gonzales and Pat Zerbo looked at how Lean has benefitted their company and how it can benefit retailers in "Lean 101."

Lean is a system developed by Toyota to improve customer service by eliminating waste. But more than that, it's a business philosophy of continuous improvement. Highlights:

LEAN BASICS

Gonzales: What are the goals of Lean? It's basically to improve quality, eliminate waste, reduce lead time and reduce total cost.

The goal is to spend only to the level that is required to meet your customers' needs and no more than that.

Zerbo: What is a customer not willing to pay for? What else is unnecessary in terms of running the operation of your business?

D'ADDARIO SINCE IMPLEMENTING LEAN

Zerbo: If a customer placed an order [at D'Addario] at 10 o'clock in the morning on Monday, it usually got out by Wednesday —



maybe even later. Now what's happening as a result of this process, orders are shipping the same day. You place an order at 4 o'clock — and it could be on the East Coast — and that order is getting out the same day. So our customer satisfaction has significantly increased as a result of that.

Back orders [used to be] 10 percent. I think it was around \$1.7 million in back orders in 2007. As of last week, I believe our global



Eric Schoenberg

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back orders were about \$60,000. Sixty-five percent of all orders used to ship on time, and now, 99 percent of orders ship on time as a result of this.

So our orders are getting out faster, they're more accurate, and at the same time, we've reduced our inventory by \$10 million. This is huge. We've saved 70,000 square feet of space as a result of doing this.

Profitability also improved two and a half times. This is the big one. Ultimately, it created new opportunity for manufacturing other products.

It creates more jobs, cuts our lead times and creates happier customers for us.

LEAN APPLICATIONS AT RETAIL

Zerbo: D'Addario is one of the

companies where we offer quantity breaks [for clients]. You might save 2 percent, but you may be bringing in far more inventory than you need. If you can rely on your suppliers, you don't need this extra inventory, which just hacks up cash flow and space.

Another example: marketing materials. How many of us have fliers that are outdated? Mailers that are outdated? They're sitting there gathering dust, taking up space. You could be putting something else there.

Batches, stacks and queues — these are all things that disrupt flow.

Multitasking is an interesting one because there is some level of multitasking that is necessary. But it can easily get out of control. The more things you are doing,

the less things that you are finishing and the longer that these processes take.

I believe the rule of thumb is, if it's your workspace, you should be able to find anything within 30 seconds. And the rule of thumb, I believe, with someone else is within 2 minutes.

Gonzales: Ineffective signage, excessive clutter, products that are hard to find or out of stock, poor service — you really have to take a hard look at your organization to be able to identify those things. Try and see it from the customer's perspective. **MI**

'Our orders are getting out a lot faster, they're more accurate, and at the same time, we've reduced our inventory by \$10 million.'

— Pat Zerbo

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* Selling Strings

Orchestra programs can be a closed-off world. During “String Marketing,” a panel of retail and manufacturing experts explained how school music dealers and road reps can better cater to this crowd. Highlights:



John Fulton, Divisional Sales and Marketing Manager of Eastman Strings

- One of the clearest ways to get in trouble with a string teacher is pretending that you’re something that you really aren’t. You have to know what kind of products you want to carry, what kind of market you’re going after, and you have to be up front about that. There’s no problem with telling a teacher, “I am not a string shop, but I would do everything that you need from a beginning instrument to the time that your student goes to college.”

There are great things about string shops, but they carry very high-end product and have very specific knowledge about strings. But they offer something different than you do, and [school music

dealers] bring something great to the table, which is the terms — the ability to rent an instrument and decide if you really want it and then purchase it.

- Know your customer. So many times, I find that when road reps go out, they know so much about their band directors, but they know pretty much nothing about string teachers.

- Educate yourself about products. It’s always surprising to me how little road reps know about accessories. What kind of current rosins are out there? What are the current strings out there?

Get to know these different parts of your instruments. You should know what a sound post does. You should know what strings do. You should know what a tailpiece, not fingerboard, does to the playability of an instrument.

- Be really helpful. One of the best ways you can get in with a string teacher is to go to a concert and help them tune.

