

# There Is More To Selling Than Cutting Price

Slashing prices is no way to close a sale or attract customers! In an exhaustive market research project, the National Association of Electronic Keyboard Manufacturers discovered that cutting prices was only a marginal inducement to buy for those individuals who had expressed a strong interest in purchasing an organ. In light of this finding, we think that many retail music advertising programs warrant review.

Over 90% of the retail advertising that crosses our desk focuses entirely on price, offering "bucks off," or "once in a life-time savings." Rarely do we see an ad that mentions any of the benefits of music, discusses a store's services, or in short, gives the customer a reason to take up music and buy a musical product.

We are not suggesting that competitive pricing is not important, or that consumers are not interested in saving money — far from it. However, we do suggest that by focusing entirely on discounts in advertising, retailers are passing up an opportunity to attract more customers and enlarge the number of music makers.

Advertising, whether in print, radio, or television, can best be described as a sales presentation aimed at those individuals whom you don't have the opportunity to meet with in person. Thus, your external advertising should closely resemble, in content and style, the type of sales presentation you deliver in your store.

A salesman whose presentation centered entirely on the issue of price would not be very effective. Most likely, he would be unable to answer customer questions, overcome their objections, or convince them that a musical purchase would be money well spent. The same can be said for advertising that deals only with price.

As an industry, we are in serious trouble if the only reason we offer the general public for buying our

products is "we have the best price." It doesn't take much of an imagination to come up with dozens of compelling reasons for taking up music. Anyone who has ever played a musical instrument will tell you that it is a gratifying, enjoyable, and demanding pursuit that develops mental and physical skills.

Not only are these reasons true, but they also sell. Parents give their children music, not because of the offer of a discount, but because they feel that music is a beneficial experience. The individual who buys a home organ does so, not so he can save a few bucks, but because he has the idea that making music is a wonderful pastime.

Thus, it seems only logical that the content of retail advertising be expanded to include some of the virtues of musical participation. For anyone who has devoted a career to this industry, the task of clearly explaining the benefits of music should not be insurmountable. For starters, try to distill the essence of some of your more successful customer presentations. For a broad spectrum of suggestions on how to transform these rough ideas into ads that sell, we suggest you consult an excellent publication by renowned ad-man David Ogilvy, entitled "Ogilvy on Advertising." (Published by Crain Books, and available in most bookstores.)

The music industry packages and sells one of society's greatest creations: music. By placing excessive emphasis on price, we fail to truly communicate the enormous value our products offer. As has been demonstrated by dozens of successful merchants in this industry, if you sell the benefits, the price becomes secondary in importance. Advertising that reflects this will unquestionably yield more sales and more profits.

Brian T. Majeski  
Editor

## The Video Game Threat . . . Where Did It Go Anyway?

In 1981, the music industry was rife with gloomy pronouncements about the dire threat posed by video games. Doomsayers predicted that the rapid growth of video games would devastate the sales of musical products as youngsters turned from playing guitar to blitzing aliens.

Two years later, now that the video game industry is on the ropes, having lost \$500 million in 9 months, the threat seems somewhat less ominous. It would appear that the rise and fall of the video games has had little or no impact on the sales of musical products. We should all keep this in mind the next time someone predicts the early demise of the music industry.

The industry's temporary preoccupation with video games is also instructive. Often times, it is easy to be-

come overly concerned with external factors and ignore the day to day details that create a successful business, or industry for that matter.

As an industry, we should pay less attention to vaguely defined "threats" and focus on the elementary aspects of running a business, like better serving the customer, becoming more efficient, and furthering interest in music in our communities. Music may lack the glamour of high growth businesses, but as businesses go, it is certainly resilient. And, for those who take an elementary approach, that resilience translates into tremendous profitability.

Paul A. Majeski  
Associate Publisher