

Breakout 1 Notes

Repair shop best practices

- Outsource repairs to independent contractors. The downside is that you're at the mercy of the tech and it can sometimes take longer than you would want. They have always done it this way and don't have the room for a dedicated repair spot in their shop. Customers pay them directly for repairs and they handle payment with the contractor. Sometimes provide a loaner instrument to use while instrument is being repaired. Guitar repairs are sent to another music store.
- Have a repair shop- specializing in fretted and bowed instruments, with a person dedicated to each.
- Provide repairs but also outsource some instruments.
- Mostly a woodwind and brasswind repair shop for local schools.
- Repairs for everything from B&O to orchestra to fretted instruments. The only thing they don't really do is electronics.
- Most stores offer loaner instruments while customers' instruments are being repaired, if they have one available.
- Repairs are highest during the summer when music directors turn in school instruments to be repaired in time for next school year and parents also turn in instruments to be repaired during the summer since school music students tend not to practice during the summer.
- Repair logged through their POS system to keep organized.
- Notifications are sent through SMS as to when instrument repair is complete or to give an estimate of cost.

Breakout 1 Notes (cont.)

Repair shop best practices

- Not all repair shops are the same - band, guitar, electronic & orchestra repairs. Electronic repair shops are rare.
- Repair shop process from customer entering to end - one store all their BO techs in one location - write up repair ticket & send customer on their way. Estimate called to customer, approved & repair gets started. They don't have a Repair Shop Mgr - just repair techs. Curious about other stores & their processes.
- Repair shop at corp HQ so all stores send repairs there to that central location - all communication goes thru there. Repair Admin handles all estimates. Customer communication has recently changed - use Podium to send customer a text & email with repair estimate or they can call admin to discuss repair cost. That's been a great way to communicate with customers.
- School repairs are done by a road person at Bandwagon Repair - they use Chekk It - communication with parents is done easily especially when instrument is dropped off at school - texting works way better than calls/emails.
- Chekk IT & Podium both great messaging tools - posted Podium's contact info in chat for those interested in looking into Podium as a NAMM endorsed service provider. Several said Chekk It cheaper than Podium
- Seems to be a lack of people sustaining in the repair field. How has it been searching for & keeping repair techs? Best practices? Jim's Music reaches out to local community (colleges/professors) re: band director turnover. Inhouse training is vital. Many have just the foundation basics - certification & extra education to improve their skills is a great way to retain them.
- Redwing is a great source for repair techs, so is NAPBIRT, word of mouth referrals. Hard to find really good repair techs, so grab them when you find them.
- Question - repairs way behind as schools sent them a bunch of repairs - tips for hierarchy of what gets done first. Triage - bigger repairs longer turnaround time. Faster repairs done first.

Breakout 2 Notes

Tips for getting your store and employees ready for the holiday season

- They don't hire seasonal temps, but hire the same college kids who are home for the holidays each year and come back to work in the store.
- None of the other stores hire seasonal temp staff.
- They used to decorate and turn on the Christmas music starting Black Friday. However, since COVID, they have moved it up to the week of Thanksgiving. Promotions start on Black Friday.
- Holiday sales are not huge for him but he starts specials on Veterans Day. Black Friday is pretty slow for him because he's in a small town and people drive into the bigger towns to go to the malls.
- A few years ago, they started making Black Friday an event and now have about 60 people waiting for the doors to open. They do a newspaper insert and other advertising. This year, they're doing a month-long Black Friday event since they're seeing more companies advertising earlier.
- Just two of the stores have a Black Friday that is better than most, typical business days. A few stores have a better small business Saturday.
- Black Friday is typically busier in the afternoon since everyone tends to go to the clothes, shoes, electronics stores first. So, they don't do an early bird deal.
- Advertising in their local, free paper has worked wonderfully for them.
- They don't have a big Black Friday but they encourage band directors to tell their students to "step-up" to a better instrument during the holidays.
- They run a step-up sales the first week of December which is very successful.
- About 30% of their advertising budget is reserved for the holiday season.

Breakout 2 Notes (cont)

Tips for getting your store and employees ready for the holiday season

- 2 main focuses for holidays 1) Retail 2) Lessons - on retail side, what special things do you do? Yes - we create sales specifically for the holidays - Christmas decorations up on Nov 1st to turn peoples minds to the holidays. Don't hire any extra employees. Use Chekk It to do email promos. Lots of BO student/school promos. Others do holiday eblasts & they see an uptick immediately after the eblast. One store closes on Black Friday so staff can spend family time but they do a big Small Business Saturday promo the following day complete with special deals & promos. Put best sellers out & educate sales team with product specs so they can fully explain to customers over holidays. Extra staff training which staff very much appreciates. One store has had success on the retail side over holidays by doing 12 Days of Christmas Staff Picks they put online - drums up interest in those particular products!! What are others doing for Small Biz Saturday? Advertise beforehand - biggest sale of the year to support your local small business. Black Friday not very busy in most stores - better t boost employee morale by staying closed & letting employees spend family time. Small Biz Saturday ideas - hot chocolate stand, giveaways, games with prizes to encourage participation. Promo - any guitar you buy you get free restrings for a year.
- Lessons - recitals, performances over the holidays - Free guitar or uke for anyone who signs up for lesson program - great way to boost lesson program. Others so lessons as a monthly subscription - 1st 3 people get discounted rate to build value over long duration. Grown upwards of 400% over 2 years. One store did gift packs when they got semester sign ups - 6 lessons for the price of 5. Redeemed in new year & turned into long time students.
- Holidays Recitals - some rent out space outside store, others do them in store. Student showcases & concerts all great ways to boost holiday sales/spirit/lessons.