No. 1, bring a tuner and a clip with you, and practice before you do it, so you can tune very quickly. You can really help that teacher a lot. The next thing is that you get to see what all of your

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competitors are doing. You get to see all of the instruments as those kids come in.

It's going to take time for them to trust you, but you don't have to be a string player to get that trust. You have to be patient.



**Mike Meyer,
Manager of
Meyer Music**

• This is going to cost you some money, and it's going to cost you some time, but directors do notice it. Every instrument comes back in [for] repair. We take strings off, steel wool the neck, steel wool the back of the neck, take off the old finger tape, take off the old gum.

It's worked out very well for us. Touch-up marks and dings

on the body. We really believe in our company that if the instrument looks better going out the door in the first place it's going to come back to us even better.

That director gets used to seeing consistently really nice quality stuff — really good strings on it, really smooth fingerboards, really smooth necks, good equipment — and they tend to start to go with you. And they believe in you.

• Also, introducing upgrades is very important. In the orchestra world, we have a wonderful opportunity when converting students to full-size instruments to introduce an upgrade. We don't have that in the band world. If you're not showing them a performance-level product when they are converting up to a full-size, you are not only making a mam-

moth mistake that is alienating the teacher but you are leaving a lot of money on the table.

And you've won over the heart of the teacher because now you care about the middle school program. You care about the high school program.



**Chris Rohrecker,
Sales Manager of
Connolly Music**

• I find this a lot, and I get a little bit frustrated listening to it: Don't concede the accessories sales to other retailers. You could possibly sell a music stand. You might be able to upgrade them to a better-level bow.

Most teachers typically have preferences. They don't know a

lot about accessories, and if you can help them learn what's best for themselves and for their students, you're a resource.

• American String Teachers Association is a national organization. This is where the string teachers come to meet. Most of them have state chapters, so that's an opportunity for you to get connected to those educators if you want to attend a national show. They also have two or three annual newsletters where they're sharing information with their members. The advertising costs are not that expensive. You don't have to be a string shop to be a resource, and it's something you might want to consider. And you also might want to consider attending chapter meetings. **MI**



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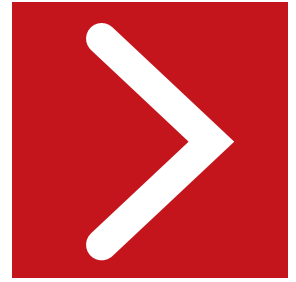
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INNOVATION & INTEGRATION



GEAR



ROLAND | FP-4F DIGITAL PIANO

Supernatural Sounds

Roland has introduced the FP-4F digital piano, the latest addition to the FP series to feature SuperNATURAL Piano technology. The keyboard offers grand piano playing feel with a superior touch, natural response and escapement mechanism. It also boasts Roland's Ivory Feel, a proprietary material that provides ideal moisture absorbency, with the white keys replicating the unique appearance and comfortable feel of real ivory keys. roland.com

> InsideGEAR

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Kawai debuts two new digitals
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Chauvet joins the circus
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KAWAI | CS3, CN43

Kawai's Latest

Kawai has rolled out two new digital pianos for 2011. The CS3 is the first model in the new Classic series digital line. It features a selection of acoustic pianos and other sounds, the company's new Responsive Hammer keyboard action, and a matching bench. The new CN43 is the latest addition to the CN series. It has 323 sounds, 12 drum kits and a 16-track recorder/player. kawaius.com



NORD | ELECTRO 3 HP

Portable Perfection

Nord's new Electro 3 HP features hammer action and sports a classic 73-key E-E range keyboard. Weighing a little over 24 pounds, the portable unit includes a flexible new delay effect with tap tempo, rate, amount and a stereo ping-pong mode. The number of live locations has been increased from one to four, giving users greater freedom to experiment with new sounds and settings on the go. nordkeyboards.com



YAMAHA | MOX8, MOX6

Production Synth

Yamaha recently unveiled the MOX8 and MOX6 music production synthesizers, which include Motif XS power and quality in a portable body casing. Features include the latest sounds, 1,217 voices and 355 MB of waveforms taken directly from the Motif XS. The keyboards also include expanded articulation, offering realistic replication of acoustic instruments and exotic synth sounds. MSRP: MOX8, \$1,999; MOX6, \$1,499. yamaha.com

GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



1



2



3



4

1 CORT GUITARS MR710-F

Cort has revised its MR710-F guitar. The instrument now offers improved electronics, an upgraded multiple abalone rosette inlay, body and neck binding, advanced scalloped x-bracing, and a genuine bone nut and saddle for enhanced tone. The acoustic/electric MR710-F has a dreadnought body with cutaway and features a solid Sitka spruce top. MSRP: \$499. cortguitars.com

2 FENDER WAYNE KRAMER STRATOCASTER MODEL

Fender has introduced the Wayne Kramer Stratocaster, a replica of the starred-and-striped Strat that the MC5 guitarist used in the late 1960s. The instrument boasts Kramer's distinctive U.S. flag finish with a red-and-white striped body, a white-stars-on-blue-background pickguard and headstock, and a Seymour Duncan '59 humbucking middle pickup. fender.com

3 GODIN GUITARS MULTI-OUUD

The new MultiOud nylon guitar from Godin features an on-board pre-amp and electronics, along with custom tuning machines. The instrument is the latest addition to the Godin Multiac series and lets Oud players be amplified in loud and live band settings without feedback. The MultiOud is easy to keep in tune and features specially engineered machine heads by Godin. godinguitars.com

4 DAISY ROCK GUITARS STARDUST ELITE CLASSIC

Daisy Rock Guitars recently released the Stardust Elite Classic electric in Jett Black. The new instrument features a 22-fret maple slim and narrow neck and set-neck construction for increased sustain and stability. The guitar's body is made of lightweight sycamore, and it's designed to fit the female form and reduce fatigue while playing. MSRP: \$299.99. daisyrock.com



> | AddOns

New small goods to drive store traffic this summer.

1 LEVY'S LEATHERS

STRETCH STRAPS Levy's Leathers has launched the Stretch Strap with printed designs. The rubber and polyester webbing of the 2 1/2-inch guitar straps was developed by German engineers to achieve the right degree of stretch and strength. The straps are finished with leather ends and are available in five print designs. levysleathers.com

2 DUNLOP TORTEX TIII

PICKS Dunlop recently marked the 30th anniversary of Tortex picks with the Tortex TIII. It combines the tone and feel of Tortex material with the speed and precision-enhancing Jazz III tip. Dunlop Tortex TIII picks are available in all standard Tortex gauges, ranging from 0.50-1.14 mm. jimdunlop.com

3 VIBRAMATE THE

STRING SPOILER The new String Spoiler from Vibramate is a bracket designed to fit onto an existing Bigsby vibrato without any modifications. It's held in position by the tension of the strings when tuned to pitch. The Spoiler is designed to maintain the same smooth operation and feel as the classic Bigsby vibrato. vibramate.com



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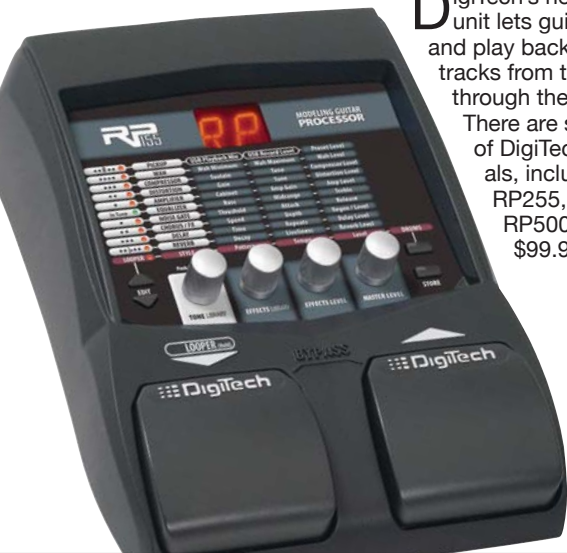
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DIGITECH | RP MULTIEFFECTS PEDAL

Multieffects iPedal



DigiTech's new RP multi-effects unit lets guitarists stream, record and play back high-definition audio tracks from their own instruments through the pedal to an iPad.

