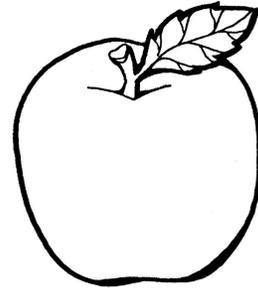




Marketing to Teachers



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Introduction to “Marketing To Teachers”



This is how these things begin. One sunny afternoon you're just another RPT winding your way to class when some noble officer of PTG offers to buy coffee. This, in itself should be enough warning. He speaks of the need to promote the RPT within the music community, to foster good will and mutual respect with our brethren in the trenches and to see the high standards of the Guild shining like a beacon in the wilderness. "Don't you agree?" he says. "Well, of course." you say. He slaps you on the back and says "Welcome to the Teacher Relations Committee. We'll expect big things from you, within the year and under budget. Did I mention you'll have to be Chairman?"

Our belief is that the simple recognition of music educators as co-workers in our effort to enlighten the general public is the most valuable and cost effective tool for marketing the RPT logo. We, the members of the Committee, hope this document "Marketing to Teachers" will guide you through the steps in promoting, not just your own business or chapter but PTG and the RPT classification. By putting all resources, including program outlines, industry contacts, Home Office materials and handouts, in one place the preparations for your presentation will be but the work of a moment.

"Marketing to Teachers" would not have come together without the joint efforts of the Teacher Relations Committee, the Piano Learning Center Task Force, the untiring efforts of Kathy Maxwell and the kind support of the PTG Executive Board.

And that noble PTG officer? In the words of PG Wodehouse, "He has probably by now been eaten by bears, like the children who made mock of the prophet Elisha."

Elizabeth Ward, RPT
June, 2006

A. Group Presentations

The 30-Minute Talk

The secret to being an effective speaker is organizing your material in a way that involves your audience in the presentation. Don't try to cram too much information into your talk. Choose one main topic and 3 or 4 key points that you would really like your audience to remember about that topic. A suggested outline for developing a presentation is listed below. Include as much audience participation as you can. This not only keeps the group alert, but also gives you feedback on whether or not you are being effective in communicating your message. If you have extra time, or people show interest in a particular point you've made, you can always use your question-and-answer time to go into greater detail. Practice your talk two or three times so that you are comfortable with the outline and have the timing right.



Title/Topic:

Short description of presentation:

Goal(s) of presentation (what do you want your audience to learn, think, do, etc.):

Materials needed (audio-visual equipment, handouts, models, easel, etc.):

I. Introduction (# minutes)

- A. Attention-getting device or activity
- B. Preview of main points

II. Body

- A. Point (# minutes)
 - i. Sub-point
 - ii. Sub-point
- B. Point (# minutes)
 - i. Sub-point
 - ii. Sub-point
- C. Point (# minutes)
 - i. Sub-point
 - ii. Sub-point

III. Closing (3 minutes)

- A. Summary
- B. Concluding device or activity
- C. Questions

III. Closing (3 minutes)

- A. Summary
- B. Concluding device

Tips for Making Group Presentations

- ◆ Find out about your audience. Who are they? What ages? What is their interest in your topic? How many will be attending?
- ◆ How much time will you have to speak?
- ◆ Are there other speakers? What will they talk about?
- ◆ How will the audience be seated? Theatre style, chairs in circles, rows, etc.
- ◆ Where will you be placed in relationship to the audience?
- ◆ What audiovisual and amplification equipment is available? What will you need to bring?
- ◆ Arrive early to be sure everything is set up and equipment works properly.
- ◆ Prepare a personal introduction for sponsors or to use yourself at the beginning of your presentation. Introductions should be short and related to why you have been invited to speak.
- ◆ Prepare any handouts needed and be sure there are enough for everyone. Unless you need your audience to refer to written materials during your presentation, hand them out at the very end of your talk. People like handouts, but only distribute information that you think will be used or needed. Ask if you can place supplemental materials on a table in the back.
- ◆ Be sure everyone can see and hear you. Check to make sure visual aids can be viewed by everyone in the room. Models and tools are good visual aids, but be sure everyone has a chance to view them during the presentation or after your talk.
- ◆ Stick to your outline and respect your time limit.
- ◆ Have a question-and-answer session if time allows. Repeat audience questions before answering them if acoustics are a problem or amplification needed. If there isn't time for questions, tell audience members how to contact you. Bring lots of business cards.
- ◆ Thank the audience and sponsors for their time and attention.

