



Working with Educators

How to Build Lasting Relationships

Establishing and maintaining a relationship with the local music educators is the most effective way (often, the only way) you will realize success in the school music market, particularly with instrument rentals. Although each market is unique in many ways, the recipe for success (or disaster) is fairly common. Below are just a few things you can do to promote your program and strengthen the bond between you and the key influencer: Your Local Music Educator.

Establish Contact

Using the school database we provide each year, contact the local music educators by order of a personal visit, a telephone call, mail, fax and finally, email. Don't rely on one single method of communication and never forget what an educator's schedule is like when making contact.

Deliver What You Promise

If you promise to stop by the school once a week, DO IT. If you say that you will order a specific band method, ORDER IT. If you have business hours posted on your store window and/or business card, LIVE BY IT. Nothing is more disastrous than broken promises and/or inconsistent hours of operation (to any business).

Have a Presence in the Classroom

Promotional logo goods such as band folders, calendars, mouse pads, pens, and note pads are great silent salesmen that go to work for you every day in the band rooms and director offices. This is an extremely effective tool to promote your school music service. Don't forget that VIR offers imprinted music folders at extremely competitive pricing (with discounted shipping).

Engage the Educators Socially

When all else fails (or succeeds), host a social event by taking all of the local music educators out to dinner, golfing, back to your place for a cookout or out on the town for some club-hopping. Nothing breaks the ice like a group social gathering and fond memories of their generous host.

Top Three Excuses for Not Calling on Educators

"So-and-so has the schools locked up"

This means you have to work twice as hard to get half of the business (or less).

"I can't call on schools. I'm the only one here to open and run the store"

Not one of our affiliates open for business before 10am. School starts between 7am-8am.

As many as five schools could be seen per week while losing only two mornings of beauty sleep.

"This just isn't a big part of my business"

It should be. Compare the investment of time and money. Combo MI margins are HORRIBLE!



Connecting with Educators

The Three Rules of Engagement

Introduction

A retailer's reputation and ultimate success within the school music community will begin and end with the relationships you cultivate between your business and the educators, supervisors and administrators of your local school music programs. With this in mind, consider the following:

Rule One: This is a relationship business. With a word, an educator can drive business to or away from your store. They are the gatekeepers separating your business from potential customers. You must establish and cultivate a lasting relationship based on trust and mutual benefit.

Rule Two: Music educators need you as much as you need them. The average age of your typical music educator is 23. Many are fresh out of college, can tell you anything you want to know about teaching and know nothing about scheduling, budgets, leases, bids and the administration behind their position. You must offer your assistance in these areas. It is equally imperative that you become an ally in advocacy and help battle the constant threat of cuts to program funding.

Rule Three: Your market share will be a direct reflection of your active involvement within the school music community. In this business, you get what you give. You must plan to call on schools regularly and make contributions of time & money. If you play, volunteer to teach a sectional. If you do not play, offer to help at the car wash fundraiser. In either case, accept the invitation to place your ad in the Winter Concert program and year book. Above all, deliver what you promise. Lack of consistency (service calls, business hours, dependability) is the Kiss of Death for any business in any industry.

These are your Rules. Break them at your own risk!

Never hesitate to ask for assistance or advice. We are here to help you capture your rightful share of the school music market. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you and wish you the best of success.



School Interaction Starter

Small Steps Creating Big Results

Make Initial Contact

- Use the school database provided by VIR to confirm school & teacher info. Share corrections with VIR!
- Call each school's front office, confirm teacher name & planning period, ask if there's a direct extension
- Don't forget to say "Thank You!"
- If available, send an email the teacher (2-3 days before planned visit)
- Offer something of value (clinic, maintenance demo, PA setup, etc.)
- Do not try to sell anything at this time
- Make the email about **them**
- Ask if you can help in any way
- Call the teacher (1-2 days after emailing, a day before planned visit, during their planning time)

Sample Script

"I am going to be in the area tomorrow and would like to stop by. Can I stop by during your planning time?
Do you have an open time I can visit?"

- A great ice-breaker is to utilize one of your customers. Have him/her leave an instrument for repair
- Tell the teacher you had a call from a customer for a pickup/repair
- Try to schedule the visit on a day you can regularly visit them (for consistency)

During the Visit

- Have something to bring & give them (information, flyers, product demo, lunch, etc.)
- Don't waste their time. Don't talk about fluff!
- Give them what you brought and take care of what you are there for
- Find out what else you can do to make their job easier

After the Visit

- Send a handwritten thank you note for their time (first visit only or after any large event)
- Follow up on a regular basis. See them each week at the same time
- BE CONSISTENT**

Music Educator Survey

Help your local music retailer help you by letting them know what your students need this year.
Take a moment to complete the following survey and keep copies on hand for inquiring vendors.

School Name: _____ Teacher Name: _____
School Phone: _____ Music Room EXT. or Number: _____
Planning Period or Best Time to Call: _____

In addition to Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Alto and Tenor Sax, Violin and/or Viola, will your students also need any of the following instruments? Please circle all that apply:

Snare Drum Kit	Bell Kit	Snare/Bell Combo	Baritone Horn	3/4 Tuba
Euphonium	Oboe	Bass Clarinet	Sgl French Horn	Dbl French Horn
Cello	String Bass			

Do you have any instrument brand preferences? _____

What band/orchestra method book will your students be using? _____
Supplemental books: _____ Student purchase or school provided? _____

Do you recommend a music stand for home use? Yes ___ No ___

Do you require a music manuscript book? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please specify size and style. _____

Do you recommend a metronome for home or school practice? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please specify electronic or mechanical if there is a preference: _____

Do you recommend a maintenance kit? Yes ___ No ___

Please list any accessory recommendations for the following:

Woodwinds (Reeds)

Reed Size: _____

Reed Brand: _____

Mpc Size: _____

Mpc Brand: _____

Brass (Mouthpiece)

Trumpet: _____

Trombone: _____

Bari Sax: _____

Tuba: _____

Percussion (Sticks/Mallets)

Stick Size: _____

Stick Brand: _____

Mallet Size: _____

Stick Bags: _____

Do you have a parent/rental meeting? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, may we attend? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, where and when? _____

Will parents rent instruments at the meeting? Or is this meeting informational-only? _____

Any other important information? _____

Will there be other vendors? Yes ___ No ___ If so, who? _____



