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MAY 2015 | VOL. 26, NO. 4

PUBLISHER

Frank Alkyer

EDITOR

Katie Kailus

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

David Ball

ART DIRECTOR

Žaneta Čuntová

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER

LoriAnne Nelson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Ed Enright, Bobby Reed

EDITORIAL INTERN

Stephen Hall

PRESIDENT

Kevin Maher

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

John Cahill

WESTERN ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Tom Burns

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sue Mahal

CIRCULATION ASSOCIATE

Kevin R. Maher

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT

Evelyn Oakes

BOOKKEEPING

Margaret Stevens

OFFICES

Ph (630) 941-2030 • Fax (630) 941-3210

email: editor@musicincmag.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

(877) 904-7949

Jack Maher, President 1970-2003

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$50 one year (11 issues), \$90 two years (22 issues) to U.S.A. addresses, \$75 one year (11 issues), \$140 two years (22 issues) to Canada and other foreign countries. Air mail delivery at cost.

SINGLE COPY (and back issues, limited supply): \$9.95 to any address, surface mail. Air mail delivery at cost.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include your current MUSIC INC. label showing your old address. MUSIC INC. (ISSN 1050-1681)

Published monthly, except April. Printed in U.S.A. by Maher Publications Inc. 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2932. Periodical Postage Paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSIC INC., P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688





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INSIDE



42 | RETAIL IS A VERB

A look back at the past 25 years through some of *Music Inc.*'s most memorable interviews with industry legends.

PLUS: The *Music Inc.* Yearbook.

38 | FROM THE TOP

Hartley Peavey on maintaining success for 50 years.



Hartley Peavey

IDEAS »»»

28 | THE TOP 25 IDEAS

× Twenty-five years of advice from *Music Inc.* columnists.



Harry Friedman



Myrna Sisen

GEAR ▶

74 | GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

78 | AUDIO & RECORDING

80 | DRUMS & PERCUSSION

82 | PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

84 | BAND & ORCHESTRA

86 | DJ & LIGHTING



XO, 1236L Trombone

»»» ■■■■ RETAIL

PROFILE

14 | Sound of Music adapts to change, celebrates 50 years

16 | NEWS

- × Bertrand's Music's Inland Empire store catches fire
- × GC opens store in central Illinois

SUPPLY ■■■■ ◀◀◀

PROFILE

22 | Paul Reed Smith on PRS's 30th anniversary

24 | NEWS

- × FMIC sells KMC Music to JAM Industries
- × Sabian sells direct to retail in the United States

ASK THE RETAILER

90 | ASK THE RETAILER

× Retailers share the best advice they've received over the past 25 years

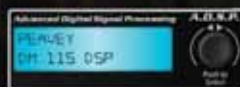
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Steve Gadd, Zoomed In

Creative insights from one of the world's
most influential drummers.



PERFECTION IS OVERRATED

"I don't know anybody who's perfect. You go out there and do your best. And if you don't nail it, then you go out the next day and you try to get it right. That's really all you can do."

NO SHOWING OFF

"Instead of driving the music with this need to show off, I've learned to let the music dictate what I need to do. You have to really listen in order to do that."

SEEK INSPIRATION

"Originally you're inspired by hearing someone else doing something, and then taking it home and trying to learn how to do it. When I was growing up I would get records of Philly Joe, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and guys like that, and slow the records down and work out what they were playing, and then work on it and put my own feel to it. That's how we all learn."

BUT BE ORIGINAL

"You can't be a copy of somebody else, no matter how hard you try. It's impossible. I've seen people try to copy licks and get them exact, and I can tell they're not playing in a way that's natural or comfortable. That's not what music is all about. You have to develop your own bag of tricks. The worst thing in the world you can do is let your enthusiasm for somebody else's work stifle your own creativity."

GET IN THE GROOVE

"I've seen so many drummers who have chops and technique that would make your jaw drop to the floor. People are doing some really incredible things. To me, though, I find it just as inspiring on a whole different level when I see somebody who can play a groove and get inside it and make me tap my toes. If you can get people tapping their toes, that's it – you're playing music."



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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

A lot has happened over the last quarter century. Email, smartphones and smart TVs were invented. The Internet became a mainstay of our daily lives. Cars became more than just a transportation device, and harem pants went out of style and came back in again.

But one thing that hasn't changed is that 10-year-old kid coming into your store for the first time to buy his first drum set. Or that weekend warrior looking to upgrade his setup. Or that mother signing her daughter up for guitar lessons. While we might be living in the digital age, the customers walking through the door today are still looking for the same things they were looking for 25 years ago: quality products with quality service.

With that in mind, we've focused our 25th anniversary issue on the timeless advice that many of the brightest minds in the industry have passed on through this magazine.

Starting on page 42, you will find just a sampling of the innovative ideas we have run over the past 25 years. From the late Chuck Levin, founder of Washington Music Center, on bringing in the next generation to Rosi Johnson, owner of Mississippi Music,

on surviving Hurricane Katrina to Larry Linkin, former NAMM president, on professional development, this issue is chock-full of better business advice beneficial to anyone in the MI industry.

Also in this month's anniversary issue, we've dedicated our entire Ideas section (beginning on page 28) to the innovative columnists that have shared their insight with readers over the past 25 years. Titled "The Top 25 Ideas From *Music Inc.* Columnists," this special section includes everything from veteran sales consultant Harry Friedman's tips on handling under-performing staff to current financial guru Alan Friedman on counting sales revenue.

Want my advice? Hold onto this issue and refer back to it when you are in need of some inspiration. It is a retailer's guide to the MI industry featuring the greatest visionaries the musical instrument marketplace has seen.

Finally, we want to thank you, the reader, for making this past quarter-century so special. We enjoy hearing from you and encourage you to continue to offer your opinions and insights. Here's to the next 25 years! **MI**



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LETTERS

A Bigger Picture

Thank you to *Music Inc.* magazine for featuring Island Music Company in the March/April edition. We have worked very hard over the last seven short years to become the store we are. Now, seeing Island Music portrayed in your magazine right next to articles about NAMM and exciting new products, it makes me proud, and makes our staff feel like they are a part of a bigger picture. We will continue to grow thanks to our awesome customers and magazines like yours that showcase great businesses!

Since that article, I was asked to speak at NAMM about Reverb.com and answer questions on how to successfully use the site to reach new customers. I am always so honored to be recognized, and I am happy to help other music stores succeed by giving them information on new sales opportunities. We have since sold the Sitar, which just goes to show that there is a customer out there for everything and something for every customer. We have also hosted a very successful wine tasting event with Taylor Guitars at the restaurant next door to our store, Casey Jones. Not only are we gaining their customers as potential buyers, but offering a fun and new way to test out Taylor Guitars to our customers. We will continue to come up with innovative ways to get products into customers' hands. Thank you again for the article and highlighting Island Music Company. We love your magazine!

Keith Grasso
Owner
Island Music Company
La Plata, Maryland

Praise From the Jungle

Many thanks to *Music Inc.* for featuring The Music Zoo in its March/April 2015 issue.



I had a great time giving you the 50-cent tour as well as speaking on the mindset behind building my dream guitar retail destination. I couldn't be happier with the issue ... you guys are the best!

Tommy Colletti
Owner
The Music Zoo
Roslyn, New York

Response to: 'What I Know Now'

Dear Greg [Billings],
Thanks for writing that great article, "If I Knew What I Know Now," in the January issue. Your points were spot on and gave me a much needed shot in the arm.

We've been in business 30 years and every day it seems like the "uphill battle" is a little bit steeper and little bit longer! We

are a small family owned store, heavy into lessons, school rentals, as well as sheet music, guitars, amps, drums, repairs, etc. A Guitar Center moved into town about 18 months ago, 2,200 feet from our door and on the same main drag! Needless to say sales have been off in guitars, amps and accessories. Rather than blaming Connecticut's lousy economy, the Goliath down the street, Amazon, etc., I think it is time to place the blame squarely on the manager's shoulders (me) for our lackluster performance. High time to embrace what I'm doing "wrong," fix it and forget it, and move on.

Thanks for the wake up call.

Scott Mulrooney
Owner
The Music Shop
Southington, Connecticut

Grabbing Attention

Thank you so much for the exciting and stellar article on our design team here at MONO. We were all very pleased with the writing and execution of our brand story. We very much appreciated your deft detailing of our vision. It's been super exciting for us to get so much attention from colleagues and other peers in our industry. We are always working to improve our operations, design new products, and engage our community of loyal fans. A good interview with *Music Inc.* magazine has helped us along our path in becoming the leading brand we are.

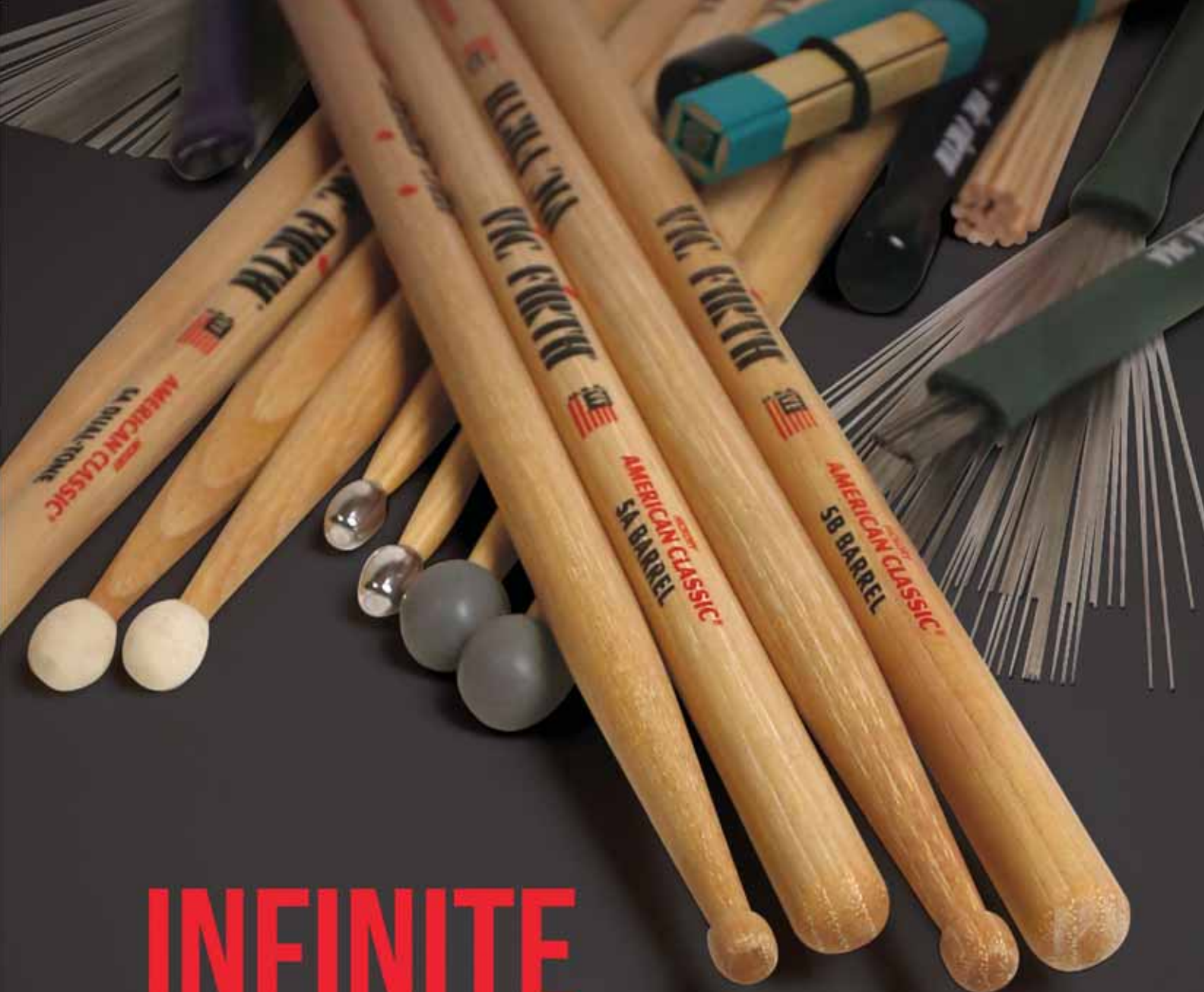
Randy Couvillon
Global Account Manager
MONO
Larkspur, California

Shining the Light

A very big thank you to the folks at *Music Inc.* for shining a light on our fundraiser. I'm very pleased to say that immediately following the article's release, we received a flood of phone calls and emails. I've made some great connections and [we] are in talks with a few people about next year. Long & McQuade, chain wide, raised a total of \$133,500 with all proceeds going towards the music therapy program at various children's hospitals across Canada, no doubt with the help and exposure of your magazine. Thanks again for the exposure. I really do appreciate it.

Bryan Faber
Instrument Specialist
Long & McQuade
Surrey, British Columbia

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- > **Bertrand's Music**
San Bernardino store catches fire
PAGE 16
- > **Cadenza Music**
Celebrates its 40th anniversary
PAGE 17
- > **Guitar Center**
Opens its 264th location
PAGE 18

RETAIL

SOUND OF MUSIC | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

In 1965, movie-goers were enthralled by the film adaptation of *The Sound of Music* starring Julie Andrews. That same year, a modest Canadian music store opened, taking the same name. Today, Sound of Music Sales Ltd. is still small, but notable for its incredible staying power. At January's NAMM Show, the company was honored with a Milestone Award for 50 years in business.

So, what's kept Sound of Music going so long? "Being able to change with the times," said store owner Dean Irving. "We started out as a piano and organ store back in the day, basically selling organs for the price of a new car. Of course, as the organ demographic fell away, the demographics shifted toward guitars."

Today, the Abbotsford, British Columbia-based store is a full line dealer, running the gamut from school band instruments to combo gear and digital pianos.

Irving himself has been involved with the company for 48 years, since he was 12. Back then, the budding entrepreneur would head into downtown Langley (a nearby suburb of Vancouver, British Columbia) after school looking for odd jobs to perform. He washed windows or swept walkways for local busi-



From left: Kathryn, Eloise and Dean Irving

Changing with the times has kept Sound of Music singing for 50 years

nesses, whatever it took to make a Canadian buck or two.

Eventually he hooked up with Robert Press, a former school

teacher of his. While a teacher, Press started selling pianos and organs on the side. The business proved to be so lucrative, he left

his teaching position and founded Sound of Music.

Irving became his part-time assistant and gradually progressed to selling instruments. He turned out to have a knack for it.

"I started selling pianos, and I started doing outside promotions, country fairs and city fairs by the time I was 15 or 16 years old," Irving said. "I was demonstrating organs and selling after school and on weekends. By the time I was 17, I made him a deal that I would just work on commission. I was making enough money that I couldn't see any point in doing anything different."

Irving went to his first NAMM show at age 16 and has been attending them ever since. For a while, he and Press distributed pianos and organs in addition to running the store.

"At one time, I had been in every piano store in Canada over a three summer period just showing products," Irving said.

Irving became a partner in the business, and when Press was ready to retire in the early 1990s, Irving bought the remaining share. In 1998, he opened the current location in Abbotsford. About an hour and a half from Vancouver, the site sits near the U.S.-Canada border and attracts

business from both sides. Although the store is only 3,500 square feet, it features sound-proof demo rooms and ample studio space for group and private lessons.

ENDURING THROUGH TEACHING

Teaching has always been paramount at Sound of Music. Back in the day, when the store was still selling organs, it offered free lessons to fuel sales.

“Sharing the joy of making music and learning to use the instruments has been paramount in our success,” Irving said.

The store is capable of handling about 300 students a week, and they are currently running at 80-percent capacity.

“We find the cash flow generated by lesson fees is a stable source of income for us,” Irving added. “We are thankful for our students — past and present — as they, their family and friends become our customer base for our retail operation.”

And sometimes those lesson students stick around.

One day in 1982, a woman named Eloise came in to take advantage of the free organ lessons, and she got more than she bargained for. Although it seemed taboo to court a customer, Irving struck up a relationship with her. They married and had their daughter, Kathryn, in 1985.

Kathy became immersed in the business as a child, just like her dad. Today she’s one of 12 store employees and the company’s heir apparent. Not that Irving has any immediate plans to retire. He says he enjoys the business so much, it keeps him young.

“Kathy quips that as long as I can still walk in with my walker, she’ll still have me coming!” **MI**



Sound of Music's storefront in 1999.



SWEETWATER | EXPANSION

SWEETWATER DEBUTS CAMPUS EXPANSION

Sweetwater has debuted the expansion of its campus in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In May 2014, Sweetwater completed a 132,000-square-foot expansion, including room for 500 sales engineers, permanent offices for vendors, three new conference halls and a 54,000-square-foot expansion of its distribution center, essentially doubling its size.

Then, in December 2014, the company added 15,000 square feet to double its dining area, including a coffee bar called “The Crescendo Café,” plus a lounge area and the campus’ second performance stage. These

amenities are in addition to a gaming area, free DVD and games lending library, fitness center with personal trainer, and a salon providing everything from hair and nail care to massages.

