



Food For Thought: Week of June 16, 2014

Preparing the Front of House for Season

In two weeks, “July” will be at the top of our calendars. For nearly half of our Affiliates, this means season will be upon us in a little more than one month. Blink and it will be here! With this in mind (and assuming you’ve been keeping up with our Food For Thought blog), here are a few ideas & strategies to consider while your preparations continue:

Front Entrance/Foyer Display

What is the first thing a customer sees when they walk into your business? From July thru October, it should be all things Band & Orchestra. With regard to merchandising, you’re only limited by your imagination, regardless of space or resources. If you have grid wall, purchase slat wall instrument hangers from your accessory vendor and create an instrument display. You can also use an affordable folding table & tablecloth to display instruments, rental brochures (acrylic brochure holders are cheap & readily available at Staples), care kits, metronomes, pitch pipes, music stands and more. If you have a display counter near the front, it’s time to move your B&O accessories into this area. Don’t worry, you can put the stomp boxes & microphones back after season!

Phone Script

Now is the time to develop & rehearse a simple & effective script to be used with school music phone inquiries. A sample phone script is available within the Marketing Resources area of Affiliate Resources. We even offer a training course (appropriately titled Phone Scripting) at Veritas U, our online training university. The idea is to be prepared when the phone rings and your new customer asks, “Do you rent instruments?”

Silent Salesmen Assistance

Throughout the store, you should have silent salesmen working for you. Affiliates should take advantage of our free 4-poster set with full color instrument photos and simple school music market messaging. We also offer a “Should We Rent or Buy?” brochure that looks great in a brochure holder. Same goes with an accessory list for each instrument (also at Affiliate Resources). One of the best uses of completed Music Educator Surveys is to create a poster-size data table that lists all of the schools in your area, teacher names, method book used, and recommended accessories. This type of display demonstrates your knowledge of your market as well as the relationship between your business and the schools.

Window Treatments & Outdoor Advertising

If you have the luxury of a marquee, letterboard, readerboard or light board, you should start getting the word out to your customers that you’re a school music resource. VIR offers a 2’x6’ outdoor vinyl banner with full-color photos and big block lettering that reads “School Band & Orchestra Instrument Rentals”. This dual-purpose banner works great for both outdoor advertising as well as a table skirt for your indoor display or rental night table dressing.

Whether school starts in Mid-July or after Labor Day, you can’t start advertising too early for the back-to-school season. With the long-awaited Summer Months in full-swing, a repeated message will pay off when kids go back to school and parents need to find instruments!

Dawson Flinchbaugh
Director of Marketing