There are six different models of DigiTech multi-effect pedals, including the RP155, RP255, RP355, BP355, RP500 and RP1000. MSRP: \$99.95. digitech.com

APOGEE ELECTRONICS | DUET 2

Perfect Duet

Apogee Electronics has released Duet 2. The portable audio interface features a top-panel, full-color high-resolution OLED display; balanced outputs; independent speaker and headphone outputs; and configurable touch pads. Duet 2 can record from sampling rates of 44.1–192 kHz. MSRP: \$595. apogeedigital.com



GENELEC | 6010A, 5040A

Mystic Speakers

Genelec has launched the 6010A bi-amplified loudspeaker system and matching 5040A active subwoofer in a new Mystic finish. The 6010A has a die-cast all-aluminum minimum diffraction enclosure, which features large internal volumes, curved edges and powerful mechanical strength. The Genelec 5040A subwoofer is the ideal partner to the 6010A for both stereo and surround applications. MSRP: 6010A, \$375; 5040A, \$750. genelec.com



KRK SYSTEMS | KRK12SHO, KRK12S

Power Couple

KRK Systems has debuted two powered subwoofers, the KRK12sHO and KRK12s. The KRK12sHO delivers the intense, focused bass response necessary for demanding high-level applications. The KRK12s is designed to be a workhorse subwoofer for music production where a precise representation of the bass frequency spectrum is needed. krksys.com



FOCUSRITE | SCARLETT 8I6

Lady in Red

Focusrite recently introduced the Scarlett 8i6, an eight-input, six-output USB 2.0 audio interface. It includes Scarlett MixControl, an 18 x 6 DSP mixer that lets musicians create up to six separate mono mixes with ultra-low latency and route any combination of input signals and sequencer outputs to any of the Scarlett 8i6 outputs. focusrite.com



RADIAL ENGINEERING | Q3

EQ Workhorse

Radial Engineering has announced the Q3 module, a three-band induction coil EQ designed to fit the popular Radial Workhorse and other 500 series racks. The Radial Q3 is a passive inductor coil EQ featuring four easy-to-use controls, a top-end boost circuit, a midrange cut circuit, a bass boost circuit and a gain make-up control, which offsets the signal loss that typically occurs when using passive EQ designs. radialeng.com



TASCAM | DR-07MKII

Updated & Upgraded

Tascam has updated and improved its DR-07mkII recorder. The unit now features a peak reduction function that sets the optimum recording level, even in recording, to avoid the over level. Another new function, the level align, prevents uneven volume levels during playback through the 1/8-inch headphone output or built-in speaker. tascam.com



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BRADY DRUMS | WALKABOUT SERIES

Rare Gems

Brady Drums has unveiled its Walkabout series. The instruments feature Australian hand-selected rare and indigenous timber species previously unseen in the drum industry. The line also boasts limited-edition exotic veneers for Brady's ply shell snare drum and drum kit range. bradydrums.com.au



KORG | WAVEDRUM ORIENTAL

Taste of the Middle East

Korg's new Wavedrum Oriental dynamic percussion synthesizer is a limited-edition version of the company's Wavedrum that's designed specifically for Middle Eastern music. The unit boasts an infusion of unique, accurate percussion sounds, all playable from the Wavedrum's rim and real drumhead surface. The instrument features specialized Middle Eastern algorithms and samples. MSRP: \$980.

korg.com



GROVER PRO PERCUSSION | CONCERT LOG DRUMS

Log Beats

Grover Pro Percussion has released a new line of professional-level concert log drums. They feature increased resonance and superior tonal quality. Imported Baltic birch is used for the resonator box, chosen for strength and tonal stability. The double curve CNC-machined padauk soundboard is specifically designed for maximum tonal clarity and focused sound. MSRP: LOG-20, \$315; LOG-25, \$340; LOG-30, \$365. groverpro.com



YAMAHA | DTX DRUMS

Fully Equipped

Yamaha has launched a complete lineup of DTX electronic drum sets. All but one of the kits feature the DTX-PAD with Textured Cellular Silicone (T.C.S.) playing surface. All of the kits in the 500 series feature the redesigned DTX500 Drum Trigger Module, which includes 427 drum, percussion and effect sounds, along with 50 preset drum kits and 20 user-editable kits. MSRP: \$1,055-\$5,752. yamaha.com