The full-menu “Downbeat Diner” features “scratch-prepared” food and a full kitchen staff.

The Sweetwater campus will continue to grow in 2015, with the total redesign and expansion of Sweetwater’s retail store, plus a major building expansion to house the marketing and merchandising staffs, as well as a new state-of-the-art video studio.



BERTRAND’S MUSIC | FIRE

Bertrand’s Music’s San Bernardino Store Catches Fire After Car Crash

Bertrand’s Music’s original location in San Bernardino, California, caught fire on Feb. 20, after an elderly driver crashed her car into the location’s storefront.

The driver, a 94-year-old woman, reportedly told police she was parking her car, a Toyota Camry, when someone cut her off, and she veered into the store. She told police her foot was on the brake the whole time.

“As soon as the car went through the store, it started to smoke,” Jeff Bertrand, VP of Bertrand’s Music, told *Music Inc.* “So one of my employees, Cody [Wakefield], immediately ran over to the car and got the driver out, and then one of my other employees [Daniel Soto], called 911.”

A third employee, Reyline Espinosa, lead the team as they worked together to make sure everyone got out safe. “Everyone evacuated the store,” Bertrand continued. “Right about the time they got outside, the car caught fire. So, they grabbed some fire extinguishers and attempted to put the fire out from the outside of the store — but then as soon as they stopped the fire extinguisher,



the flames would come right back.

“Before you know it, the store was up in flames. When the firefighters showed up, it was pretty much a blaze. About two-thirds of the store are completely destroyed.”

Bertrand’s Music has set up a temporary location at 908 E. Highland Ave, directly behind the damaged San Bernardino store, to continue servicing its Inland Empire customer base.

CADENZA MUSIC | ANNIVERSARY

Cadenza Music Celebrates 40 Years

Cadenza Music celebrated its 40th anniversary by inviting young musicians representing five schools from the Saint Paul area — with rock-and-roll, stage band and jazz combos — to perform for an audience of over 400 customers, neighbors, and friends.

Headlining the party was Irv Williams, 95-year-old saxophonist, who shared tips with saxophone players after the show. Williams' career has included performing with Count Basie, Louis Armstrong and Dinah Washington.

This year's party supported the scholarship program of Walker West Music Academy and addressed the way music brings individuals of diverse backgrounds together to build positive relationships.

"Our party raised \$1,500 that will be used for scholarships to Walker West Music Academy's summer music programs," said Eugene Monnig, owner of Cadenza Music. "We all really believe that we save our children by teaching them to play instruments."

Music industry vendors supported the party by donating items used as giveaways. Amati's Fine Instruments and Alvarez led the way with guitars, with additional donations from Connolly Music, D'Addario and Yamaha.

To add to the fun, Saint Paul's mayor, Christopher Coleman, proclaimed "Cadenza Music Day" for Feb. 7, 2015.



Nancy Vernon and Eugene Monnig, owners of Cadenza



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Irv Williams Trio — From left: Tom Lewis, bass; Irv Williams, tenor saxophone; Steve Blons, guitar



Walker West Jazz Ensemble



GUITAR CENTER | OPENING

Guitar Center Opens New Store in Central Illinois

Guitar Center opened its 264th location in central Illinois on Feb. 26. The latest store, covering 8,000 square feet, is the first in a series of grand openings in 2015. Michael Amkreutz, Guitar Center's EVP of marketing, merchandising and e-commerce, announced that the opening is an example of the company's ongoing plans for growth and long-term expansion.

"Our Champaign, Illinois, store is the first in a series of 2015 new store grand openings," Amkreutz stated. "In addition to opening new stores, we are revamping many of our current locations to bring them in line with our new store designs that foster a hands-on

environment in which customers are encouraged to interact with the products. We are always looking to create a more immersive in-store experience for our customers."

Guitar Center's Champaign location features showrooms for guitars, amplifiers, percussion instruments, keyboards and live sound, as well as DJ, lighting and recording equipment.

Guitar Center hosted a grand opening weekend celebration featuring discounts and gear giveaways catered to local musicians. The celebration kicked off on Feb. 26 with a free, live in-store performance by The Fights.

ONLINE RETAIL | TAX LAW

Supreme Court Allows Challenge to Colorado Internet Tax Law

The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that federal courts have the authority to rule in a dispute over Colorado's Internet tax law.

The ruling on March 3 is a win for business groups that want to challenge the state's so-called "Amazon tax," which requires extensive reporting by retailers that don't collect the state's 2.9 percent sales tax from Colorado customers.

Online retailers challenged the law, claiming it violates protections from the companies doing business in other states. A federal court agreed that the law violates the

Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

But a federal appeals court ruled that tax cases can only be filed in a state court.

The high court reversed the ruling, finding that retailers were not challenging the actual collection of taxes, only a law giving state officials information about people who owe taxes.

This case may lead to a broader reexamination of how online purchases are taxed. Currently, states cannot tax purchases that residents make from an out-of-state retailer unless that company has a physical presence within its borders.

SANDERS PIANO CO. | CLOSING

SANDERS PIANO CO. CLOSES HONOLULU STORE

Sanders Piano and Organ Co. in Honolulu, Hawaii, will be closing its doors after more than 42 years in business.

The shop's president and general manager, Bill Sanders, told *Pacific Business News* that a slow market led to the decision.

"With the recent trends in piano purchasing and [a] sluggish economy, we decided, 'Why fight it?'" Sanders said. "It's becoming a losing battle."

The piano company's parent corporation, William Sanders Inc., will seek other business opportunities in the future.

Sanders' showroom has offered brand-name instruments, sheet music, repairs and music lessons since its opening in 1973.

Sanders Piano supplied professional brands, including Yamaha, Kawai, Pearl River and Rodgers.

IN MEMORIAM



From left: Armand Zildjian, Buddy Rich and Lennie Dimuzio

LENNIE DIMUZIO

Lennie DiMuzio, former artist relations director for the Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company, passed away on March 7. He was 81.

DiMuzio joined Zildjian in 1961 and worked closely with Armand Zildjian for over four decades before Zildjian's passing in 2002. He oversaw the lineup of endorsees – including Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, "Philly" Joe Jones and many more – and their many activities, as well as the company's printed material related to musicians and their official endorsees. After leaving Zildjian in 2003, DiMuzio went to work for Armand's brother, Robert, who had started the Sabian Cymbal Company years before.

APPOINTMENTS



Michelle Grabel-Komar

Full Compass Systems

Full Compass Systems has announced that Michelle Grabel-Komar has accepted the role of vice president of sales and will be overseeing the company's vertical sales channels.

Grabel-Komar most recently held the title of vice president of product planning and procurement, a role where she oversaw the purchasing, product management, and merchandising departments. She has first-hand experience in the Full Compass sales department, where she worked as a national sales pro from 1996-2000. Prior to rejoining Full Compass in 2013, Grabel-Komar held the position of senior manager, western U.S. sales, at Shure Incorporated where she was responsible for key account management, and the strategic planning and implementation for activities assigned to the Western region.

FCS has also selected Ryan Mauer as its new sales manager to head up its national sales division.

Prior to joining Full Compass, Mauer was director of marketing and sales operations for RenewAire, LLC, where he was responsible for the strategic and tactical execution of the company's go-to-market initiatives. Mauer also served as the director of national accounts at Conney Safety Products, where he not only oversaw the national sales channel for the company, but brought on and worked with dozens of business development managers to support the most aggressive sales expansion in the company's history.

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ADVERTORIAL • MAY 2015 • NAMM.ORG



Note From Joe

Creating Lifelong Music Makers— Why Some Stick With It While Others Quit

NAMM's vision is a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone. Achieving that vision would benefit every NAMM member and make the world a much brighter place. That vision could be summed up to this: get more people to start playing music and get fewer to quit. Sounds simple, right? But why do some stick with it while so many others quit, especially after leaving their school music programs? A newly published Swedish study looked at the factors that keep kids playing music into adulthood.

When researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm examined years of data, they found some interesting results. "Lifelong musicians tend to be people who, as kids, practiced frequently, were surrounded by other musicians, chose their own instruments, and began taking lessons early in life."

While not groundbreaking revelations, they seemed to make a lot of sense to me. I could see the important role that our industry members—especially retailers—have in fostering these four critical factors. With my Skip's Music hat on I thought about these four factors in this order:

Picking Out an Instrument

We see this play out every day in our stores; leading a new customer (of any age) to the instrument that is right for them is one of the most important roles we can play. The study shows that if we get this right, we're halfway to creating a lifelong music maker.

Taking Music Lessons

In my opinion, selling a musical instrument to a new customer without offering instruction is a huge missed opportunity and leads to increased dropouts. Whether you have your own lesson

program or work with local teachers, please ensure that everyone has the chance to learn to play.

Practicing Frequently

Performances, recitals, open mic events, jams, ukulele or drum circles ... giving your customers incentive to practice and play with other musicians is now linked with keeping them playing longer. "The strongest predictor of continued playing was total amount of music practice," the researchers add. And make sure that parents recognize this too. The study found that a positive attitude toward practice on the part of parents increased the odds that their children would still be playing when they were ready to have kids themselves.

Being Surrounded by Other Musicians

Kids join their school band for many reasons but one of the strongest is to belong to a group. The same friendships and camaraderie that comes with playing music with others is what keeps people involved as they grow older. NAMM members have the opportunity to be the hub of music making in their communities. Get people involved in making music with others and you'll create connections that lead to lifelong music making.



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Playing Music Into Adulthood



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Played in
 Ensemble



Playing
 by Ear



Practiced
 Improvisation

You can read the study in the article
 "What Leads to a Lifetime of Music-Making?" at www.psmag.com.



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- REACH** your customers

You can grow your business, increase your competitive advantage, help create more lifelong music makers and help us achieve our industry's vision—such a deal, right? Visit the NAMM Foundation and NAMM U websites to learn more about proven programs and strategies to develop these opportunities for your customers. And together we can get a little closer to our vision and create more music makers for life.

Joe Lamond
 Joe Lamond

NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

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- > **FMIC**
Sells KMC Music wholesale distribution
PAGE 24
- > **Sabian**
To sell direct to retail in U.S. market
PAGE 25
- > **Hoshino Gakki**
Names new president
PAGE 26

SUPPLY

PAUL REED SMITH | BY DAVID BALL

A QUICK LOOK BACK

For its 25th anniversary issue, *Music Inc.* celebrates Paul Reed Smith's own anniversary by catching up on 30 years of guitar making.

MI: You mention in the YouTube video *Then & Now: Looking Back on 30 Years of Guitar Making* (on prsguitars.com) that you began to make your own instruments because you "wanted really nice guitars, but didn't have the money, so the only way [you] could get the gear was to make it."

On what type of guitar did you first learn to play?

PRS: I learned how to play on a nylon acoustic, a Rickenbacker six-string, a [Gibson] Melody Maker ¾-size and then guitars that I made.

MI: Did you have any favorite guitars before you began to craft your own?

PRS: The Melody Maker, and later I had a 1953 Les Paul. I would say that it was a big day when I felt I had made a guitar that played better than the '53.

MI: You also mention in the video that you began your business by selling your handmade guitars to touring artists playing



Paul Reed Smith

at local venues, such as the Capital Centre.

Were the first guitars you sold to artists similar to the core electric guitars you still sell today?

PRS: Yes. I would say that they were pretty close, although not reflections. They were more like brothers and first cousins.

MI: What advice would you give to an aspiring independent luthier trying to craft and market his or her own guitar line in the present day?

PRS: Make guitars, make guitars, make guitars, make your customers happy, make your customers happy, make guitars, make guitars, make your customers happy. I can't repeat those enough.

MI: Your guitars filled a void between popular models — like the Gibson Les Paul and the Fender Stratocaster — and seized the opportunity to pursue a middle-ground at a time when the market showed demand for guitars with some of the best elements from both

worlds.

If PRS had not begun production in 1985, do you think it would have been possible for another company to have filled the gap?

PRS: Absolutely. The way to make money is to fill a need, and there was a need. It wasn't being announced. No one said, "I need a combination between a Les Paul and a Strat," although they were putting humbucking [pickups] in Telecasters and Stratocasters, but they weren't putting single-coils in Les Pauls.

They also weren't putting tremolos on Les Pauls at the time. The need was there! It wasn't said, but it was present.

It was the same thing with cars! Henry Ford said, "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." They needed cars. There was a need to travel. There was a need to transport your body faster than walking or riding a horse.

MI: How much has changed in the design of your core electric guitar line since the implementation of the CNC machine in 1990?

PRS: The CNC machine is not what implemented the change. The CNC machine is a tool. There are hundreds of changes; for instance, we changed the truss rod three times until we settled down to a truss rod design that we love. The CNC machine didn't design that truss rod design.

It is like, "Would you write a letter differently if you used carbon paper, handwriting

or a word processor?" The computer didn't change the letter! The computer just made it much easier to edit the letter and to repeat it.

MI: Since the introduction of the S2 series in 2013, how many U.S.-made guitars does PRS make per month?

PRS: PRS manufactures 700 core guitars and 500 S2 guitars per month. In addition, we import roughly 20,000 SE guitars [per year] that are made to our exact specifications. By the way, each SE guitar is play tested at our factory before it ships out to a dealer or distributor.

MI: If you could have have done anything differently in the past 30 years, what would it be?

PRS: For the most part, very little; but as with anything, as you mature as a business or mature as a guitar maker, if I knew then what I know now I would have done it differently ... but for the most part I don't have

any regrets. The problem is, I like where we are now and this path got us here, so I have to shut up.

MI: What do you hope to see from PRS over the next 30 years?

PRS: I hope to see more of the same — which is doing everything we can to [ensure] the people that buy the guitars get their money's worth, so they can love the product that they buy, use the product they buy, and not want to sell the product they buy.

The firemen in this town came and told me that they are hearing more and more that, when a house is on fire, [people say], "Go in and get the PRS, not the photos." And that day I felt better about what we are doing. If we are building heirlooms, something that is highly valuable to people, I think we are doing our job. I hope in the next 30 years we continue down that road. **MI**

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KMC | SALE

FMIC SELLS KMC MUSIC WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS TO JAM INDUSTRIES

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) announced on Feb. 10 that it has completed an asset sale of the KMC Music wholesale distribution business, including the trade name B&J Music, and certain proprietary brands, to JAM Industries, Ltd. JAM Industries is a global leader in the MI, pro-audio and consumer electronics wholesale distribution business.

FMIC will provide short-term transitional support as part of the transaction. Financial and other terms of the deal were not disclosed.

“We are extremely pleased to have found a company with ideal synergies for the

KMC Music wholesale business in JAM Industries, Ltd.,” said FMIC’s interim CEO and board member Scott Gilbertson. “They possess great vision for the future of their business, and we believe this transaction will mutually benefit each of our strategic objectives.”

“We are very excited about this acquisition — it adds greatly to the JAM family of companies in North America,” said Martin Szpiro, president and CEO of JAM Industries, Ltd.

“KMC Music has a tremendous legacy and unique distribution abilities that will allow us to provide our current and

expanded North American dealer base with the widest and best product offering anywhere. It has been a pleasure doing this transaction with FMIC, and we look forward to completing the transition of key employees and operations shortly.”

Earlier this year, FMIC announced that KMC Music sold its owned and licensed percussion brands, including Gretsch Drums, Latin Percussion, Toca Percussion, KAT Percussion and Gibraltar Hardware — as well as the Ovation guitar brand — to Drum Workshop, Inc., the manufacturer of DW drums, hardware and accessories.

{fender.com; jamindustries.com}



Victor Wooten and Jack Knight

HARTKE | ARTIST APPROVED

Hartke Re-signs Wooten

Hartke has re-signed bass legend Victor Wooten to its roster of distinguished artists. Wooten is best known as a part of the eclectic ensemble Béla Fleck and the Flecktones. He is also an internationally acclaimed solo artist, author and clinician.

Wooten first joined the Hartke family in 2009. Since then, he has performed with Hartke amplifiers and cabinets on stage and in the studio. Together with Hartke, Wooten has also held countless educational clinics in music stores all over the world.

“The name Hartke represents great sound, high-quality and good people, and I’m very happy to be continuing my relationship with them,” Wooten said. “Together, we’ll continue bringing this great sound to the world. See you soon.”

“We’re excited to continue our relationship with Victor,” said Jack Knight, Samson Technologies (Hartke) president. “Our partnership with Victor goes beyond having him on an artist roster. He embodies the Hartke spirit.” {samsontech.com/hartke}

MARTIN | COMPANY

MARTIN GUITAR RECEIVES PATENT

C. F. Martin & Co. has received a new patent for its guitar neck joint router system. Created and spearheaded by Theresa Hoffman, engineering project manager at Martin Guitar, the machine is a combination of measuring sensors, a scanning probe, aluminum tooling, and three different cutting tools.

The patented router system uses a scanning probe to measure critical areas of the guitar body and neck. The measurements are then compared to optimal neck fit settings required to obtain a perfect neck fit. The system calculates the adjustments required for the proper setup for bridge height and neck centering and machines areas on the body to create perfectly matched parts. The system machines the fingerboard and heel areas on the body as well as the final dovetail dimensions, providing a tighter neck joint, enhanced tone and playability.