The following presentation outlines have been used by PTG members in various group settings. Our thanks to them for sharing their material and ideas.

All About Pianos

30-45 minutes in length

I. Piano classifications

1. Grands
2. Verticals
3. Upright
4. Console
5. Spinet

II. Piano parts

Frame, Lid, Fallboard, Keyblock, Keyslip, Bottom Board, Soundboard, Ribs, Bridges, Plate, Strings, Tuning Pins, Pinblock, Keys, Pedals, Trapwork, Pedal Lyre, Action of vertical and grand, etc.

III. How the action works

Display a drawing or poster of an vertical action and describe the working parts. With the grand action, glue a whippen and hammer assembly onto hardboard and have one for each teacher. As they are examining the models, describe the working of a grand action.

IV. Tuning

V. Regulation & Voicing

VI. Commonly Asked Questions

Put these questions on a flip chart. You can also ask participants to write out questions on 3 x 5 cards before the session starts, then answer these questions at the end.

1. How much do you charge for a tuning? Do I get a discount because I am a teacher?
2. How often should my piano be tuned? Why does it go out of tune? Where should it be placed in the house? What is the best time of year to tune? What about humidity control systems for pianos?
3. How do I keep my piano clean? Fingerprints? Key cleaning? Dust on soundboard?
4. Who should I hire to work on my piano?
5. How did you become a tuner?

Adapted from an MTNA presentation developed by Lucy Urlacher, RPT

Pianos Inside and Out

This class is presented in a flexible format; it can be a one-day seminar or the content can be expanded or condensed to fit the time frame available. As outlined here, it is a full day class. At the front of the classroom is an upright piano (if more than one is available, use several); class participants will actually take case pieces off this piano and learn how to inspect a piano. The handout is a consumer-level checklist for the piano buyer (*see page 24 for a reproducible copy*); under the guidance of the technician, the class learns how to look at a piano critically. This class is valuable to music students, teachers, and the piano-buying public in general.

I. Introductions

- A. Participants
- B. Basic rules of the class
 1. Ask questions as we go.
 2. Don't ask "Who makes the best piano?"
 3. Don't ask the prices of pianos on display.
 4. We are here to learn about pianos; there is no question too stupid to ask.
- C. This is a basic information class to learn about pianos and how they work. After completing this class you will not be a qualified piano technician nor an appraiser. If you have further questions after this class I will be happy to help you in any way I can.



II. Nomenclature of Major Parts

- A. Rim/Frame
- B. Beams and Support Structure
- C. Plate
- D. Pinblock
- E. Other non-musical structures

III. Nomenclature of Action Parts

- A. Keys/Keyframe/Keybed
- B. Action frame
- C. Wippens
- D. Shanks and flanges
- E. Hammers
- F. Dampers
- G. Pedals

IV. The Soundboard

- A. Materials
- B. Crown
- C. Bridges
- D. Strings
 1. Tension on frame
 2. Materials
 3. Tuning Pins
 4. Failures
- E. Failures of the soundboard
 1. Splits
 2. Loss of crown
 3. Loose ribs

Break for lunch or coffee break here.

V. Piano Service

- A. Tuning
 - 1. A440
 - 2. Octaves
 - 3. Thirds
 - 4. Fourths and Fifths
 - 5. Electronic tuning vs. aural tuning
 - 6. Beats
- B. Voicing
 - 1. Hammer shaping
 - 2. Needling
- C. Regulating
 - 1. The process
 - 2. Variations to good regulating

V. Cleaning Your Piano

- A. The soundboard
- B. The plate
- C. The keys
- D. The strings
- E. The cabinet

VII. Piano Buying and Selling

- A. Where to buy and sell pianos
- B. Refer to the Consumer Checklist handout (*p. 25*)

V. Closing Comments

Note: If time permits, a grand as well as an upright can be inspected by the class. Also, the technician can pass around samples of piano parts to illustrate various points: a cracked bass bridge, a section of a pinblock, a wippen, worn hammers, etc. The *Pierce Piano Atlas* and *The Piano Book* by Larry Fine can be introduced, also, as resources.

Adapted from a presentation developed by Michael Reiter, RPT

Teaching Children About Pianos

30-40 minutes in length; 4th to 8th grades.