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VIC FIRTH | CARTER BEAUFORD SIGNATURE STICK

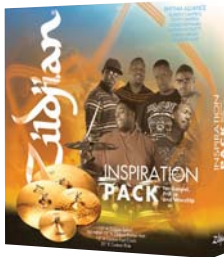
Beauford's Signature

Vic Firth has introduced the Carter Beauford Signature Stick. Beauford, one of the founding members of Dave Matthews Band, created a stick that combines a 5B shaft with an extended taper and elongated oval wood tip. The butt end of the stick is dressed in an anti-slip coating in signature yellow. MSRP: \$20.50. vicfirth.com

ZILDJIAN | INSPIRATION PACK

Pure Inspiration

Developed with members of the Rhythm Alliance, Zildjian's new Inspiration Pack is designed for the gospel and praise and worship markets. It features a range of bright, dark and fast cymbals made from Zildjian bronze alloy. zildjian.com/inspiration



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Virtual Erskine

Cymbal Masters has released *Virtually Erskine - Peter Erskine Drum Sample Library*, which features two of Erskine's personal drum kits formatted for BFD2 and BFD Eco. The company also launched *Virtually Erskine - Peter Erskine MIDI Groove Library*, which has more than 400 MIDI files formatted for BFD2, BFD Eco and MIDI. It can be used with any GM-compatible drum software or hardware. bosporuscymbals.com

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BAND & ORCHESTRA

HAL LEONARD | CICADA PEDAL

Pedal Pushers

Hal Leonard now distributes PageFlip's Cicada, a Bluetooth pedal for hands-free music page turning on iPads or on any computer. The Cicada emulates a standard keyboard and works with any software that uses keyboard strokes to navigate through digital files. MSRP: \$79.95. halleonard.com



ACE PRODUCTS | STRUKTURA STANDS

Vibrant Stands

Ace Products has introduced Struktura music stands. They're made from heavy-duty aluminum but are designed to be lightweight. Available in seven colors and featuring a high-gloss finish, the stands incorporate a locking tray with a simple thumb-operated release for quick, easy adjustments. Each stand folds down to fit into a 5- by 21-inch carrying bag. MSRP: \$49.95. aceproducts.com

RS BERKELEY | CHARLIE PARKER LEGEND SERIES

Parker's Piece

RS Berkeley, Drake Mouthpieces and Beverly Getz have joined forces to create the Charlie Parker Legend series mouthpiece, the first alto saxophone mouthpiece in the Legend series. These mouthpieces are handmade in the United States by Drake and combine technology with a hand-finishing tradition to create a reproduction of Parker's original mouthpiece. drakemouthpieces.com; rsberkeley.com





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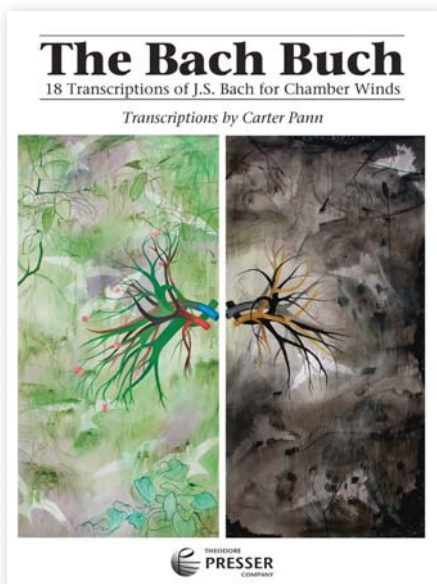
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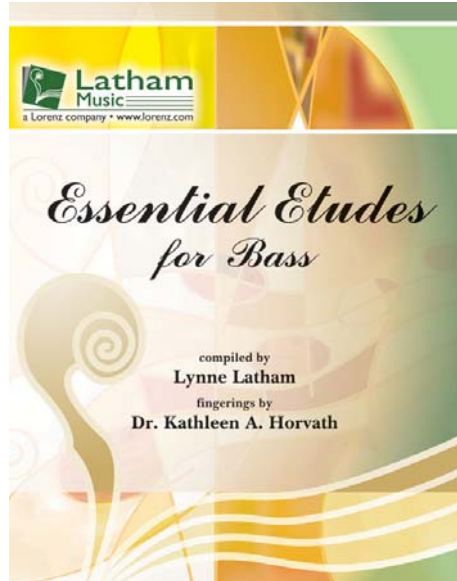
Theodore Presser recently released Carter Pann's *The Bach Buch: 18 Transcriptions Of J.S. Bach For Chamber Winds*. The collection features 18 of Bach's most celebrated keyboard and instrumental gems and was transcribed by Pann for a flexibly scored ensemble of 10 woodwinds. *The Bach Buch* is ideal for individual movements to be used with school ensembles or features within band concerts. presser.com