“We are proud to receive a patent for one of our technology systems,” said Chris Martin IV, Martin Guitar CEO and chairman. “Throughout Martin’s 182-year history, our skilled team of engineers and researchers have perfected the marriage of our traditions in craftsmanship with innovative thinking to produce new processes for the next era of guitar-building. This patent exemplifies that spirit.” {martinguitar.com}

SABIAN | DISTRIBUTION

Sabian Sells Direct to Retail in U.S.

All sales and distribution of Sabian cymbals and accessories in the United States is now handled exclusively by Sabian Ltd.

“This is absolutely the right time in our history to engage directly on all levels with our valued partners in the USA,” said Andy Zildjian, Sabian president and CEO. “It allows us to take direct control of the message, relationships and brand focus in our largest market. This is the beginning of a very exciting time for all of us in the Sabian family, and we look forward to working closer with our retail partners for many years to come.”

In 2013, Sabian implemented Lean as a corporate philosophy, and it has impacted the entire organization in many positive ways. According to the company, the resulting increase in overall efficiency and effectiveness allowed for improvements in many areas, including customer service, warehousing, manufactur-

ing processes, and the elimination of waste.

“Incorporating Lean into our daily lives has allowed us to remain competitive on a global basis while helping to change our culture for the better,” said Mike Connell, Sabian CFO and COO. “This has resulted in our employees being better able to service the needs of our customers. Employees at Sabian are open-minded to change and have a genuine passion to do whatever it takes to position Sabian for a strong future. This strategic move to sell direct to retailers in the U.S. marks the start of a new era in Sabian’s history.” sabian.com



TAKAMINE | DISTRIBUTION

Takamine Completes Global Distribution Reconfiguration

Takamine has completed its global distribution reconfiguration. The company has worked to free itself from a long-term distribution relationship with KMC Music — a former division of Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC). Takamine has terminated distribution relationships with Fender in more than a few dozen countries around the world, including the United States and Canada.

As of February 2015, Takamine is the

only source of Takamine branded guitars and is now free and independent, and more than 30 distributors around the world have partnered with the company to bring Takamine products to market.

Simultaneously, Takamine has announced that it has re-established its longtime Canadian distribution relationship with B&J Music, which is now a division of JAM Industries.

Additionally, the ESP Guitar Company has teamed up with the company to be the

United States distributor for Takamine Guitars.

According to a statement by Takamine, ESP's wealth of experience and powerful relationships with musicians, dealers and industry professionals will now be able to bring top class acoustic and acoustic-electric guitars to its portfolio. Takamine could not be happier to have found a partnership in the staff of the ESP Guitar Company in the U.S. market. takamine.com

APPOINTMENTS

Hoshino Gakki Names New President

Hoshino Gakki Co. Ltd., holder of the Ibanez and Tama brand names, has appointed Kimihide “Ken” Hoshino as the company's new president. He succeeds Toshitsugu “Tom” Tanaka who, beginning in 2004, led the company into an era of sharply increased sales and prosperity. Tanaka will continue his work with the company in the capacity of advisor.

Hoshino, son of late company co-owner, Masao Hoshino, began his career with the Hoshino organization in 1974. From 1981 through 1985 he served as president of

Hoshino USA Inc. and was acknowledged as the driving force behind Tama's rise to prominence in the U.S. market during that period.

“It will not be easy to live up to the exceptionally high standards of achievement and success set by my predecessors,” Hoshino said. “But by applying what I have learned through all my past experience within the Hoshino Gakki Group, I believe our company stands poised to make Hoshino an even more valuable partner than ever.”

hoshinogakki.co.jp



Ken Hoshino



Dustin Hinz

Hinz Appointed Ernie Ball VP

Ernie Ball has named Dustin Hinz executive vice president of marketing. A longtime Guitar Center executive, Hinz most recently held the position of vice president of brand experience, marketing and media production. Recognized across the industry for his successes, Hinz

boasts more than 20 industry awards and honors to his credit in 2014 alone. Hinz took top honors for Guitar Center's content work at the Content Marketing Awards, Telly's and MarCom Awards and was a finalist for PRN's 2014 Marketing Professional of the Year.

Levy's Leathers recently appointed Ted Burger to the position of international sales manager.

Chris Marr has been named Yamaha's national account manager for its pro-audio and combo division.

Conn-Selmer had added Tom Bracy as its director of educational programs in the division of education.

Adam Hall has appointed Chris Fearn key accounts manager for the UK and Ireland territories.

Breedlove

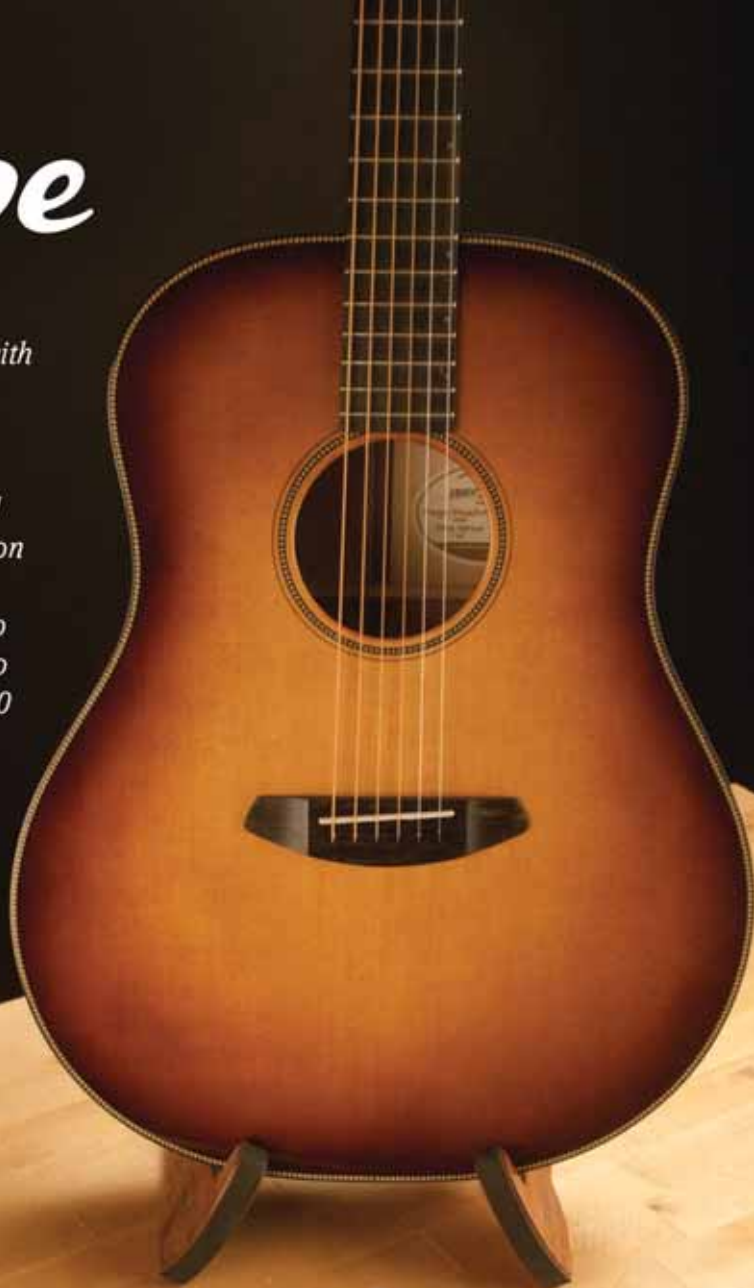
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IDEAS

Top 25 Ideas From *Music Inc.* Columnists



Alan Friedman

On Counting Sales Revenue:

→ “A properly formatted income statement for all music retailers should begin by reporting sales — and nothing more — followed by ‘cost of goods sold’ and ‘gross profit.’ Sales should not include rentals, repairs, lessons, deliveries or any other material source of revenue. These items should be reported as ‘other operating income’ after gross profit but before overhead expenses. When done correctly, overhead expenses, such as sales salaries, will be consistently compared to ‘sales only.’ If you include other operating revenues in sales, you’ll erroneously report much higher gross profit and much lower operating expenses as a percent of sales.”

— Alan Friedman, “Compensating a Retail Sales Staff,” July 2007

On Selling Rental Instruments:

→ “I maintain that when built-up rental credits get applied toward an instrument purchase, those credits should be merely reflected in the instrument’s sale price, effectively as a sales discount. The rental credits should not be recorded as an ever-increasing liability — they are being built up because we don’t know if the credits will be used by the customer. Nor should they be recorded as a reduction in rental income if and when they are ‘cashed in.’”

— Alan Friedman, “Selling Rentals,” August 2009

On Taking Physical Inventories:

→ “By knowing the absolute dollar value of your inventory, you’ll be able to analyze gross profit dollars and percentages, and derive meaningful inventory turns and GMROI trends. Ultimately, this will help you make decisive and educated buying and selling decisions, instead of simply guessing. Physical inventories don’t have to be long, burdensome or done all at once. Taking periodic counts of inventory throughout the year (called “cycle counts”) can help alleviate the monumental task at the end of the year. Take a count of inventory by department at the end of each month (i.e. guitars in January, keyboards in February, and so on). Also, make sure you employ bar code technology and good accounting software.”

— Alan Friedman, “Let’s Get Physical,” August 2006

On Making Tough Business Decisions:

→ “The common thread in all these [bad] decisions is that I failed to focus, first and foremost, on my own company. I made a decision to benefit my vendors. I made a decision based on perceived customer reactions. And I made a decision based on an honored relationship. In each case, the right decision would’ve been the decision that had the most positive effect on company profitability. The bottom line is the bottom line — and everything else is just noise.”

— Gerson Rosenbloom, “Tough Decisions,” October 2010

On Understanding Vendor Agreements:

→ “When you see a personal guarantee, ‘Run, Forrest, run!’ This onerous aspect of dealer agreements is a supplier’s inducement to grant credit. It gives them the right to collect an unpaid company debt from you personally (i.e. your personal bank accounts and your assets). Assuming that you have established a protective corporate structure for your business (you have, haven’t you?), signing a personal guarantee undermines safeguards you thought you had in place. Vendors have every right to protect themselves, but so do you.”

— Gerson Rosenbloom, “Read the Fine Print,” September 2009

On Shopping Your Own Store:

→ “Many of years ago, a friend of mine invited me to attend an annual sales event at his store. Since we both held similar sales, we visited one another and helped out ... The most amazing part is that we both saw things in the other person’s store that we never saw on our own. He pointed out glaring issues in my store that were hurting the customer experience. And fixing those problems paid dividends.”

— Gerson Rosenbloom, “The Eye of the Customer,” November 2014



On Focusing on a Few Lines:

➡ “Pick a category and manufacturer with whom you can work best. Then, focus your efforts on that line. Show the range of products they make, learn them better than you’ve ever learned any other product and sell them the way they deserve to be sold.”

— Gerson Rosenbloom, “Don’t Collect Lines,” October 2009

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Top 25 Ideas From *Music Inc.* Columnists



Ted Eschliman

On Being the Best 'You' You Can be:

→ "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."

— Ted Eschliman, "How to Compete," June 2011

On Knowing When to Cash Out:

➔ "You want new, and you need new. Think of the old gambler proverb: 'Know when to hold them, when to fold them.' That requires being conscious of when your inventory arrived and when it didn't sell. A premeditative inventory time limit lets you make mistakes and take a few chances on new gear."

— Ted Eschliman, "When To Cash Out," August 2010

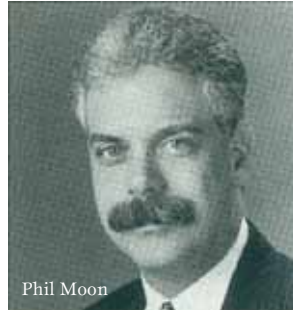


Tom Shay

On Keeping a Positive Attitude:

→ “With every company from the big-box stores to the Internet, business requires determination. If the owner or manager of a business doesn’t want to be the optimist and cheerleader for their store, then why should any employee have a ‘can do’ attitude?”

— Tom Shay, “Setting Your Mind for Success,” February 2002



Phil Moon

On Drum Display Management:

→ “You must be committed to improving your drum display every day. A little touch here, a reworked display there and a major rework 3–4 times per year will keep the area fresh for your customers.”

— Phil Moon, “Ready-to-Play Display Helps Sell, Not Sacrifice Drums,” November 1997



Kenny Smith

On Identifying What Should Sell:

→ “Identify products you should have already sold. Your employees are a good resource, and their opinions won’t show up on an inventory spreadsheet. Visually inspect the store to find out why certain products haven’t been selling. You might be surprised what you find.”

— Kenny Smith, “Selling Old Yeller,” May 2010

On When to Close a Sale:

→ “Timing is everything with closing. Ask too early, and you’ll seem pushy. Ask too late, and you’ll miss the boat completely ... Identifying this magic moment is a lot easier when you listen. Some sales folks get so tied up trying to sell and demo that they don’t give the customer a chance to talk until it’s all over. Leaving space for customers to speak is critical, and many times, they will hand you the perfect opportunity and pathway to close them when you do so.”

— Kenny Smith, “Closing for Newbies,” November 2009

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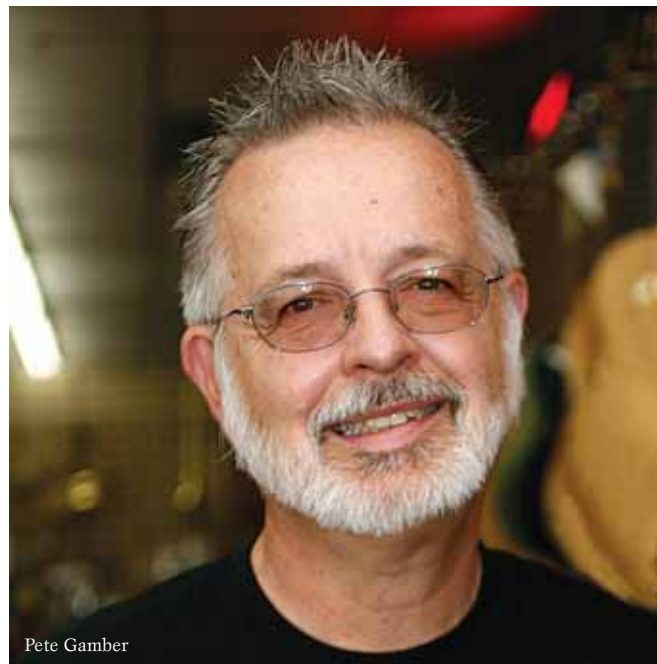
→ “It’s best not to train new instructors in all the neurological-historical-neoclassical-metaphysical approaches to teaching an instrument. Pick the two most-used methods at your store and discuss how they can effectively use those method books. Ask your experienced teachers about any supplemental material like sheets or scale and chord handbooks that they use, and pass that on as well. Write it all down in an easy-to-follow format, and package it with a few of those top methods. You’ve just created a teacher’s manual. It’s nice to leave the new teachers some freedom to decide how and what they want to teach, but this gives them a grounding in what’s common, especially at your store.”

— Pete Gamber, “Need Teachers? Look In-House,” June 2005

On Selling to Your Lesson Students:

→ “Create a student gear survey. You and your staff can ask students, using a form, what they own. You won’t know what they need until you find out what they already have. When you design your form, use open-ended questions for part of it and a checklist for the rest.”

— Pete Gamber, “Holiday Add-on Plan,” November 2011



Pete Gamber

On the Importance of Holding Recitals:

→ “Set a goal to host a performance event every 60 days. People take music lessons because they want to play music. Guitar Center knows this and uses people’s desire to play to market its lessons program. Show people that’s what you do, too.”

— Pete Gamber, “Welcome to the Jungle III,” July 2011



James Harding

On Interacting on Facebook:

➔ **“Whatever your Facebook strategy, the key to success is regular conversation. Remember that Facebook is not like a newspaper ad. Your fans want to interact with you and that interactivity is what will spread your message — and your brand — around the Internet.”**

— James Harding, “Figuring Out Facebook,” November 2014

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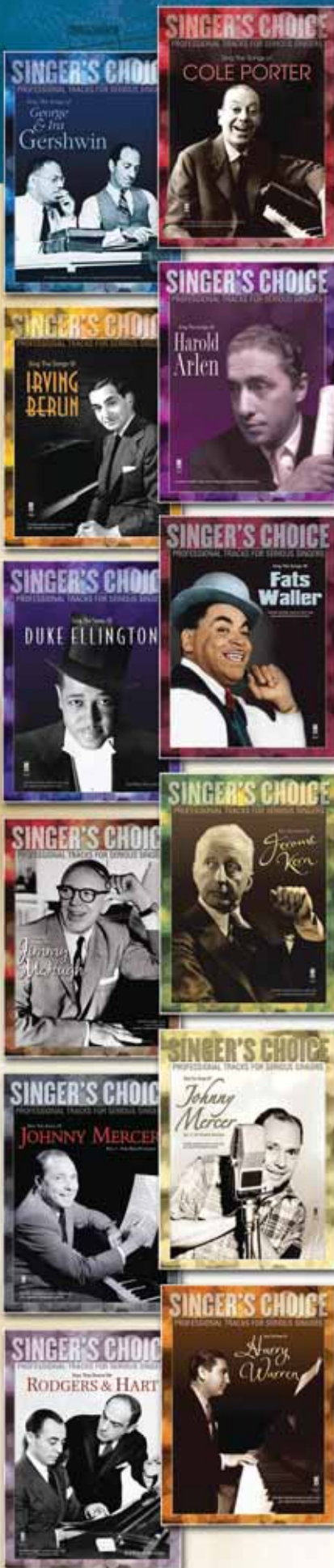
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Greg Billings

On Communicating Your Message to Customers:

→ “People live in a near-constant stream of information, and they’re pretty good at filtering out anything that even hints at boredom. We have to be compelling and interesting. We have to grab their attention and grab it again every few minutes. Using the right words can help. It’s not what you say that matters — it’s what people hear.”

