



Food For Thought: Week of August 4, 2014

Acquiring & Using Your School Database

The Back-To-School Rental Season has officially begun. For most Affiliates, students report back to school within the next week. By now, you should have your store & staff at the ready; Banners, posters & silent salesmen posted, accessories & instruments displayed, employees & management enrolled into Veritas U and completing the core training courses online, and most important, reaching out to your local music educators.

As you're probably already aware, our staff begins hand-dialing more than 15,000 schools in April, asking if they offer band and/or orchestra programs, if so, asking for teacher names. This data is compiled & updated each year by the end of June. From our findings, we create our mailing list, sending rental brochures & welcome letters to each school with a music program (two packages if they offer both band and orchestra) on your behalf. However, the school database is also offered to you for your own marketing efforts. This is GOLD presented on a silver platter (what other vendor hands you a list of 100% relevant customers?! So how do you get your hands on a copy? Ask.

Please send a quick note to Dawson, TJ, or Greg (via email, IM, or phone) and we'll send you an Excel file via email shortly thereafter. As with all information sources, it's only as valuable as what's done with it. We suggest reviewing the list, verifying the data, contacting us if there are any discrepancies or mistakes (we're not perfect, neither is the database!), and identifying the schools nearest your business. Call them. Ask to speak with the music directors. If you can't speak with them immediately, ask if they have a direct line (office or band room). Ask when their lunch break or planning period is scheduled. After making phone contact (with or without success), plan to drop by with rental brochures in-hand (and hopefully some of the folders you've already ordered from us).

This is easier than you think and doesn't cut into any other store activity other than a little missed beauty sleep in the morning. For years, I've maintained that in our 25 years doing this, we've never worked with an Affiliate who opens their doors before 10am. Most schools start their day by 8am. Stopping by two schools per morning on your way to the store means calling on ten schools per week. It may not be immediate, but the end-results are consistent with the best possible return on your investment of time. Get your copy of the database and get started today!

Dawson Flinchbaugh
Director of Marketing