



## Food For Thought: Week of April 7, 2014

### Getting the Most From Your Repairs

Let's face it, most of us view the administration of our customer repairs as, quite frankly, painful. The paperwork, the packing & unpacking, the shipping, the calls to customers in trying to get them to pick up & return loaners. It's not a particularly bright spot of the rental program. However, with a little modification of our thinking, some scripting and a dash of creativity, we can turn this around and into a very profitable marketing & sales opportunity.

M&R and billable repairs are customer contact points; interactions that get customers through your doors (something we all spend a lot of time & money trying to accomplish). These are **golden** opportunities to not only further demonstrate the value of your school music service offering, but also capture add-on & accessory sales. Here's a few suggestions:

#### Arrival & Evaluation

When a customer brings an instrument to you for repair service, you should thoroughly inspect the instrument and take note of the cleanliness of the instrument, the condition of the mouthpiece/reed/rosin, any missing accessories, even the case. You should be hearing the sound of a cash register as you read each one of these, as they're (here's that word again) opportunities. Suggest a care kit. Give them a deal on a box of reeds. Show them how the instrument would look in a brand new case. Is it time to start thinking about an upgraded mouthpiece? How about some popular sheet music?

#### DIY Customization

Have you ever noticed how much floor space is dedicated to do-it-yourself goodies in your local auto parts store? Steering wheel covers, hub caps, floor mats, license plate holders, sticker graphics, fancy valve stem caps, you name it. And it's all stuff the average person can do themselves. Why not apply the same principal to school band & orchestra? Trumpet bottom valve caps, flute crowns, reed holders, mouthpiece cases, clamp-on lights and stands are just a few items you can suggest to your musical students.

#### Stated Value of Your Services

You've put a lot of effort into facilitating this repair. As mentioned above, you probably inspected the instrument upon arrival, prepared a repair tag, boxed the instrument, shipped it to VIR, unpacked the repaired instrument, contacted the customer and spent some time all along the way. There's no shame in reminding the customer of your commitment. One way is to create a service card to be attached to (or placed inside) the case. Perhaps something like:

*"Thank you for the opportunity to service your child's musical instrument. Today's repair would have normally cost \$xx.xx. However, your Maintenance & Replacement Coverage covered 100% of the repair & handling fees. If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding your recent service or visit to our store, please do not hesitate to contact us at xxx-xxx-xxxx. We appreciate your business and the opportunity to be a part of your child's musical experience!"*

This is a particularly valuable strategy when an affiliate offers at-school service (road rep visits schools, picks up & drops off repairs), as there are instances where a parent might not even know you serviced the instrument (thus, not aware of your service). Make sure they know with a quick note or card!

The Bottom Line: Repairs can & should be a gateway to meaningful customer interaction & add-on accessory sales.

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