— Greg Billings, “Be Understood,” July 2012

On Helping Customers Make Purchasing Decisions:

→ “The customer whisperer must understand the importance of confirmation. If customers ask what you think, they are seeking confirmation. (They are trying to keep the pleasant rush of dopamine flowing.) This is not a time to be shy, show off your expertise or express an opinion. It’s an opportunity to provide the reassurance your clients are seeking. Every salesperson at a department store cosmetic counter understands this, but for some reason, music store clerks often waste the opportunity to confirm and instead brag about their favorite ax or simply demur. If a customer seeks confirmation and you provide it, you are helping make the connection between the rational and emotional brain. You may even provide a little shot of dopamine.

“Too many times, I have heard a customer ask for confirmation and seen the salesman fail to provide it. Except for bombarding a client with too many facts, it may be our most common error. Many salespeople are genuinely surprised when prospects ignore their argument and make a purchase elsewhere based on emotion. Well, of course they did! When you blast someone with facts, the upper brain gets overwhelmed and shuts down. And when you deny confirmation, the client has a hormonal crash. It’s easy for the next salesperson to get the sale on a rebound.”

— Greg Billings, “How We Decide,” January 2010



Peter Dods

On Trying on All Hats:

➔ “You need to be your store’s guinea pig and run through the hoops and challenges of each role and define them. If you do, your business will run smoothly and will be better fortified against disaster.”

— Peter Dods, “Be the Guinea Pig,” January 2013



Harry Friedman

On Hiring the Right Employees:

→ “If you can’t select the right person from the applicants interviewed, don’t re-run the ad unless you initially got a poor response. By running the ad again, you may find yourself looking for nonexistent qualified people. Instead, choose an inexperienced applicant who is willing to learn — the one who is the least disqualified. Then train, train, train.”

— Harry Friedman, “Hiring Top Employees,” January 1999

On Handling Under-Performing Sales Staff:

→ “Not all salespeople have earned the right to sell independently. Substandard performers should be held accountable for certain selling behaviors that you don’t require from top producers. As soon as they become top producers, they don’t have to take your advice either.”

— Harry Friedman, “Understand Salespeople to Avoid Training Pitfalls,” December 1996

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Billy Cuthrell

On Combining Lessons and Sales:

→ “Essentially what I did was look at the way the cell phone industry worked with contracts and subsidizing equipment and tweaked that model to fit what we wanted to do in our industry, in regards to moving drums and guitars ... For example, we can do a rent-to-own on gear that has been sitting around for too long. Rent the gear to the customer, then when they are ready, we roll them from the rental contract into our Instrument/Lesson Package Program. We still sell it at cost minus what they paid in rental fees with a 12-month lesson agreement. In that scenario, we get the rental money up front and then we have a 12-month lesson commitment after the rental agreement.

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— Billy Cuthrell, “A New Way to Win?” July 2013

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On Handling Trouble Employees:

→ “Lay out your expectations for every employee in writing — no exceptions. At my dealership, we have a detailed employee manual that works well, but you can also get away with a basic overview of your expectations. Set a regular date and time for employee reviews, so you can meet with each person and review his or her work, discuss expectations, and consider solutions.”

— Billy Cuthrell,
“Treating Staff Infections,”
September 2010



Myrna Sisen

On Community Involvement:

→ “If your store does not participate in a community parade, I urge you to start doing so. It not only integrates you further into your community but also introduces thousands of potential customers to your brand.”

— Myrna Sisen, “I Love a Parade,”
September 2012



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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

HARTLEY PEAVEY | PEAVEY ELECTRONICS

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I work out, shower, go into work, and get on email. I receive about 200–300 messages a day, most of which is junk, but a lot of it is from customers and dealers, and I personally answer those messages. Then, I spend time in engineering, marketing, and some in my little lab. I have two labs — one here in Meridian and one at my house in Florida — and I’m constantly trying to invent new things. Then I’m here at work every day until 6:30 or 7:00 p.m., personally answering phone calls and emails.

FIFTY YEARS IS A LONG TIME TO HAVE PERSONALLY RUN A COMPANY — CONGRATULATIONS ON THE SUCCESS AND LONGEVITY.

Peavey is a very different company than most of our friendly competitors in that we have been in business, with the same ownership and management, for five decades. A lot of other companies have been bought, sold, moved, and given new management and locations, but that’s not the case with Peavey. We have the same location, ownership, and management as when we started, so we really are the same company that we’ve always been. In fact, if you have a Peavey amp that was built 40 years ago, we still have the parts to fix it.

HOW HAVE YOU MANAGED TO STAY SUCCESSFUL FOR SO LONG?

I believe that business is like a rodeo and the company that can stay on the pony longest wins. This is a highly competitive and ever-evolving marketplace and, like most companies that have survived for a while, we have had to reinvent ourselves. We started by making very simple guitar and bass amplifiers. At that time, it was all that we knew how to do. Then we expanded into other areas and started making power amplifiers, P.A. systems, and more. In the mid 1970s, we kept blowing out speakers. We were making 200- to 300-watt amplifiers and the speakers at the time couldn’t handle more than 100 without burning up. None of the so-called premium speaker people would listen to us — so in 1976, we started making our own loudspeakers, too.

WHEN YOU COME UP WITH AN IDEA FOR A PRODUCT OR COMPONENT, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When I tell an idea to my engineers, they usually say that it can’t be done. [Laughs.] I’m not an engineer. I’m what I

call a “half-assed technician.” I insist enough, my guys will sit down and find a way to do it. We have earned 180 patents around the world, and that’s why.

DO PEAVEY AMPLIFIERS HAVE A SIGNATURE SOUND?

Unlike many of our competitors, we do not. We design our products for particular artists we are working with or for specific styles or genres and all of our amplifiers sound different. We have some that are great for heavy metal but maybe not so good for country. Some that are great for blues or gospel but not for metal. I have people call me all the time and say, “Peavey, I have one of your first amps. Do you want to buy it back?” I tell the caller that no, not only do I not want to buy it back, I don’t even want to see it.

WHY IS THAT?

What I’m doing now is lightyears ahead of what I was doing then. Very interestingly, a lot of my competitors are coming out with so-called reissues. Peavey doesn’t do reissues. I don’t want to come out with something I did in 1965 because what I do now is so much better. When companies do reissues, I feel that it is a tacit admission that the stuff they were doing then is probably better than what they’re doing now. We don’t do them for that very reason.

WHAT ARE SOME INNOVATIONS THAT YOU’RE PROUD OF?

In the mid ’70s, we started making guitars, but did it in a different way, using CNC [computer numerical control] machines. We were the first ones to ever use them to produce guitars and everybody said it couldn’t be done — but that’s what we do at Peavey. We always want to do it a better way.

ARE ALL OF PEAVEY’S PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED IN MISSISSIPPI?

We do make some of our stuff overseas. We were the last major company to do that, though, and we did so reluctantly, only because customers are interested in the price. You just can’t make stuff in the United States for the same kind of money that you can in China, per se.

WITH OVERSEAS FACTORIES, HOW DO YOU INSURE QUALITY?



THE DETAILS

HARTLEY PEAVEY, FOUNDER AND CEO

HQ: Meridian, Mississippi

Founded: 1965

Best selling product: Escort portable P.A. systems

Fun Fact: Peavey has earned 180 patents worldwide.

One big thing is that you have to have people there. We have offices in north and south China, as well as Singapore and Hong Kong. We have an American employee over there who speaks fluent Chinese and has about 30 people working for him. Also, experience is the great teacher, they say. We've discovered who we can count on and who we can't count on.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Every day, I get to learn something new. That's what's kept my attention all of these years — and after five decades, you kind of realize that you do have a pretty good understanding of what's going on. [Laughs.] I also love when people tell me, "You can't do that!" In a few instances, those people were right, but most of the time, they were wrong.

WHAT'S YOUR OWN MUSICAL BACKGROUND?

My father was a swing saxophone player, and I was practically raised in a retail music store. I went to my first NAMM show in 1954. I originally tried to be a guitar player, but I was very mechanical.

At the time, when I was in college, I would build equipment for the bands that I was in and as soon as I built the gear they wanted, they would kick me out. The third time that happened, I had to do something that's very difficult for us human beings — to be totally honest with myself. "Well, sport, it looks like you're not going to be a rock star. What are you going to do with the rest of your life?"

AND THAT'S WHEN YOU STARTED PEAVEY?

I was a senior in college at the time and had had lots of trade school experience — machine shop, electronics, working with sheet metal — and I always loved music and musicians.

In 1964, the British Invasion came on the scene and lots of corporate conglomerates like CBS, Paramount Pictures, and even Sarah Lee bought music companies. Their only passions were for profits so the prices doubled and the quality went to crap. That was the environment in which I started my company.

AND THERE WAS DEMAND FOR WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO DO?

Yes, I kept hearing from musicians that they wanted someone to make good gear at a fair and reasonable price. My father had always taught me that you should always make a fair and reasonable profit.

SPEAKING OF CBS, WHAT ARE YOUR REACTIONS TO THE EPISODE OF "UNDERCOVER BOSS" THAT RECENTLY AIRED FEATURING PEAVEY?

CBS led people to believe that we shut down our U.S. operations and moved off-shore. That's not true. We laid off 82 people, partly because our health insurance costs went up no less than 49-percent last year, and we still have hundreds, in the United States, on the Peavey payroll. There was one young man on the show who had another job offer that offered him more money, but we matched their offer and he chose to stay with Peavey. He still works at Plant 3 here in Mississippi, which Undercover Boss told everybody that we had closed. It is still open. The show also apparently led people to believe that we did not honor the commitments that we made to our employees during filming. One employee wanted to pay off her student loans and go back to school. We gave her the money, like she asked, and they led viewers to believe that we did not do that. I don't know why they did it that way, but it was a disaster. Maybe they wanted sensationalism and to kick our ass a little bit.

DO YOU REGRET AGREEING TO DO THE SHOW?

It was a huge mistake. We've been the epitome of American manufacturing for years — I've invested more money in technology, buildings, and U.S. manufacturing than any other company in the pro sound and musical instrument business — and anybody who knows Peavey knows that.

HOW HAVE YOU LED THE COMPANY THROUGH THIS?

I've been telling the truth, and some people believe it and some don't. The show indicated that we don't give a damn about our folks, but the truth is, how could we stay at the top of the game for 50 years treating our folks

badly? We couldn't and we don't treat our people like that. The ironic thing is that a lot of other major companies in the business don't have any U.S. production at all — and irony of ironies, CBS used to own Fender and they did exactly what they accused us of doing. They closed down the Fender factory in California and moved the whole damn thing to Japan. The important thing is that we're still here, doing our thing, bringing products to the market that other people aren't making, and doing it a price that is, generally speaking, very attractive.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

My father wanted me to sell insurance, and I'm pretty sure I would have been an absolute failure at that. [Laughs.] I just wasn't interested.

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By Frank Alkyer

RETAIL

Every month, the pages of this magazine talk. They retell the stories that our writers and editors have lived, breathed and witnessed, chronicling the lives and times of entrepreneurs great and small on their quest to succeed in this business — the musical products business.

Story after improbable story of musicians who start selling a few guitars, pianos, band instruments, recording consoles from the back of a car, basement of a house, garage, eBay ... wherever.

Story after improbable story of businessmen, connecting the dots along their career path, taking a life-changing U-turn when they accidentally intersect with the musical products industry.

Story after improbable story of inventors who buck the trend, tune out the nay-sayers and create the next generation of incredible musical instruments.

There are themes that run through these stories. Themes as universally true as any lesson Shakespeare ever wrote down — from thinking outside the box to etching age-old business tenets into stone.

Here's one: Retail Is a Verb. That came from Hartley Peavey, the founder of Peavey Electronics, whose special anniversary "From The Top" column appears on Page 38.

And truer words have never been spoken. Retail moves, it shakes, it shape-shifts. And the retailers who succeed are as fluid as surfers, finding their groove and riding wave, knowing when to take off and working hard not to wipe out.

Sometimes the ride is short. Just ask anyone selling technology. Sometimes it seems like it can go on forever. Take for example, the guys at Fletcher Music Centers. One of my first duties for this magazine was to go down to Florida to see Bob Fletcher and John Riley at Fletcher Music. This was the early '90s and the organ business had all but died a decade or more earlier, but Fletcher was rocking the malls, selling organs like it was 1975 again. How could he do it with a product that was so far past its freshness date?

"We're not in the organ business," said one of Fletcher's vice presidents. "We're in the creative selling business and the product we're selling happens to be organs."

Improbable? Totally. But it's a successful business recipe to this day, and a key lesson for me on what this industry is really about.

IS A VERB

It's About People

It's an industry about creativity and also about people. Take, for instance, Alberto Kreimerman, the owner of Hermes Music. We kept hearing about this retailer down on the Tex-Mex border that was doing huge business in the Latino market. So, in the late '90s, I hopped a flight down to McAllen, Texas, to meet with the mastermind behind it.

Kreimerman was, and still is, a kind soul with a broad smile. He had performed under the name Bingo Reyna, recording 19 albums and touring throughout South America and Mexico. But wanting to get off the road to raise his family, he bought a closed music store, and without a previous day of retail experience, began a journey that turned into an \$80 million enterprise. How?

"It's people," he said. "Yes, we have great computer systems. Yes, we have great stores and buildings. But the way to succeed is with our people."

Sure, it's more than that. It always is. It's long hours and fits and starts. But surround yourself with smart, passionate professionals. Continuously train them. Compensate them well. How many times has that lesson been repeated? That's the recipe for some of the most successful companies this industry has ever produced.

It works for brick-and-mortar stores. And after the birth of the Internet, it works for online retailers, too. Take, Chuck Surack, the founder and president of Sweetwater Music in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Few businesses have grown faster or more successfully than Sweetwater over the course of the last quarter century. And even for this cutting-edge business, it boils down to the fundamentals.

"It's do the right thing," Surack told us back in 2012. "I was in Boy Scouts, and I believe in what they teach. Scouts are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, clean and reverent. Those are great philosophies for a teenager to live by. They're great philosophies to live in our personal life. And, frankly, they're great business philosophies."

For Sweetwater, the right thing includes a rigorous interview process for every employee hired, a 13-week training period before they take or make their first phone call, and weekly training meetings for the entire sales team. Then, they drive the business. They don't wait for business to come in — 82 percent of calls at Sweetwater are outgoing calls.

The result is more than 150 salespeople who average more than \$1 million in sales annually.



Alberto Kreimerman
owner
Hermes Music
Music Inc. Cover,
January 1998



Chuck Surack
owner
Sweetwater Music
Music Inc. Cover,
June 2008



RETAIL IS A VERB

It's About Family ... Business

The people in the business are often fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, uncles and nephews and nieces. Second, third, fourth generations and more following in the footsteps of their family because they believe this is a noble and worthy craft and profession.

The D'Addarios, the Zildjians, the Wests, the Heids, the Quinlans — these are just a few of the family names that also hang on the shingle above the office door. Washington Music Center, All-County Music, House of Guitars — three more that didn't take the family name, but have been rock-solid and stocked with family members.

I remember asking Paul Ash, the late co-owner of Sam Ash Music, what made the generations of the Ash family come into the business and work so hard. His response was priceless, "Because it's all we know how to do."

Hitting Restart

Add *Music Inc.* to that list. This company currently has its third and fourth generations of family management with Kevin Maher serving as owner and company president and his son Kevin Ryan Maher as circulation manager.

And maybe it's that dedication to family that makes these companies tick, because business is never really easy, and it often takes years or decades to truly appreciate what has been built.

That's very true in the case of *Music Inc.* This magazine was created in 1990 to take the place of *UpBeat Monthly*, a good, old-fashioned trade magazine that this company had published since the early '70s. It had become, quite frankly, as dated as pegboard for a guitar wall with little hope for saving it.

