



## Food For Thought: Week of June 2, 2014

### **Summer is Here: Five More Things You Can Do**

#### **Order VIR Accessories Now**

If you're planning to order student music folders, care kits and/or banners from VIR, you should place your order today. Right now. Presently (June), production time for folders is four weeks. In July, 5-6 weeks. And if you order in August, you will be lucky to see them by October, far beyond the back-to-school season and much too late. We strongly encourage you to place your order online as soon as possible.

#### **Plan School Music-Related Summer Events**

Now is the time to get these on your calendar. Work with your lesson teachers & repair techs to sponsor a Mouthpiece Clinic, a Teacher & Student Recital or even a Free Instrument Checkup at the store. With any event, dress it up! Balloons & banners should be all over the place. Grill some burgers & hot dogs outside the store (super-cheap, effective, and appreciated!). Flyers/post cards should be at-the-ready and given to every customer beforehand. Talk it up through all of your social media channels. Create some excitement!

#### **Prepare Your School Music Stock, Displays & Merchandising Strategies**

Now is also a good time to begin taking an inventory of your method books & related accessories (music stands, metronomes, oils, impulse buys, trinkets, etc.) and placing orders with your vendors. Be sure to request your free school music posters from VIR. The set includes four beautiful, full-color 24"x36" posters with instrument photos and simple messages to let customers know you're active in the school music market. Don't forget about our 2'x6' indoor/outdoor vinyl banner that's perfect for outside the store as well as a table dressing at the back-to-school rental meetings. And keep an eye out for our "Should We Rent or Buy?" brochure that's suitable for distribution or as a silent salesman within your school music department.

#### **Request an Updated Copy of the VIR School Database**

Contact VIR to ask for an updated copy of your school database. This is a complete listing of the schools in your area (names, addresses, teacher names, programs offered). Verify the data and let us know if there are any discrepancies or schools missed. From February-May, VIR hand-dialed more than 32,000 schools to compile this data. Do your part by looking through the 50-100 schools on your list. Because this is also our mailing list (where we send your flyers), complete & accurate data is important. This should also be your Hit List for making calls & planning visits when school resumes.

#### **Communicate Any Changes in Market Conditions to VIR**

Has one of your biggest competitors closed their doors? Are music educators finally warming up to you? Are you planning to visit schools this year (something you didn't do last year)? Equally important, are you discontinuing any of your school music-related activities? We would surely appreciate your consideration of both VIR & fellow Affiliates of your plans to scale back before inventory is allocated. Conversely, if you're anticipating a heavy increase in productivity, we need to know now (yesterday, actually), as we will not be able to effectively support the demand if notified in August. Shop your competitors. Call them as a customer. Send someone into their store. Get pricing. Make sure we're competitive and there are no surprises this year. And be sure to communicate your observations to us!

*Stay tuned for Part III of Things You Can Do...*

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