HAL LEONARD | 'BLACK SWAN'

Oscar-worthy

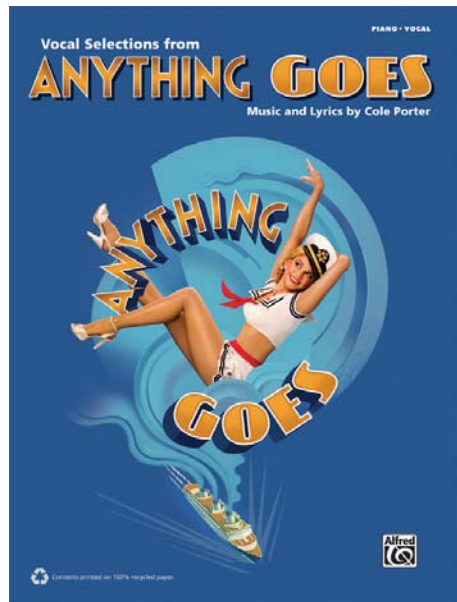
Hal Leonard's new *Black Swan* folio features piano solo arrangements of 11 pieces from the Oscar-winning thriller. The score is a collaboration between director Darren Aronofsky and English composer Clint Mansell, based on the music of Tchaikovsky. MSRP: \$14.99. halleonard.com



LATHAM | 'ESSENTIAL ETUDES FOR BASS'

Etudes, Dude

Latham Music has unveiled *Essential Etudes For Bass*. The collection features 19 etudes that are both lyric and technical. The etudes pave the way for successful performance of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms symphonic literature. lorenz.com



ALFRED MUSIC PUBLISHING | 'ANYTHING GOES'

De-lovely Songbook

Alfred has released *Anything Goes – 2011 Revival Edition*, a collection of music from the Broadway musical based on the 1987 rewrite. Songs include "I Get A Kick Out Of You," "You're The Top," "It's De-Lovely" and "Anything Goes." alfred.com



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RANE, SERATO | SL2

Portable Playability

Rane and Serato have released the Rane SL 2 for Serato Scratch Live. The SL 2 is a compact, professional two-deck interface packed with features. It's the most portable in the Scratch Live interface series, with two inputs; two outputs; and a high-speed, low-latency USB 2.0 connection.

MSRP: \$629. rane.com; serato.com



KORG | KAOSS PAD QUAD

On the Quad

Korg's recently released Kaoss Pad Quad employs new effects, functions and features. These let users create their own combination of Kaoss effects with control of up to four effects in real time. Any audio source can be processed, including MP3 players, mixing boards or instruments. MSRP: \$350. korg.com



AMERICAN DJ | DJ SPOT LED

In the Spotlight

American DJ's new DJ Spot LED is a compact, intelligent moving head, powered by a 25-watt surface-mount diode LED source. The light's moving head features seven colors plus white and 11 gobos plus spot on separate color and gobo wheels. Its compact size makes it ideal for traveling DJs. MSRP: \$699.95. americandj.com



CHAUVET | CIRCUS

Ringmaster of the Dance Floor

Chauvet has introduced Circus, a room-filling, high-energy effects light that simulates the performance of a moving light without the complication of internal moving parts. Circus features red, green, blue, white and amber LEDs housed in five separate, synchronized pods. Users can also take advantage of the built-in, automated programs available in the Circus via master/slave mode or DMX control. chauvetlighting.com