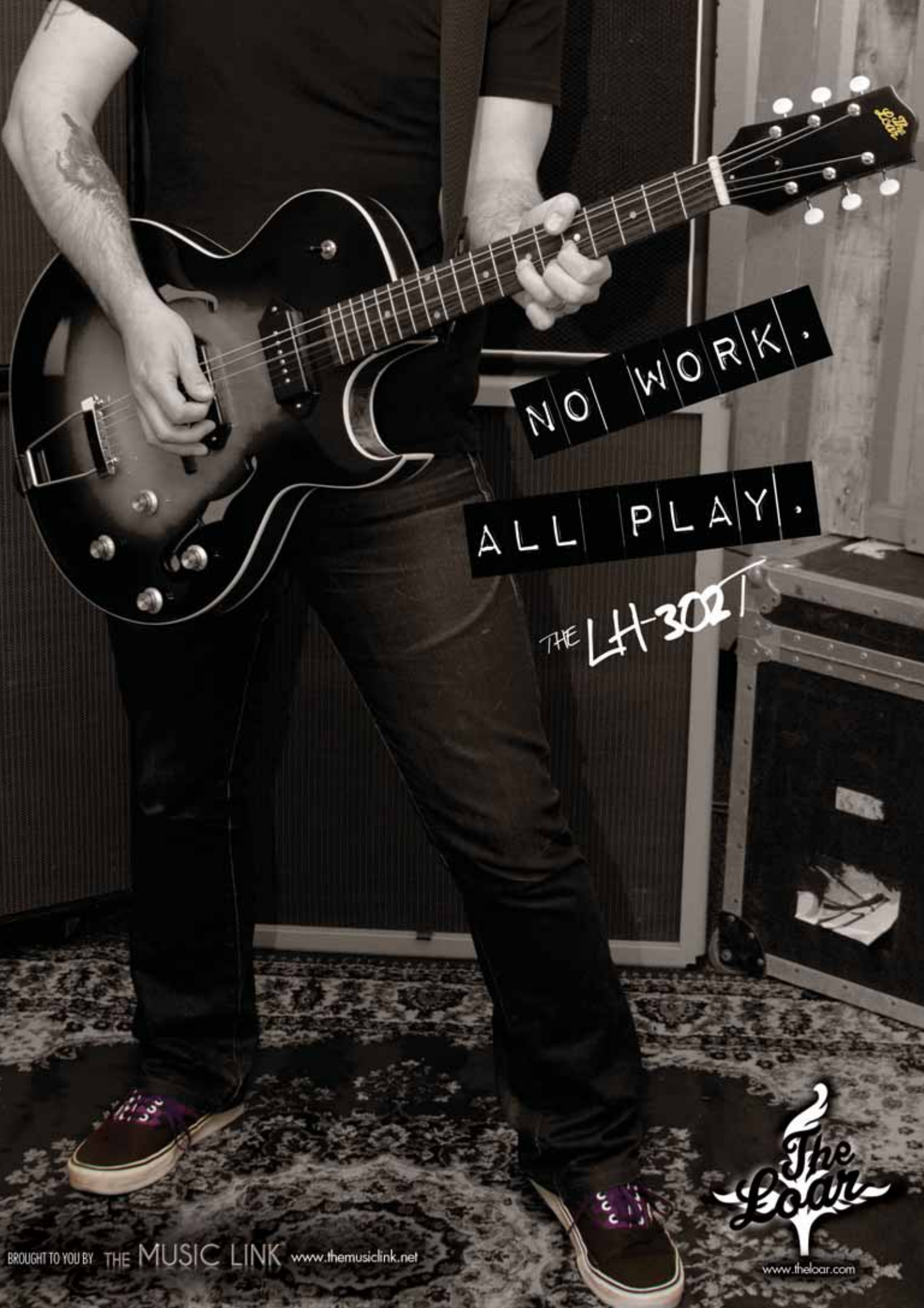
When I was hired, our then-owner, the late Jack Maher along with Kevin asked a simple question: "Should we kill this thing or try something new?" They had a name, *Music Inc.*, already set up, just in case we wanted to give it a go.

And I said, "Let's try that something new angle." Our mission was, and still is, to educate, enlighten, inform and entertain retailers of musical products. We thought it was a winner out of the shoot, that *Music Inc.* would take off as a concept and never look back, but the fact of the matter is that this industry is slower to change than you think. It took us five years before anyone believed we were going to stay around. It was 10 years before most thought we were for real, and probably 20 before we became anything close to a staple of the industry.

So here we are at 25, still fighting each and every day as though we were a startup, vowing to never rest on our laurels, vowing never to become complacent, vowing never to become the equivalent of pegboard. We've learned those lessons the hard way, by trial and error, but also by listening to the stories of our readers. Because when you have the opportunity to witness this industry's best entrepreneurs month in and month out, some of it has to rub off.

With that, welcome to our 25th Anniversary issue. On the following pages, you'll find insights and knowledge from just a few of the great businesses and people we've interviewed over the years. It's a small, but wonderful, slice of the great minds we've been honored to speak with over years.

This issue is a 'thank you' to all of the businesses who have graced *Music Inc.*'s pages. It has been a privilege to serve such an amazing industry, and we pledge to continue to do so as long as you keep retailing ... and reading. Enjoy. **MI**



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HOW I GOT INTO THE BUSINESS

Some started as musicians. Some started as teachers. Some started as luthiers. Most started from scratch. Music Inc. has told the story of how hundreds of the industry's heavy-weights got into this business.



From Teachers to Retailers

Dale and Susan Beacock, Beacock's Music, "A New Sensation," May 1998

In 1976, Dale and Susan Beacock launched a small lesson studio and retail operation. Both full-time educators, the Beacocks ran the business in their spare time. "We opened at two in the afternoon ... and would stay open until nine, and every now and again, we would get a customer," Dale said.

"We didn't take a salary or anything out of the store for years and years," said Susan, who taught elementary school. "We started the store with instruments that we had at home and every night Dale would load them in his pick-up [truck] and take them home because we didn't have insurance." [Ed. Note: Today, Beacock Music is owned by second generation owners Gayle and Russ Beacock.]

Keeping Drunks Away

Dan Palen, president and owner, Palen Music Center, "Taj Mahal of Sales," March 1991



"When I started [Palen Music Center], downtown was in a nice part of town. It was decent, and we gave a lot of lessons — 250 a week. But over the last five years, I have to say, we didn't want to do very much more than that because it was next to a bar. That bar used to be respectable, but now we've got winos and derelicts, so if a mother gets out of her car to take her little child to a lesson, one of these drunks might say something really bad to her. That becomes a direct influence on your business." [Ed. Note: Bottom line, Palen built a new store and moved.]



Buying the Store for \$7,000

Massoudd Badakhshan, owner, Haight Ashbury Music, "Long, Strange Trip," July 1990

It all changed when Badakhshan sent his girlfriend out to buy a bass string from the music store down the street.

"She told me it was for sale and they were looking for a working partner. It was a losing business at the time. The store owner had named the store 'Chickens That Sing Music' because his girlfriend had a dream about singing chickens. He had a store in Michigan and bought this as a satellite. It ended up that he didn't want a partner — he wanted to sell the whole thing. The books were really screwed up, too. They did a lot of sales, but didn't make money. Their idea was to just sell more."



Musical Inspiration

Bill Marshall, founder, Marshall Music, "School of Opportunity," August 1998

Two young entrepreneurs walk into a struggling music products store. They happen to be husband and wife. The store happens to be for sale. They take a look around and buy the joint. Neither has played a musical instrument. In fact, the trip to that little store happens to be their first visit to any music store.

"We were too young and naive to know we had two or even three strikes against us," smiled Bill Marshall. "They laughed about the two jokers who bought Styles Music and said we wouldn't last six weeks."



Lesson Succession

Skip Maggiora, president, Skip's Music, "Star Maker," January 1995

Tiny Moore taught Skip Maggiora to play guitar, and it was at Tiny Moore's Music Center where Maggiora later got his start working in the music business. Asked what he learned from Moore, Maggiora answers without hesitation.

"How to be a person. Integrity. And probably, the fact that we taught made people want to buy. We weren't in the music business for retail. But because we were teaching them, they wanted to buy from us."

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MANAGING PEOPLE

Managing your staff can be one of the most important aspects of a store owner's job. Read on as some of the industry's leaders — past and present — shared their management tips over the years.



Rewarding the Team

Jim Rupp, co-owner, Columbus Pro Percussion, "Real World Team Building," November 1998

"If the shop meets its monthly sales goal, we take [a portion of] our gross profit and divide that between our sales staff. It's weighted by the number of hours that you've worked and your tenure. If you've been here five years or more, you get a 110-percent weighting; if you've been here three to five years, you get a 100-percent weighting; and if you've been here less than three years, you get a 90-percent weighting.

"It creates a team effort and it avoids the sharks at the door, waiting to pounce on a customer with a hard-sell approach. If you're a guy in the back organizing lug nuts or something, you don't feel like you're missing out because someone is up front making a big sale. Organizing something in the back is as important to the store as the guy making the sale."



Season-end Survey

George Quinlan, owner, Quinlan & Fabish, "The Art of Tweaking," December 2014

"We send out a note to everyone in the company and ask for three things that you notice were improved over last year and three things that still need improvement. Sometimes you get responses from the newest members of the team that are like, 'Duh, why didn't we think of that?' It's because we've been doing it for so long that we can't see the forest for the trees."



Performance-based Management

George Hines, owner, George's Music, "The New Game," July 2003

"We are performance-based. The better you take care of the customer, the more money you are going to make. That is true for sales associates, management, the retail support team and myself. I tie myself to their success. If they hit their goals, it affects my income. If they miss their goals, it affects my income. Ultimately, I am working for the people working for the customers."



Get Out of Your Store

Steve West, CEO, West Music, "Adding Value," January 2002

"I've always believed in getting out of the office and finding the best ideas in the industry and bringing them back to this company. Getting out and being part of organizations like NAMM and so many others has totally reshaped my life as well as the company's life. You've got to spend enough time in your office to manage the company effectively, but you've also got to get outside. You've got to learn. You've got to look at what other people are doing. None of us [are] smart enough to have all the great ideas. So you've got to be ready and willing to find people who are pushing the frontiers."



Store Manager is King

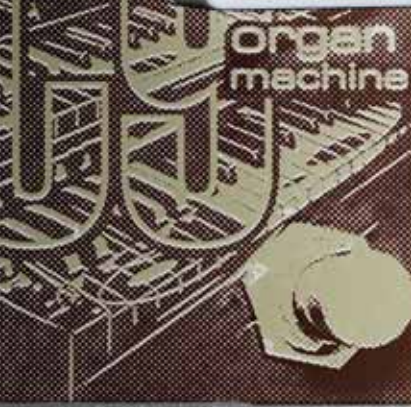
William McCormick, chairman, Jordan Kitt's, "Repositioned in Grand Style," March 1990

"There is a very important philosophy in this company and that is that the store manager is king. We encourage them to think they are running their store — their store, their stock and their employees. The compensation structure is such that the financial rewards to the individual store manager, I would say, are as good or better than most individual store owners would ever get."

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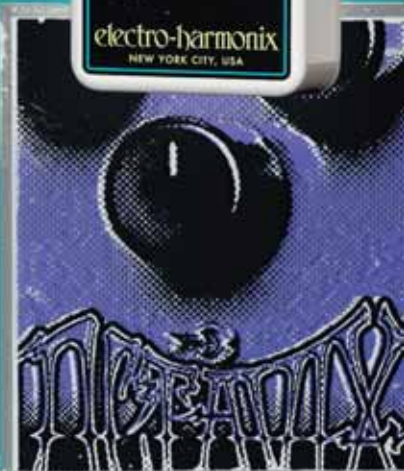


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A truly super tremolo with powerful controls and signal routing. Sculpt the tremolo's shape with adjustable sine, triangle and pulse waveforms while tap tempo and tap divide ensure synchronicity. Control your tempo with the Rate knob. Tap footswitch or through an external source. The envelope filter section gives you dynamic control over both depth and rate which can increase or decrease with your input signal. Access factory rhythms or create your own rhythmic tremolos using the on-board sequencer while the LED array displays the pattern. Save and recall up to eight customized presets. Conjure moving tremolos on-the-fly with expression control over Rate, Depth, Shape, Phase and Volume. Stereo input/output lets you choose any combination of stereo/mono operation. Analog circuitry yields warm, lush tone that will envelop you in shape shifting waves.



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SALES 101

From when to discuss price to valuing the customer — Music Inc.'s pages have been chock-full of sales advice. Here's some of the best.



Concentrate on Selling, Not Buying

Herb Brochstein, president, Pro-Mark, "Sticking it Out," October 1992

"The one thing I've noticed, and this isn't limited to accessories, is too many dealers spend excessive time trying to buy at low prices and not enough time trying to sell. They have no business spending valuable time calling three or four companies trying to get a price on a dozen pairs of sticks or a dozen sets of guitar strings, when they could spend that time calling customers trying to upgrade a drumset or sell them a cymbal or any other item that would generate larger sales and profits."



The Value of a Customer

Andy Anderson, piano sales professional, Schmitt Music, "Do the Right Thing," August 1996

"How much of my business is through referral? I'm not sure, but it's a lot. For example, I've made a record of referrals from just this one fellow. Since 1982, from this one person, I have written \$365,000 and sold 97 customers, averaging about \$3,800 a customer."

What makes Anderson so good? Many things, including simple detail and follow through. He keeps a card catalog with every customer he's ever sold, including 5,780-plus piano and organ sales.

"When I pull the card, I can remember almost every one of them. When they call in, I'll pull the card and bring up something about them because I'll make a personal note about them or their family."



Get Price Out of the Way

Alan Rosen, owner, Bananas At Large, "Value," November 2010

"If you get [price] out of the way, then you're open to discuss things like accessories, add-ons, other models, proprietary stuff or unique stuff. It allows you to spend more time with the customer. And if they do go home and find [the product] cheaper, call us. We'll refund the difference."



Start Low

George Luther, owner, Rhythm City, "Fast Times at Rhythm City," August 1992

"Our philosophy here is, we don't care how much money they spend, as long as they spend their money here. They can spend \$100, or they can spend \$1,000. We're just as satisfied with the \$100 sale because they'll be back. If you make the customers happy, and you get the right thing in their hands, and they know you're trying to work for them, they're going to come back when they want other equipment."

NEW

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The Comparison Checklist

Blake Cooper, owner, Cooper Music, "King of the Row," September 1999

Cooper Music even goes so far as to provide shoppers with a checklist that spells out Cooper's added value features — including a 30-day money-back guarantee, a 30-day price guarantee and free adult group piano lessons. Cooper also provides boxes for shoppers to check off which features other dealers offer with their instruments.

"Well, people are going to [comparison shop] anyway," Cooper said. "We might as well get on board with them. I just list some things to try and give them an idea of what we do special for them."



Location-Specific Selling

Tim Pratt, co-owner, Dietze Music, "Local Focus," December 2004

"We break down our business regionally so we can see what moves in a certain location, as opposed to trying to make every location be exactly the same. For instance, in Omaha we might carry a certain brand of pedal that doesn't sell well in Lincoln. In Lincoln, one of our stores carries twirling batons, and none of the other locations do. They tear it up with them and have a huge selection. It makes sense if there's a need and the product continually moves like that."



Stocking New & Used

Sammy Ash, COO, Sam Ash Music, "Power Generation," December 2013

"Customers don't want to walk into a generic, all-new world. Even if they love new, they would like to see some alternatives, whether it's just a used '80s Strat, or a vintage Strat, or they want to see what their guitar is worth. We buy tons of items a week. Majority used, sometimes vintage, sometimes cheap. But everything has a price."

Invest in Music

Ben O'Brien, president, Music & Arts, "Power of Thinking Small," August 1994

"If you get the community interested in music, then they'll take care of the rest. Most dealers don't do that. They buy things, and they sell them. They don't think about servicing youngsters, the future customers."

Music & Arts makes community support a priority, whether it means initiating music incentive programs for public schools or loaning a piano for the local theater production of "Hello Dolly." That philosophy represents more than a neighborly gesture: It helped Music & Arts grow from a \$1,100 nest egg to a chain with gross annual sales of \$17 million that covers Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.



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SURVIVING CATASTROPHES

Running a business comes with risks — from tough competition to financial meltdowns to natural disasters. Here's how a few retailers weathered the storms and came back stronger.



Underinsured, Overwhelmed

Chuck Levin, owner, Washington Music Center, "Big, Damn Big," May 1991

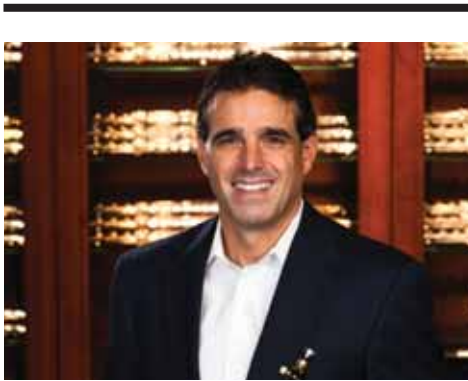
It was April 4, 1968 in Washington, D.C. Just two days earlier, Martin Luther King Jr. was shot. Riots erupted in the nation's capital.

At the time, Washington Music Center was located on the district's Northeast side — H Street Northeast and 12th Street. The riots took their toll on the entire nation, but for the Levins, the pain was much more personal. Their business was burnt to the ground.

"We couldn't go back because everything was destroyed," said Chuck Levin. "Even today, there are certain areas of Washington that never came back. Ours was one of them. Most of the owners never went back because people didn't want to go there. So, we figured the best thing is just to forget about it. Still, we never disconnected our phones, they went to the house. And we used to have a lot of bands and a lot of kids call us and ask when we were going to open again — really."

