

# A Proven Way To Grow The Market

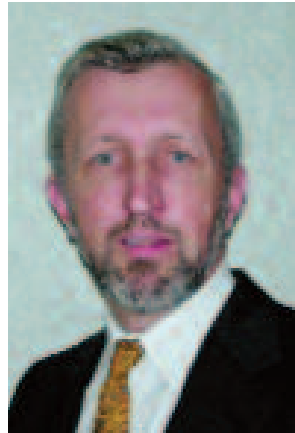
**E**conomic headwinds invariably prompt calls throughout the industry for some type of concerted marketing effort to raise demand for music making, drive traffic into retail stores, and generally improve the fortunes of retailers and manufacturers. If someone could devise a truly effective umbrella campaign, we'd be the first to champion it. But over the past 75 years, despite the time and effort of a lot of smart people, we're still waiting. Here's a brief review of the main stumbling blocks that keep getting in the way of an industry-wide marketing campaign.

**Fragmentation.** In an industry that includes everything from church organs to guitars designed for "death metal" fans, it's hard to get agreement on an acceptable "pan-industry" marketing theme. Efforts to be all-inclusive yield slogans and imagery that are so watered down, they appeal to no one. More targeted messages can't get broad-based support.

**Be careful of what you wish for.** Competition from Wal-Mart, Costco, Target, and the rest of the big-box mass merchants has caused an outcry from every corner of the m.i. retail channel, not to mention a sizable number of suppliers. However, if the industry ever managed to mount an effective mass marketing campaign, like the ones for flat panel TVs or laptop computers, overnight, mass merchants would become a much bigger factor in music sales. If you polled NAMM show attendees, would a majority consider that a desirable outcome?

**What are we trying to promote anyway?** Past industry campaigns have used 30- or 60-second public service announcements to declare that music is a wonderful thing. But, is that a message that needs to be delivered when last year alone consumers downloaded 1 billion songs from iTunes, purchased 477 million concert tickets, listened to untold billions of hours of music broadcast by 5,800 radio stations, spent similar amounts of time watching MTV and VH-1, and bought three million guitars? Put another way, does music really need to become any more popular?

**Can a television spot create music makers?** The painful truth is, making music is the antithesis of instant gratification. We have yet to find a way to eliminate the time and effort required to gain some satisfaction for making music. It takes more than a catchy slogan to get people to take the first step, let alone stick with it.



Despite the relatively negative laundry list above, don't despair, because there exists a time-proven, highly successful method for expanding the market. The good news is that you can put this program to work in your business tomorrow without having to wait until hell freezes over for a group of higher industry powers to unveil the magic marketing bullet. The bad news

is, like most other programs, it takes time, effort, and investment. The program we're referring to is music education.

Winston Churchill famously said of a political opponent, "He has many good and original ideas. Unfortunately, the original ideas aren't any good and the good ideas aren't original." Providing lessons deserves a prominent place under the heading of good but unoriginal ideas. For as long as we've been publishing, evidence has shown that teaching leads to the kind of satisfaction and enjoyment that stimulates more purchases. But don't take our word for it. Elsewhere in this issue, we detail how Falcetti Music has used a foundation of music education to construct a thriving five-store chain in New England. Aside from generating store traffic that leads to sales, their education program has set them apart from their competitors like nothing else. Tony Falcetti puts it best: "When you're competing with Guitar Center and all the online retail operations, it's hard to get a lot of attention with just another sale or promotion. Teaching differentiates us from everyone else and defines who we are in a way that's meaningful to our customers."

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