

## Prescription For Profit . . . . Attend the NAMM Expo

With well over 400 exhibitors, the upcoming NAMM International Music & Sound Expo promises to be one of the biggest shows ever staged by NAMM. While the old adage about "lies, damn lies, and statistics" may confidently be applied to many big picture compilations of facts, the growth of our music industry trade show mirrors one irrefutable trend: the face-to-face dealer-manufacturer contact the trade show affords is an increasingly important element in the marketing of musical products.

Ironically, in spite of improved transportation and low cost electronic communication, trade shows are expanding overall. The association of trade show managers recently reported that 1982 saw a 22% increase over 1981 in trade show space sold. Figures are not yet compiled for 1983; however, the association predicts another record year.

The dynamism of the NAMM trade show reflects its vital importance to the entire industry. From the standpoint of retailers, the annual NAMM show represents a unique opportunity to analyze and compare at first hand all products currently on the market. Given the increasing number of products available and the rapid pace of product development, the opportunity to make a "hands-on" assessment of a product line is well worth the investment in airfare and hotel bills.

With a national cross-section of retailers in attendance, as well as an international contingent of wholesalers, the trade show provides manufacturers with an unmatched opportunity to perform some quick market research. Where else can a manufacturer query retailers to determine product preferences, market conditions and necessary conditions for doing business?

An added benefit of the trade show is the increasing number of educational seminars. Covering topics from effective selling to setting up an in-store studio, the trade show seminars offer a wealth of valuable information that can be easily applied to improve retail profits.

With over 400 exhibitors and a staggering diversity of products, the enormous scope of the show requires a careful type of planning. Starting with 28 hours, before deducting time for pit-stops, meetings, and meals, let alone sleep, no one will have time to cover the entire show without some type of advance planning.

To get the most out of the NAMM show, begin by turning to the Exhibitors List in this issue and start checking off your priorities in product displays. Then take a look over the list of educational offerings and make a point to attend any sessions that pertain to your operation. A well planned checklist will help you capitalize on the many profit opportunities at the show.

*Paul A. Majeski, Assoc. Publisher*

## Building School Music . . . . A Simple Solution

Much has been made in recent years about the crisis facing school music programs across the country. By this time, anyone in the music industry is familiar with the deleterious effect that declining enrollments and curtailed school budgets have had on music programs.

For the most part, these broad social trends have been considered far beyond the control of the music industry, as it is unlikely that a collection of manufacturers and retailers are capable of effecting a change in demographics or in the national tax picture. However, in his address at the recent NASMD Convention (see p. 130 of this issue), Ken Ingram outlines a strategy which, if applied on a school-by-school basis could help alleviate some of the budget pressure on school music.

Unlike a number of past proposals that promised instant industry salvation and were characterized by huge budgets and poorly defined methodology, Ingram's strategy is simple and straightforward. His major underlying premises are that school music is an insignificant component of any school budget, and that, due to the de-

clining number of citizens with children in the school system, school administrators are desperate for community support.

Starting with these premises, Ingram urged music dealers to work through the local band director to convince the administrator that the school band is an inexpensive and highly effective means of building community support. In other words, school music can solve some of the administrator's problems.

Anyone who has been involved with school music can readily attest to the fact that a strong music program instills community pride and reflects well on a school system. If this is properly communicated to the local administrator, there is a good chance that music budgets will survive any cuts.

The cardinal rule in selling anything is to stress the benefits to the individual. In selling school music to an administrator, it is a rule that retailers should never forget.

*Brian T. Majeski, Editor*

THE MUSIC TRADES, MAY, 1983