To this day, they still remember not only the customers, but also the manufacturers that helped them through those tough times.

"I called Mr. Martin senior [of Martin Guitar] and I remember telling him, 'Mr. Martin we need some more guitars here and we still haven't settled our insurance claim.' He said, 'Chuck, have any of my employees called you about money?' I said 'No.' And he said, 'Chuck, let me tell you something, you're doing everything the right way. I've never had to call you to find out what's happening. But I noticed that you called me. You gave me the insurance company's name. You gave me the adjuster's name. We know what happened to you has never happened before. Tell us what you need and don't worry about it.'"



"The rush of competitors into our market made me a better businessperson. I had to determine who we were going to be and how we were going to be, what we were going to do and how we were going to do it."

— Fred Schiff, owner, All County Music, "Taming Hurricanes," October 2011



Tackling Hurricanes

Rosi Johnson, president, Mississippi Music, "The Survivors," August 2009

The week following Hurricane Katrina, company communications were handled via cell phones. Vendors were contacted, and most gave Mississippi Music various payment extensions. In turn, the company passed on the same courtesy to its customers. Insurance only covered one week of lost business, but staff continued getting paid. And employees with damaged homes were given free reign to camp out in the company's recital halls.

"I let them move in with mattresses upstairs, and they had a bathroom and air conditioning," Rosi said.

Create Contingency Plans

Alfredo Flores, Jr., owner, Alamo Music Center, "Beating Tough Times" January 1992

Around 1982, Alamo Music was hit with a triple whammy. Its south-of-the-border clientele dwindled as the peso dropped from 50 per \$1 down to 2,000 per \$1. At the same time, oil prices plunged from \$32 per barrel to \$10 per barrel. Real estate prices fell as well. On top of that, the agriculture industry suffered four straight years of drought.

"We went on the contingency plan that the economy would go bust, and it did," Alfredo Jr. said. "We were like Dupont, the only oil company with contingency plans for the oil bust. I think they planned all the way down to \$15 per barrel." Because of planning, Alamo Music Center was well capitalized. When the Resolution Trust Corp. took over the area's major banks and demanded repayment of all loans, Alamo Music Center tightened its belt, reached deep into its pockets and found the money. Twelve competitors went under.



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TOUGH CALLS

Change can be scary. These retailers adapted their businesses to ensure success and growth.



Regaining Control

Warner Paige, chairman, Mark Goff, president, Paige's Music, "Regaining Control," January 1996

"I took a look at the business and the bulk of our sales and profits were coming out of our band and orchestral division. Bigger didn't feel any better. It wasn't doing anything more to the bottom line. It wasn't putting nickels in my pocket. It was kind of stupid. So, I decided to scale back," Paige said.

Today, downsizing has produced success for Paige's Music. "Comparing when we shut down our other locations to today, we'll do the same dollar amount out of one location that we were doing in three," said Mark Goff, company president, who went through the entire process with Paige.

"And I don't even want to talk about bottom line," chuckled Paige, who added that the profits have doubled. "We turned it around real quick. So, in two years, we were right where we wanted to be with a few exceptions. We had some long-term debt that lingered, but that certainly wasn't a problem."



"We've lasted because, when we saw the business change, we changed with it. We weren't going to get stuck selling stuff that's dead. We moved on. It's all about finding products other businesses don't have."

—Sami Lavi, owner, Midwest Pro Sound & Lighting, "The Art of Reinvention," October 2012



'This Was a Scary Thing.'

Tom Schmitt, president, Schmitt Music, "Do the Right Thing," August 1996

Schmitt Music closed the most unpleasant chapter in the company's 100-year history when it reached a \$2.1 million out-of-court settlement of a class-action suit.

Filed in February 1993, the suit contested the financing package on Schmitt's Trial Purchase Plan for school music instruments in Minnesota.

"Our attorneys told us, 'Listen, if you take this all the way to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, you should win this case because the facts and the law are with you. But there's always a chance you could lose because juries are unpredictable,'" Schmitt said. "Now, if we would have lost, it would have been the end of our company because the trebled damages would have been far in excess of our net worth.

"So, you weigh those things and say 'OK, as distasteful as it is, if we can settle this for a price that we believe we can survive, that's the most responsible thing to do.' As much as I hated having to do that, it was the basis of our decision."

'Downsizing' for Profit

C.H. Duncan, owner, Duncan Music, "Duncan Music Celebrates 40 Years," October 1997

"Downsizing" might not be the best way to put it. The secret to Duncan's longevity resides more in re-focusing on the market segments most familiar to its owner, C.H. Duncan.

"We are essentially in school music because that's the way I cranked it up 40 years ago as a horn player. We simply decided that our best bet, from a profitability standpoint, would be to concentrate in the limited product category."

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Photo of Noah And The Whale



SUCCESS IS FLEETING

Whether it was growing too quickly, increased competition or trouble matching big-box pricing, we pay homage to those MI retailers that taught us success can often be transient.



Global Expansion

Dennis Bamber, owner, Woodwind & Brasswind, "I'll Take Manhattan ... and More," December 1999

Dennis Bamber has opened a 3,300-square-foot showroom on Manhattan's 23rd Street. Bamber has also opened another showroom in Paris.

"I guess I'm just trying to be opportunistic. I think when you look out at the marketplace and see how the retail scene is changing, you have to look for opportunities. We're obviously a large purchaser of a lot of manufacturer's products. We want to continue to be a large purchaser of those products and, potentially, an even larger purchaser."

[Ed. Note: The New York location closed in 2002 and Paris shortly thereafter. Woodwind & Brasswind filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2006.]

The Trouble With L.A.

Don Griffin, owner, West L.A. Music, "Competition, L.A. Style," April 1992



"There are two problems with L.A. One is that manufacturers forgot what dealer support and loyalty mean. With few exceptions, most of our suppliers and reps will open up anyone who can fog a mirror and get approved on flooring, which in some cases is understandable. But in others — when a product is of a technical nature and to sell it properly your salespeople have to have a certain level of expertise — it becomes counter-productive in the long term. Unfortunately, [many manufacturers] are not looking long-term. They're looking at the next paycheck date." [Ed. Note: After a successful career, Griffin sold West L.A. Music to Guitar Center in 2012.]



"We have to have the same prices that the superstores do. I can't lose to them on price. That's a big issue. I can't let the customer think that they have cheaper prices than we do, but if the price is the same and the service is better, we will win."

— Fred Bramante, president, Daddy's Junky Music, "Big Daddy," November 1999

[Ed. Note: Daddy's Junky Music, a 19-store chain reporting \$35 million in sales in 1999, closed its doors in 2011.]



Goal: Dominant Educator

Mark Begelman, CEO, MARS Music, "The Good Guys Survive," January 1999

"Ultimately, it is our intention to become the dominant educator in the music industry. That is one of the things that I'm going to steer MARS toward over the next 20 years.

"We're doing so many out-of-the-box things. We're doing our first charter school where we've taken over the music program in a private school. It's a test, and we'll see how it goes, but so far it's awesome. That takes us into another business. We've just announced a joint venture with Full Sail where we're going to be offering a Full Sail/MARS school for recording engineers. We want to be the dominant music educator in the United States. By 2001 or 2002, I'd like to do a million lessons a year."

The Downfall of MARS

Mark Begelman, CEO, MARS Music, "MARS Strikes a Sour Chord," November 2002

"If I could relive life, I probably would have expanded slower. What happened to us was that the economy slowed in April of 2000 when Greenspan raised the interest rates and it seemed to create a whole spiral in the economy. Capital markets compressed; our ability to raise equity capital, which up until that point had been pretty forthcoming, became progressively more challenging. As the dot-com market collapsed, the venture capitalists got their clock cleaned ... The venture capital community just completely withdrew, and access to capital was non-existent. We were in the midst of a 16-store expansion that cost close to \$50 million and had \$28 million in the bank. Whenever you have that kind of shortcoming it's going to lead to trouble."

[Ed. Note: MARS filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy in 2002.]

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MUSIC INC. YEARBOOK

1. From left: Fender's Andy Rossi, Jon Gold and Bill Mendello with Taylor's Kurt Listug and Bob Taylor at The NAMM Show, 2008. 2. Alfred's Ron Manus, left, and Antonio Ferranti at Summer NAMM, 2009. 3. American Music's Reese Marin, left, and Andy Aldrich, 1993. 4. From left: John Sr., Mary, John Jr. and Jim D'Addario at the grand opening of the new D'Addario facility in Farmingdale, New York, 1994. 5. From left: Skip Music's Skip Maggiora, Creed Maggiora and Joe Lamond, 1995. 6. Guitar Center's Larry Thomas, left, and Ray Scherr as Thomas is named company president, 1991. 7. From left: Sabian's Bill, Bob and Andy Zildjian at Summer NAMM, 1996. 8. Korg USA team, circa 1998. From left: Joe Castronovo, Mike Kovins, Joe Bredau and Larry DeMarco. 9. Brook Mays Music's Bill Everitt presents NAMM's Karl Bruhn with the NAMM Music For Life Award, 1994. 10. Zildjian's Armand Zildjian and drummer Greg Bissonette, 1993. 11. Henry Goldrich with the first dollar Manny's Music ever earned, circa 1990. 12. The opening of the new NAMM Headquarters, 1998. From left: Heid Music's Paul Heid, West Music's Steve West, NAMM's Larry Linkin, Medley Music's Gerson Rosenbloom and M. Steinert and Sons' Paul Murphy. 13. From left: Dansr's Greg Grieme, Mike Skinner and Bill Gray, 2006. 14. Frank & Camille's Frank Sicari and Camille Scheidemann, 1995. 15. The future was so bright that Roland Corp. U.S.'s Dennis Houlihan had to wear shades, 1999. 16. Summerhays Music's management team. From left: Roger Firmage with Briant, Scott and Laurel Summerhays, 1994. 17. Alamo Music's Alfredo and Tenchita Flores at the NAMM headquarters grand opening, 1998. 18. Hal Leonard's Keith Mardak, right, and Larry Morton, early '90s. 19. Carl Leong, KHS president and CEO (left), and Tabor Stamper, KHS America president (center), are congratulated by Mt. Juliet Vice Mayor Will Sellers after the ribbon-cutting ceremony for KHS America's new headquarters, 2010. 20. Kidder Music's Jim and Ede Kidder, 1994.



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GREAT MARKETERS

Getting your name out there is first and foremost when operating a business. These retailers have excelled in that field.



Pre-School Music Programs

Joe Lamond, president, NAMM, "Changing of the Guard," July 2001

"Probably the most exciting new program is Sesame Street Music Works. If we want to reach an entire new generation with the message that music making is something you just have to do, then Sesame Street could not be a better partner.

"NAMM and Sesame Street are developing an outreach kit that will impact more than 100,000 day care centers, pre-schools, doctors offices and music retailers. Basically, it's going to have a pre-school music program for music stores to do. These kids will already be seeing it on television every day. Now retailers will be able to bring it into their stores and market with Sesame Street's branding and its characters."



On Television Ads

Armand Schaubroeck, president, House of Guitars, "H.O.G. Heaven," April 1991

"The early ones really caused a lot of controversy. A lot of it, we really didn't do on purpose. Just the rock music blaring in the background and the shots of our store full of guitars and amps kind of scared people. Like television is a god that we shouldn't mess with, it caused a lot of commotion. So much so that we had a hate mail/fan mail contest in one of our ads. If our hate letters outnumbered our fan letters, we'd take the commercials off the air.

"The person who won the best hate letter, won a new folk guitar. The person who wrote the best fan letter got a night on the town with us and got to be in a House of Guitars commercial. When everybody sent in their letters, the whole store was papered with them. Thousands and thousands. The fans won. We picked the winner for the worst and gave him his guitar. "We told all the fan-letter people that everybody won at the same time and set up a camera and told them to come as they wanted to be on TV. Some dressed up, some didn't. We filmed a little bit of everybody — there were more than a thousand people — and we aired them all. Then we showed up, without warning, at a local bar. It was great."



Billboard Success

Ken Stanton, owner, Ken Stanton Music, "Full Contact Retail," June 2004

"I'm gonna be brutally honest: We were flipping out," said Stanton, reflecting back to when MARS came to town. "But it made us get better; it made us learn how to merchandise; it made us get with it."

One important step was for the company to erect some large signage on Hwy. 41 to reaffirm its presence in the market. "Before MARS ever came to town, we had a little greeting card for them. It was a billboard, right above them. And it was there before they opened until they were gone."



Opening the Door

Skip Maggiora, owner, Skip's Music, "Year of the Warrior," August 1996

"I have always believed that for Skip's Music to grow, our market must grow. For years, NAMM has been asked to lead the industry in market development — they can only offer their members the tools for the job. The work must take place at the front lines. It is up to us to open the door to playing music as other industries have opened their doors for their markets. Our industry as a whole can only become stronger through NAMM's efforts in taking Weekend Warriors nationally."



ONLINE MASTERS

Twenty-five years ago, no one would have been able to guess the role the Internet would play in today's marketplace. From the start, there have been retailers embracing the online platform. Here are words of wisdom from a few online masters.



Charge a Shelving Fee

Patrick Piens, owner, Piens Music, "Techno-Trad Retailing," October 1999

"It is possible for manufacturers to sell direct, but they lack the enthusiasm created by a network of very different independent stores. Every dealer contributes to this industry with their own gifts, with their own inventory, with their own enthusiasm. We need to preserve this industry through the traditional marketing channel — manufacturer, distributor, retailer, customer.

"It's so important. Musicians have to go out to stores to find out about, feel and try out all of these products before they can buy them. But, in the end, they might go to the Internet because it's 30 percent cheaper.

"I see two types of retailers developing. I see retailers who say, 'OK sir, if I give you the same price, will you buy from me?' They will drop their price and there go their margins, their profits. It's not possible for a decent retailer to provide a good level of service, have the right people on the floor doing the right presentations, having all the inventory available and still sell at the e-tail price.

"The other type of retailer will keep the retail price and try to explain why the higher price is justified. But I'm afraid that kind of price difference will be difficult to overcome."

Taking a cue from the grocery industry, Piens recently suggested that his suppliers pay him a "shelving bonus" to stock their products in his store. He said the bonus would help offset margin erosion from mail-order and e-tail competitors.

Own Your Stock

Steve Zapf, Music 123, "Forecasting the Future," June 2000



"We own our inventory. We have a huge warehouse full of inventory, and we understand what it's like to pay financing costs just like any other independent retailer out there. But we believe quite firmly that you need to own your inventory to properly service the customer online. Some [online] companies are playing the drop-ship game out there, but it's our observation that it's been a difficult experience for those who rely on this fulfillment channel."

We Still Prefer Talking

Chuck Surack, president, Sweetwater Sound, "Embracing the Hurricane," October 1999



"Because Sweetwater Sound isn't a traditional brick-and-mortar retailer, we've long been aware of the potential of the Internet as a means of getting our message and philosophy across. It's been very successful for us — we have one of the largest websites in the industry, and we receive more than 3 million hits a month.

"Recently, we began selling items over the Internet. We still prefer talking one-on-one with a customer, but people want to buy on the Internet. They want that option."



"E-commerce in general has always been a changing process. Consumers are dictating the majority of it, so we have to stay with it and listen to what the consumer is saying and not be afraid to make changes."

—Ben Kraft, owner, Kraft Music, "Embracing Change," January 2015



Social Impressions

Rick Camino, CEO, Hello Music, "The Birth of Anywhere Commerce," January 2013

"On our product pages, you can 'like,' 'pin' or 'tweet.' You can add to your favorites. Every time you tweet, every time you like something, it pushes a message out about Hello Music and this specific product to your specific community. So, we get social impressions out of it. Basically, we get our members to be our best ambassadors and salespeople."



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Countless industry legends have graced the pages of Music Inc. over the past 25 years. Here is just a taste of the inspiring and innovative business advice they've imparted on readers.



A Warning on Digital TV

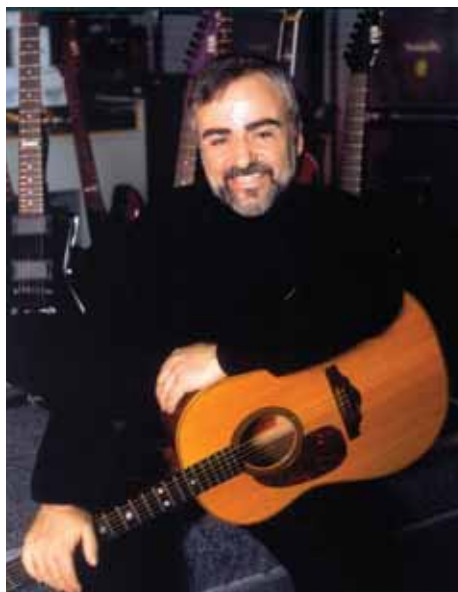
Hartley Peavey, founder and CEO, Peavey Electronics, "Tides of Change," February/March 1999

"What is a digital TV? It is a computer with a big screen. And every day computer power increases. The processors that are coming along now could replace a whole roomful of computers that were around 10 or 12 years ago. By the time digital TV hits, I mean, we're going to be talking amazing speed and processing power.