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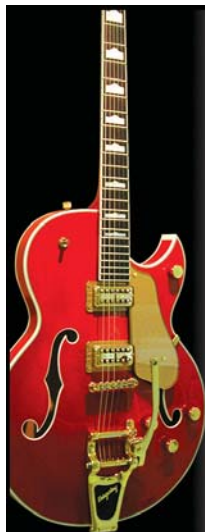
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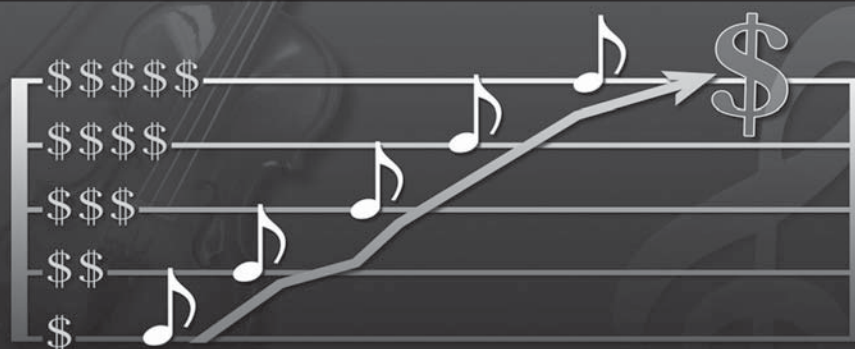
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Breaking News?
Done.

Online Marketplace?
Got it.

Industry Events?
Uh huh.

Better-Business Resources?
Yup.

Archives?
You know it.

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>>>
Barbara Wanless
Steinway Piano Gallery
of Milwaukee
Wauwatosa, Wis.

We are constantly trying to introduce [ourselves to] new people and tell them where we are. We hold a ton of events such as private recitals, and those bring people in. People can also use our recital hall for any type of event or workshop. We had a banker's meeting last year and hosted the chamber of commerce as well as the Civic Music Association. I think you have to be very involved in the community.

We don't use television at all and very little print. I do advertise at the movie theaters. Marcus Corp., the biggest theater group here in Milwaukee, lets you advertise on its big screens.

We also do a lot with our website, and we use MailChimp to let everybody know about our promotions. Like Constant Contact, it's a weekly way of letting people know what events we are holding. We also put [event notices] in the community newspaper, as well as the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

If there's some kind of event or recital or lunch concert, we always put a blurb in. There's always something in there.

>>>
Ray Totaro
Boston Organ and Piano
Natick, Mass.

Our No. 1 source for new customers is a 40-foot grandfathered sign outside our store that has been there since 1969.

After that, the Internet is our No. 1, and referrals are the No. 2 means of drawing new customers. Newspapers and the *Yellow Pages*, which used to be numbers two and three, are no longer in the mix.



>>>
Fred Forshey
Forshey Piano
Houston

How do you attract new piano customers?

When we started our business 33 years ago, customers were finding our store through the newspaper and the *Yellow Pages*. Now, that's the last thing that brings them in.

We focus on our website and social media. We have good e-mail lists, and we do a lot of e-mailing and try to personalize everything. I try to answer every e-mail inquiry personally. It could be some ridiculous question, but I want everybody to know that Fred Forshey is answering these e-mails.

I try to make it a little bit more personal with everything. I've had this come back with big benefits when I least expected it, such as when you're offering somebody a tip on

service or some accessory for their piano.

When somebody inquires about a Steinway product on Steinway's website, we get a follow-up. [Steinway] copies the information that the customer gave them, so we have an Internet lead. I put all of those into a folder and reach out to those people that have some sort of interest.

The key is to engage with these people, because if you can get somebody to trade e-mails with you two or three times, chances are you are going to get them in the store. You have to build a personal trust factor, and if that's not there, you're just another voice in the big web. I try to encourage questions and get them to

engage with me.

We build the Internet up to where customers feel we are a better source of information for them. We are also building our store to be more of an educational place.

In a month, we're hosting an event that is going to be a Christian songwriter and composer seminar put on by a Steinway artist. The people who attend are not necessarily our customers, but because we are hosting it, we send out an announcement to all of the local churches and even got some free advertising on Christian radio. National Public Radio operates out of the University of Houston, and they put us on all the time.



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PLAY

First Place, National Chopin Competition United States

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