"The Internet as it exists today is probably a Neanderthal. It's going to migrate to interactive TV where somebody can say, 'I want earrings or a new tennis racket or a musical instrument,' and they can turn on their TV and go into a virtual jewelry store or sporting goods store or music store.

"My fear is that so many retailers aren't going to act quickly enough.

"This is what I don't want to happen. Everybody in the industry says, 'The megastores, the megastores, the megastores.' That's not the big problem coming down the road; the big problem is going to be interactive TV."



Go South

Alberto Kreimerman, owner, Hermes Music, "Common Sense," January 1998

Like thousands of Latin musicians, Krierman often came north of the Mexican Border to buy new gear. But if it broke while touring in Mexico, Central America or South America, repairs could be a problem.

"We became the first retailer in the United States to offer instruments sold in America with a warranty that was good in Mexico. Before that, there were real problems. I knew the trouble Mexican musicians had buying a product in America with no warranty and no service."



Retailing Goliaths

Russ Beacock, president, Beacock's Music, "Think and Act Big," May 1995

"While big retail operations set the standard for service, mail-order sets the mark for pricing. That's why we need to get rid of the phrase 'Mom & Pop,' which implies small-minded management and higher prices. Stores with that business approach are destined for failure, and their numbers have dwindled considerably as of late. But that doesn't mean small guys are doomed. They just need to use big game plans like the retailing Goliaths.

"For my small store to succeed, my prices must be in the ball-park of the big guys. By this I mean that I'm always a little higher than mail order. If we can't sell that, then we're not doing a very good job. And if we're a lot higher than mail order, then we're in trouble. The fact is, customers don't really care why you happen to be much more expensive than the catalogs. You are simply higher, and that's all they need to know."



"A number of qualified music therapists have researched rhythm-based therapy and are recognizing the effect of vibro-tactile stimulation on the human psyche whether illness is involved or not."

— Remo Belli, founder and president, Remo, "Wanted: Growth in Music's Global Village," September 1995



NAMM's Attack Plan

Larry Linkin, president, NAMM, "Trade Shows and a Whole Lot More," January 1997

"First, NAMM is committed to professional development. There will be continued emphasis on professional development at the retail level, at the manufacturing level and at the sales level. We're going to spend the funds to make this happen. If we don't do that, we're going to lose ground, and we just can't afford it.

"Second, we have to continue to promote what the retail store looks like — what the impression is when the customer walks in. Customer needs, expectations and desires are different than they used to be.

"Third, we've got to continue the market development progress that we have made. If we can do these things, we're way ahead of the game."



Competition Increases

Larry Thomas, CEO, Guitar Center, "Year of the Megastore," August 1997

"There's this change in the industry. Everybody's afraid of change, but all of us have to manage it. That's our job. Today, to be in retail, it's harder than it was 10 years ago. If you don't have systems, if you don't promote, if you don't have budgets, if you don't have controls, you're not going to make it in retail. And to me, that's a bigger factor that's affecting life today in the music business. We compete with real quality competitors. I think people in Northern California like Gelb Music and Guitar Showcase and West L.A. Music. These people are good retailers.

"There are a million opportunities in this industry for people who want to go for it. And most of it is energy and ideas. Very little of it requires big money."



"One thing we don't dare do is stand still. We're afraid of standing still. If we don't improve, other people will catch up and surpass us. It's an actual fear."

— Jerry Ash, co-owner, Sam Ash Music, "Meet the New Neighbors," September 1992



Watch What You Wish For

Chip Averwater, president, Amro Music, "Fast-Growing Retailers," May 1994

"A lot of retailers say, 'Wow, if my business could grow by 100 percent, I'd be in heaven.' Well, the truth is you'd probably be bankrupt."



Target ROI

Briant Summerhays, president, Summerhays Music, "Experience Pays," September 1994

"We don't care if we're the biggest store. We want to have the highest return on investment."

[Summerhays] target is a 20 percent return on investment before taxes. They don't always achieve that, he said, but many times they do. To help reach that goal, they leverage somewhat. "We try to be 60 percent equity funded, because we do feel that if we can borrow money at a certain rate and recognize a return at a higher rate, that helps us get our 20 percent on the 60 percent we have."



Go Out & Get the Business

Bobby Scheiwiller, president, American Music Group, February/March, 1992

"When we started calling on schools [in Phoenix], we found that our competitors were mail-order companies who were doing a large rental business because dealers didn't call on the schools. So, the market is there, and if you sit back and say, 'well, business is awful,' and then take a man off the road, somebody else is going to get it — either another dealer or a mail-order company."



FAMILY BUSINESS

Some of the most successful operations have been handed down from generation to generation. Music Inc. has had the pleasure of speaking with many of the industry's iconic family businesses.



“Having our name out there, the same name as the business, I think that matters a lot to people in today’s day and age. We’re certainly proud of that.”

— *Clint Strait, owner, Strait Music, “Family Tradition,” June 2013*



Lead the Way

Pete Sides, Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, “All in the Family,” May 2010

“When I brought my kids in, I wish I had been more hands-off in the beginning. The thing that I did the best was to pull out and let them make their own decisions. You have to make a conscious effort to listen in a way you might not for other people.”



A Family Affair

Paul Heid, past president, Heid Music, “All in the Family,” May 2010

“I’m not sure there is a line, and if there is, I’m not sure how or where to draw it. You have to bear in mind that there are a whole bunch of people involved. It isn’t just you and your son or daughter. All of the extended family is affected — your wife, in-laws, other siblings, and even nieces and nephews who maybe should have been involved in the business.”



Teaching the Younger Generation

Chuck Levin, Washington Music Center, “Big, Damn Big,” May 1991

“We’re lucky, Marge and I, that we had two kids come along and join the business. We built the business, but they were able to come along and expand it. Because when it comes to the pro-sound business or the keyboard business — where the big money is — it’s really a totally different ballgame. It’s been up to the younger generation to carry those businesses forth. And they’ve done a good job.”

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THE ART OF SUCCESSION

The handing down of a company from generation to generation is more than just a business transaction. These MI families explain what went into their succession plans.



Devising a Plan

Joel Menchey, president, Menchey Music, "Succession Skips a Generation," May 2003

"I had a source, a former employee, who sort of explained that he thought there was an opportunity. He told me, 'I know you've never considered it, but you should think about talking to your grandfather about [the business]. This could be a great opportunity. I came back about a month later with a business plan, and I sold it to my grandfather and the other guys in the shareholder group. It was a fair deal. It took about a year from start to finish [to complete the succession].'"



Figuring Out the Financials

Mark Dunkley, manager, Dunkley Music, "Satisfaction Guaranteed," September 1990

"My father [William K. Dunkley] is a true entrepreneur who's had a hands-on management style over the years. And he has a different background than mine.

"We've talked many times about what our desires and wants are and, at this time, his are different than mine."

The fundamental question that Dunkley and his parents are wrestling with is how to fairly value the business. What kind of price do you put on someone's lifelong work? There is no set formula and part of the answer is in the domain of accountants and lawyers. Currently, there is a provision in the senior Dunkley's will and in the company minutes that gives Mark Dunkley first rights to buy the firm and includes a formula for valuing it.

"We've gone through several ways of evaluating the business — what it's worth and how to arrive at that value, but we're not there yet. It's hard with family emotions involved.

"My parents' interest is that we come to a fair price, so they will have the benefits of my father's long years of working.

"You have to have some type of business plan that will dictate the continuance of the business so it won't be a burden on any one party.

"Part of the problem in changing a business like this is getting the entrepreneur to let go and allow the younger person — the child — to take over and make his own mistakes."

[Ed. Note: Dunkley did buy the business and operates it successfully to this day.]



Valuing the Business

Bob Saied, owner, Saied Music, "Taking the Reins," October 1991

"I felt like I was ready to take the next step, which was to start running the business. I understood the financial statement. I was on the floor most of the time, and I understood what most of our customers were dealing with. I had a business degree, and I felt I understood some things that were common to all businesses. I'd been around for 15–18 years, and felt I was in touch with what was going on. So, I said, maybe it's time that I try to buy [my father] out, and he said that might work as a way for him to get out of the store and retire."

Bob and Jimmie decided on a leveraged buyout — the company borrowed money to pay Jimmie the price he wanted — which meant going into debt for the first time.

"I was lucky in working with the bank. We never relied that much on a bank, and it was a big thing that I had to handle. But we already had a good relationship, so it worked easily."

Who's to Manage

George Douglas, owner, St. John's Music, "The Idea Swap," January 1995

"The issue of succession is much more than just family business," Douglas said, pointing out the majority of Music Industry Insights Group (MIIG) were no longer family businesses. "We have to identify potential candidates, whether its family or not." However, those in family businesses must come to terms with the difference between management and ownership, he said. "The family members may still own the business, but are they indeed going to be the ones that manage the business?"



EMILY SIERRA



STEVE NUNEZ



MARCUS JOHNSON



NELSON GARCIA



ADRIAN CROTCHFIELD



ELLE MICHELLE



ANTHONY TERRY



STEVE CLARKE




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or contact us at info@antiguawinds.com

Photography by Prime Cut Creative



ANDRAE GRANT



CRAIG ALSTON



TIMES ARE A CHANGIN'

Music Inc. has reported on the evolution of the music products industry since the magazine's inception in 1990. The following are excerpts of news stories from the last 25 years that have come to shape the present MI landscape.



Minimum Advertised Prices

Yamaha, "Establishing Minimum Advertised Prices," November 1991

On Nov. 1, [1991] Yamaha Corp. of America is implementing a ground-breaking, new pricing policy. Informally called MAP — short for minimum advertised prices — the policy establishes minimum prices that retailers can advertise Yamaha acoustic pianos, Disklavier pianos, Clavinova keyboards and Election keyboards, as well as select synthesizer and other DMI (digital musical instrument) products.

Music Inc.'s Frank Alkyer: Why at this time is Yamaha proposing such a policy?

Ron Raup, senior vice president of Yamaha Corp. of America: In reviewing how our products are being promoted in the industry, and we don't think we're alone on this, it would appear that the image of our products is being affected negatively. We don't think that's a situation that's recently developed, but one that's evolved over time. Doing nothing about it is no longer a viable option.



Alliance of Independent Music Merchants

AIMM, "Independent Dealers Unite, Form AIMM," September 1998

A group of independent music merchants has formed a unified national marketing entity: the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants (AIMM). At present, AIMM represents 130 retail storefronts in 30 states, with combined marketing resources approaching \$400 million.

"Developing a stronger, more profitable market for both its retail and manufacturing members is one of AIMM's major goals," said executive member Skip Maggiora of Skip's Music in Sacramento, California. "If our industry really wants to grow in today's business climate, we must all recognize the need to work together to develop pro-competitive strategies."

Websites: Then & Now

"Web Surfing the Industry," January 1996

Gruhn Guitars' (left) and Fender's (right) websites in 1996 versus 2015.





Laptops

Music & Arts, "The Power of Thinking Small," August 1994

Music & Arts gave one of its road reps a laptop computer in March and plans to have laptops for most of its roadies by the end of the year. "Educators love it when he [the road rep] comes in with a laptop and can produce invoices on the spot," said Ken O'Brien, vice president.



Barcoding

Gene Joly, president, E.U. Wurlitzer, "And Now For Something Really Exciting ... Bar Coding," July 1996

"You are wasting time and money by not scanning barcodes if you are busy with one or more of these functions: sales transactions, inventory transfer, inventory receiving and physical inventory counting. This is not just for multi-unit retailers. If single-store operations were fully barcoded, they could do physical inventory counts faster, they could do cycle counts and they could speed up their sales transactions at check out."



The Internet

"Industry Goes Online," October 1995

In January, few people had heard of the World Wide Web, a graphics-oriented, user-friendly system that helps make the Internet accessible to a wide audience. By NAMM Summer Session, dozens of manufacturers had introduced "home pages," as sites on the Web are called. As this article went to press, several retailers had their own home pages, too, and others were looking into it or using e-mail, the most basic online function.



GC & Sam Ash Go Head-to-Head

Guitar Center, Sam Ash, "Clash of Titans," September 1996

Rumored for years, anticipated since last winter, it finally happened in the last week of May. Permit hassles had delayed the opening for several months, but now the Sam Ash superstore in Miami Lakes, Florida, was poised for its grand opening celebration.

A short drive up the Palmetto Expressway, Guitar Center's 20,000-square-foot Halandale store was being stocked in preparation for a June grand opening. Another Guitar Center location, in south suburban Kendall, would soon follow. Meanwhile, Sam Ash's store in Margate, northwest of Ft. Lauderdale, had been open for more than a month.

A clash of titans had begun.

"This is going to be an experiment of how much business can possibly be done out of one area by a bunch of very large stores," said Jerry Ash, chairman of Sam Ash Music.



E-mail, It's Kind of a Big Deal

Larry and Richard Caruso, co-owners, Caruso Music, "A Day in the Life," October 1998

Larry and Richard Caruso co-own Caruso Music. On this morning they have already been in for more than an hour and are busy taking part in a '90s-style business ritual — checking their e-mail.

"E-mail is a big thing, a big part of the business," said salesman Brad Lyons. "[Many retailers] don't realize the power behind it.

"This morning, I was online with a guy in Spain, and some of my best customers are in London."

PEAVEY VYPYR PRO 100

Peavey has debuted the VYPYR Pro 100, which uses four stages of TransTube analog gain to create realistic tube-sounding distortion. The VYPYR Pro 100 features a digital processor that allows combinations of additional stompboxes, rack effects, amplifiers and instrument models; and the VYPYR Pro 100 can run up to four amplifier models in parallel. peavey.com

ELECTRO-HARMONIX C9 ORGAN MACHINE

The new EHX C9 Organ Machine offers nine new organ presets using the same technology found in the B9 Organ Machine. The organ volume knob controls the overall volume of the organ preset while dry volume controls the volume of the untreated instrument level, enabling the player to mix the sound of their original instrument with the organ to create lush layers. ehx.com

MUSIC NOMAD CRADLE CUBE

MusicNomad's 5-in-1 Cradle Cube neck support is made of a soft gel material to gently yet fully support either side of the neck. With five varying heights and angles, it works great for all string instruments, including acoustic guitars, electric guitars, ukuleles, violins, banjos and mandolins. Safe on all instrument finishes, the Cradle Cube helps users change strings quicker and do repairs and maintenance in a secure and sturdy way. musicnomadcare.com

IBANEZ PAUL STANLEY SIGNATURE

Paul Stanley and Ibanez have reissued new versions of the original Paul Stanley Signature Model, including the PS10BK. The PS10 features a select mahogany body with a maple top, a three-piece Maple Prestige smooth heel set-in neck, Ibanez exclusive Prestige Fret Edge Treatment, a Gibraltar bridge and Seymour Duncan 59 model SH-1 and Custom 5 SH-14 model pickups. ibanez.com





DIGITECH MOSAIC

Harman's DigiTech has introduced the Mosaic polyphonic 12-string effect pedal, which uses advanced polyphonic pitch shifting and "intelligent" doubling algorithms to approximate the sound of a 12-string using any electric or amplified acoustic guitar. Whether playing single notes, arpeggios or full chordal strums, Mosaic tracks the nuances of a player's picking and dynamics to deliver rich harmonic complexity with crisp octave shimmer and balanced low-end response.

{digitech.com}

MICHAEL KELLY 1960S SERIES DOUBLE CUTAWAY

Michael Kelly has introduced the vintage-style, double cutaway 1960s series of electric guitars. Each model features a humbucker and two single coil pickup configurations, 25 1/2-inch scale bolt-on maple necks, and a six inline headstock, plus a specially designed open air back plate to help deliver a unique spectrum of tone while maintaining the look and feel of classic electric guitars.

{michaelkellyguitars.com}

MARSHALL 50TH ANNIVERSARY CABINETS

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Marshall stack, Marshall has produced Limited Edition straight angled and straight 4- by 12-inch commemorative cabinets with period correct aesthetics, build quality and craftsmanship. Each features Celestion G12M 20-watt 12-inch speakers, with solder tags as per the originals, authentically recreated grille cloth, a rear-panel mounted commemorative plaque and dust cover.

{marshallamps.com}

KALA

AQUILA STRING MODELS

Kala has included Aquila strings on all ukuleles in the company's Makala and Ukadelic series. Aquila strings have been standard on the company's Kala ukuleles since 2005. The Makala Brand is an entry-level ukulele series by Kala, which is now in its 10th year of production. The Makala series includes multi-color dolphin and shark bridge ukuleles, Ukadelic, Mahogany and Makala Packs. [\[kalabrand.com\]](http://kalabrand.com)



LANIKAI MAKAPU'U

Lanikai has debuted the Makapu'u, the newest expansion of its Makau line of solid wood ukuleles, which are made by hand in Honolulu. The Makapu'u chambered body acoustic/electric ukulele is the first instrument of its kind to be introduced into regular production in Hawaii. It features a solid Mahogany neck and chambered tenor body with a solid Koa wood top, solid Rosewood fingerboard, and a piezo pickup with volume knob. MSRP: \$1,375.

[\[lanikaiukuleles.com\]](http://lanikaiukuleles.com)

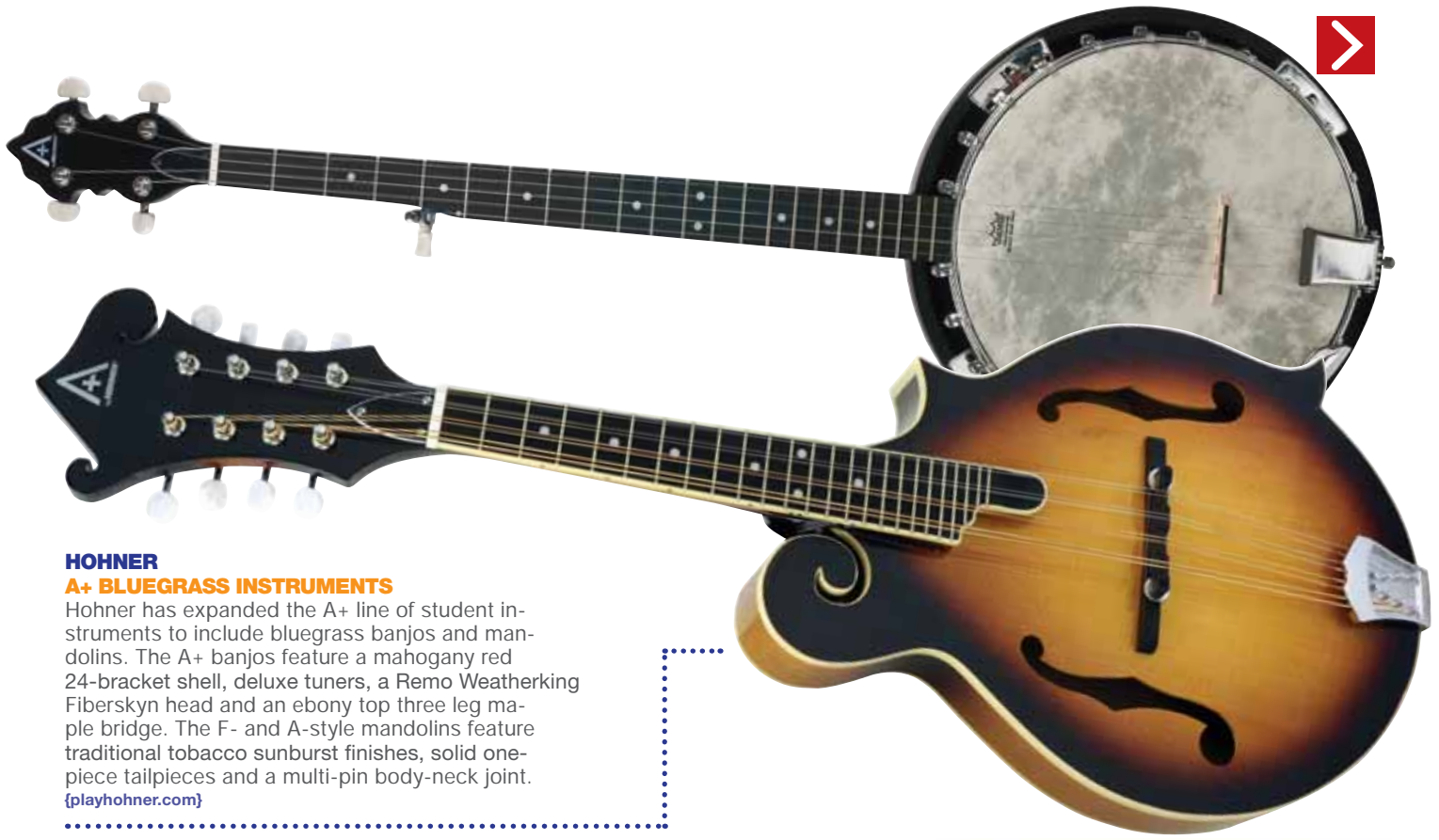


MARTIN

ED SHEERAN X SIGNATURE EDITION

Martin's Custom Shop and singer/songwriter Ed Sheeran have teamed up to create the Ed Sheeran X Signature Edition guitar. This guitar features his signature "x" (multiply) sign on the headstock and down the fretboard. The logo is inlaid in solid Koa on a solid spruce wood top. The model comes stage-ready, equipped with Fishman Isys T electronics, SP Lifespan Martin strings and a padded gig bag. [\[martinguitars.com\]](http://martinguitars.com)





HOHNER

A+ BLUEGRASS INSTRUMENTS

Hohner has expanded the A+ line of student instruments to include bluegrass banjos and mandolins. The A+ banjos feature a mahogany red 24-bracket shell, deluxe tuners, a Remo Weatherking Fiberskyn head and an ebony top three leg maple bridge. The F- and A-style mandolins feature traditional tobacco sunburst finishes, solid one-piece tailpieces and a multi-pin body-neck joint. playhohner.com

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**FOCUSRITE
CLARETT RANGE**

Focusrite has released its Clarett range of audio interfaces, which combine a new preamp design with the latest in Thunderbolt technology, offering high-quality sound with an interface latency of under one millisecond. Focusrite's Clarett interfaces offer clear conversion, 24-bit, 192kHz sample rates and high-end dynamic range. focusrite.com

**PIONEER
HRM-7**

Pioneer Electronics has introduced the HRM-7 studio headphones. Intended for home and private studio listening, Pioneer's latest headphones incorporate a newly developed HD driver. Its "dual chamber" bass reflex enclosure also helps produce lower bass response as well as provide better control for increased audio accuracy, while the hybrid memory-foam ear pads provide a snug fit. pioneerelectronics.com

**AUDIO-TECHNICA
SYSTEM 10**

Audio-Technica's System 10 camera-mount digital wireless system is designed to provide solid performance along with easy set up and clear, natural sound quality. Featuring a compact design, the system is available in handheld, lavalier and body-pack configurations. audio-technica.com





YAMAHA
CBR SERIES

Yamaha's CBR series is the company's newest lineup of passive loudspeakers. The CBR10, CBR12 and CBR15 are lighter than their DBR counterparts and do not require power cables, allowing them to easily adapt to both portable and rigged applications where access to a power supply is limited. The CBR series offers high-definition, low distortion sound, even at high output levels when used in combination with an external power amplifier.

{usa.yamaha.com}

CAD
CADLIVE D90

The CADLive D90 supercardioid dynamic vocal mic is equipped with a Trueflex diaphragm and PowerGap high gauss Neodymium magnets. The D90 is engineered to produce a powerful, smooth and detailed performance in a variety of high SPL live situations. It also features a durable and road-ready case for maximum protection.

{cadaudio.com}

AKG
K553 PRO

Harman's AKG has debuted its K553 PRO closed-back studio headphones. The K553 PRO headphones provide the balance of noise-isolating qualities of closed-back headphones and the spacious, multi-dimensional sound of an open-back design. They feature 50-mm drivers for accurate bass response, plus extra-large soft ear pads and lightweight over-ear design.

{akg.com}



VIC FIRTH SPLIT BRUSH

Vic Firth's new Split Brush is a retractable wire brush, created with two separate rows of medium gauge wire. The two-tiered design helps produce a unique and varied weighting of sound with different qualities of articulation, while the retractable pull-rod includes a third crimp that offers the player an enhanced setting capability.

{vicfirth.com}

SABIAN FAUX LEATHER BAGS

Sabian has introduced a new line of bags featuring the unique look of high-end vintage bags with the durability and scratch resistance of premium vinyl. The new faux leather look will be implemented on popular models of Sabian bags, including the Fast 22 and a new version of the Pro model called the Pro 24.

{sabian.com}

PEARL CHAD SMITH FREE-FLOATER

Pearl has announced a new snare collaboration with RHCP drummer Chad Smith — the Chad Smith Free-Floater snare, which features three interchangeable 3-mm cast rings (two of brass, one of steel), housed in Pearl's Free Floating snare frame. This not only allows for multiple tonal combinations when stacked in different order, but also for total resonant freedom from attachment hardware. MSRP: \$959.

{pearldrums.com}





TAMA

SUPERSTAR CLASSIC

Tama's Superstar Classic series is designed to offer an all-maple kit to drummers in search of an affordable option, delivering pro-level acoustic quality at a competitive price. By incorporating features from the company's Silverstar series like low-mass lugs and the Star-Mount system, the Superstar classic can fulfill a wide variety of needs. MSRP: \$699.99.

{tama.com}



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KURZWEIL

ARTIS SE

Kurzweil's Artis SE keyboard features the new German 9-foot Grand Piano sample, plus the Fatar TP-100, weighted keyboard bed. Also included in the Artis SE sound library are vintage electric pianos, clavichords, synthesizers, string sections, orchestras, guitars and percussion. Kurzweil has added a dedicated, front panel 3-band master EQ with an on/off switch to the Artis SE. MSRP: \$1,995. [\[kurzweil.com\]](http://kurzweil.com)



YAMAHA

PSR-E353

Yamaha has introduced the PSR-E353 portable keyboard, offering beginners and aspiring musicians feature sets that belie an entry-level price point. The PSR-E353 features the Yamaha Education Suite (Y.E.S.), which includes more than 100 pre-set songs that can be broken down into right- and left-hand components. The PSR-E353's keys are also touch-sensitive, responding to how hard they are played and adding dynamics to the player's performance. MSRP: \$269. [\[usa.yamaha.com\]](http://usa.yamaha.com)



HOHNER AIRBOARD JR.

In response to the success of the original Airboard, Hohner has released the new Hohner Kids AirBoard JR. Designed for kids ages five and up, the Airboard JR features a tri-color look, color-coded keys that allow easy play-along (with an included song book) and a colorful, padded travel bag. MSRP: \$50. [\[playhohner.com\]](http://playhohner.com)



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GEAR >

BAND & ORCHESTRA

XO

1236L TROMBONE

XO Professional Brass has unveiled the new XO 1236L traditional wrap trombone — a free-blowing symphonic bore trombone. It features a hand-crafted 8 ½-inch yellow or rose brass bell with soldered bell flare wire for increased resonance, gold-plated rotor assembly, three interchangeable leadpipes, brass outer slide and nickel-silver crook with dual-lapped chromed-inner slides.

{xobrass.com}



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to believe it.





**WOOD
SVX STINGRAY**

Wood Violins has debuted the SVX series, its latest update to the Stingray series of electric violins.

Newly redesigned and streamlined, the SVX4 and SVX5 feature lightweight bodies combined with a Wood Tru-Tone pickup for enhanced dynamics, warmth and clarity. The Stingray is available in four- or five-string models.

{woodviolins.com}

**LÉGÈRE
INSPIRATION**

Légère has launched the Inspiration mouthpiece combination, designed by Nick Kuckmeier, a world-renowned mouthpiece craftsman. The Inspiration is precisely machined to deliver a dark, warm tone, allowing for quick articulation and intonation. This semi-professional mouthpiece combination plays easily, and is ideal for orchestras and bands.

{legere.com}

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DJ & LIGHTING

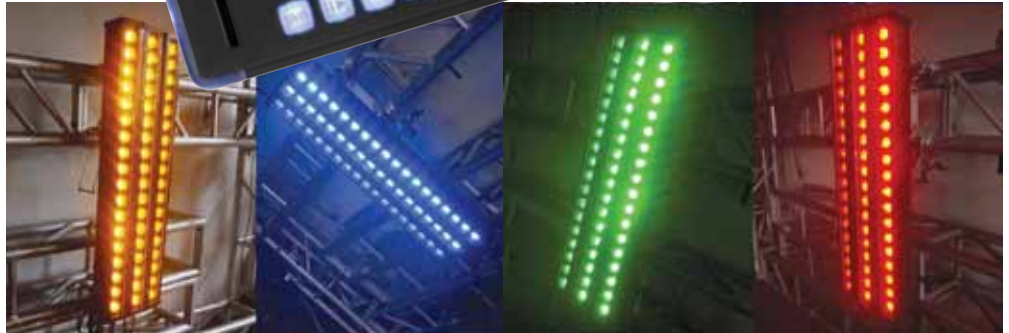
KORG KAOSS DJ

Korg's KAOSS DJ is a USB and standalone DJ controller that features a built-in KAOSS PAD, Korg's touchpad-based effects control surface. This compact, lightweight design maintains all the functionality DJs command. KAOSS DJ also integrates seamlessly with Serato DJ Intro software. korg.com



ELEKTRALITE ELEKTRABAR

ElektraLite's elektraBar is a 43-inch linear LED fixture that can be linked end-to-end or side-to-side for seamless, continuous coverage. Sporting 18 12-watt, 25-degree LEDs, the product's six-in-one LEDs deliver the full color spectrum, including amber, as well as a greater color palette than gels can provide. myelektralite.com



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**CHAUVET DJ
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With Chauvet DJ's new Firebird LED multi-color simulated fire effect, now you can instantly add the drama of a leaping column of flames to your show or performance. Featuring a built-in flicker effect that imitates a real flame, the Firebird LED creates "fire" in a rainbow of hues with no heat. The flare-like blaze rises 6 ½-feet high, making it visible from long distances.

{chauvetlighting.com}

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BUYERSGUIDE

Acoustic First.....	15	Kyser Musical.....	37
Alfred Publishing.....	11	Max Margin.....	35
All Parts.....	81	Music Inc.....	81, 83
American Way Marketing.....	87	Music Minus One.....	23, 33
Antigua Winds.....	71	Music Nomad.....	77
AP International.....	36	NAMM.....	20-21
Audix.....	57	OMG.....	86
Backun.....	55	OnBoard.....	19
Breedlove.....	27	Peavey.....	7
Breezy Ridge.....	81	Piano Mart.....	82
Cannonball.....	53	PMC.....	69
CE Distribution.....	35	Radial Engineering.....	63
Chesbro.....	65	Remo.....	19
Conquest Sound.....	86	RetailUP!.....	31
Classifieds Ads.....	88-89	Roland.....	2
D'Addario.....	5	Samson.....	92
Dava.....	77	Schilke.....	85
Electro-Harmonix.....	47, 49	Sennheiser.....	51
Fishman.....	41	Sher Music.....	23
George L's.....	15	Shubb Capos.....	25
Hal Leonard.....	3, 23, 30	SKB.....	59
Hunter.....	25	The Music Link.....	45
IMS.....	36	Theo Wanne.....	10
JJ Babbitt.....	17	Vic Firth.....	13
Jody Jazz.....	84	WD.....	4
Kawai.....	91	Zoom.....	8, 9
Kratt Pitch Pipe.....	84		



>>>
Ben Kraft
Kraft Music
Franklin, Wisconsin

A mentor of mine would tell me that “there are all sides to the coin; not two sides, but all sides.” If you accept that there are many valid perspectives, and that there are a variety of ways to win, wouldn’t you concentrate on listening to all of the methodology available to you and use that knowledge and perspective to shape your business and your future? If there are all sides, then it would pay to actually take advice and debate it, think about it, and turn it into something that you can use before simply discarding it as something that seems impossible or “wrong.” I hope that I never forget that.



>>>
Beth Houlihan
Kidder Music
Peoria, Illinois

“Hire good people and then get out of their way.” We have been fortunate to have had, and still have, many long-term employees. One of the reasons for the longevity is that we target intelligent people with a good sense of our company culture, and empower them to make their own decisions. We encourage their input and ideas to streamline operations, add new products or services or a new marketing promotion. We are always open to trying new things and embracing new ideas, many of which come from our creative staff. I learn what influences the purchasing decisions of our newer staff members and how we can implement those things into our business model.



>>>
Nick Rail
Nick Rail Music
Santa Barbara, California

What is the best advice you’ve received **in the past 25 years?**

I attended UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara with the goal of becoming a band director. In my third year I became disillusioned and quit. Band instrument repair interested me so I decided to pursue that instead.

Allied Music offered a one-year repair course then, taught by the employees in their overhaul factory in Wisconsin. I applied, got accepted, and moved east.

With a beard and long hair, I looked like every other male college student in California. In Wisconsin, however, things were

different. Bob Getzen, the owner and founder, took a liking to me and provided some advice.

Without saying I was different from the factory folk I’d be studying with, he suggested I respect them and make every effort to sincerely like and understand them. The more I could appear to be one of them, the more they would trust and open up. This would result in my obtaining a much better education.

I took Bob’s advice to heart, making it my job to make friends with everyone. This allowed me to gain their trust, and in so doing they opened

up and I got a great education.

In reality what Bob gave me was a classic selling course in miniature. This technique is second nature to me now and at the heart of qualifying the customer. I call it the art of the chameleon, reading each customer and then intuitively matching his or her persona to establish a comfort zone.

As Bob so aptly pointed out, the key is showing genuine interest. Presented as such, the first impression is always positive and you’re well on your way to establishing another great customer relationship. **MI**

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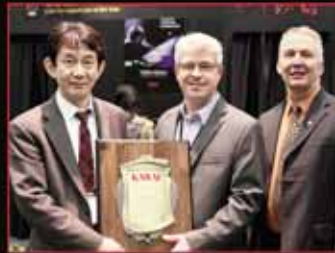
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