- I. Introduction (very brief) and audio-visual presentation.
Show a video on the making of a Steinway piano (or other manufacturer factory tour), Check with a local dealer to see if they have one for loan. During the introduction, tell students they will be asked to name five things they have learned when the whole program is over.
- II. Observations and demonstrations on vertical piano (dismantled so the group can see the strings and action).
 - A. Point out strings, pins, plate, and soundboard. Discuss what these parts are made of, length and thickness related to pitch, and relation of weather and humidity to movement of strings and soundboard. Ask “Is a piano more like a sofa or a car?” Someone will usually say, “A car, because it has moving parts” or “it needs a tune-up.”
 - B. Describe and talk about the action. Demonstrate with vertical and grand action models and ask someone to describe what happens when the presenter depresses a key. Pass around a vertical wippen and hammer assembly and a grand wippen and hammer assembly for students to manipulate. Talk about the materials involved. Discuss how pianos get dirty and why they need to be cleaned periodically.
 - C. Explain how a piano is tuned. Show students a tuning fork, mutes, and tuning hammer. Listen to A440, then tune everybody’s favorite note: Middle C! Ask the group to help listen for beats and beatless unisons.
 - D. Ask the group to name five things they have learned.
 - E. Pass out a brochure for them to take home, one that discusses piano facts and maintenance.

Adapted from a presentation developed by Monica Hern.

Do You Hear What I Hear?

30-45 minutes in length; adult audience



Greeting

- I. Select a Piano
- II. Select a Technician
- III. Service Your Piano
- IV. Your Questions

Greeting

Talk about the Piano Technicians Guild, a professional organization for piano technicians. Tell why you are a member. Talk about PTG being an organization for the exchange of information, setting standards with exams for regulation, repair and tuning (RPT) and providing consumer education.

I. Select a Piano

- A. You get what you pay for. Considering the parts, workmanship, how long they last—pianos are a bargain!
- B. Considerations
 - Proficiency - Get more than you need.
 - Space
 - Money - A junky piano will cost more in the long run.
- C. Grand or Vertical?
 1. Warning: To buy a cheap grand for “prestige” is a bad investment.
 2. New or Used?
 - Used may be less expensive, but no warranty will be available. Is it really a good piano?
 - Buying new—be open-minded, spend time looking, learn
- D. You will hear about:
 1. Case parts—consider music desk, fallboard
 2. Structure
 3. Plate
 4. Pinblock—quality of wood used and accuracy of drilling
 5. Tuning Pins
 6. Scaling—has to do with length and thickness—what is longest bass string? Is there a duplex scale?
 7. Soundboard—traditionally solid spruce
 8. Action—watch for double striking, plastic action parts, look for real buckskin.
 9. Keys—length is very important, angled keys wear out faster, key weighting is very important
 10. Hammers—spacing should be even
 11. Pedals and Dampers
 12. Be sure the piano is in tune. If the piano needs any repairs, have them done in the store before it is delivered.

II. Select a Piano Technician

- A. Choose a PTG member, preferable a Registered Piano Technician (RPT).
- B. Get referrals.
- C. Do not depend on music stores or yellow pages.
- D. Get someone you trust, someone who knows his or her current abilities and continues to learn.

III. Service Your Piano

- A. Tuning—why do they go out of tune? How often?
 - 1. Relative Humidity
 - 2. Piano Placement
 - 3. Temperature
 - 4. Humidifiers
- B. Regulation and Voicing
Parts need adjustments due to wear, settling of cloth, changes in wood due to humidity changes. Letting a piano get out of regulation can lead to premature wear and breakage of parts.
- C. How do I get my students to have their pianos serviced?
 - 1. Be an example.
 - 2. Give referrals—be persistent.
 - 3. Tuning develops good ears.
 - 4. Tuning cleans up harmonies.
 - 5. Visit www.ptg.org/learningcenter for information about piano care and the importance of regular service.

Adapted from an MTNA presentation developed by Lucy Urlacher, RPT

B. Organizing Exhibits & Displays



Event types: music teacher- and music-related conferences and seminars, community fairs, school career days, business and chamber of commerce trade fairs, music festivals, home schoolers and other education-related conferences

Tips for Designing Exhibits

When PTG chapters and individual technicians have an opportunity to exhibit at a local event, increase the effectiveness of your display by keeping the following ideas in mind:

A. Pick a message for your booth display and use this message to set goals for your exhibit. Typical goals might be to:

1. *Educate players and owners about the instrument and what a qualified piano technician can do to improve the sound of a customer's piano.*
2. *Help owners understand the importance of regular, professional service and the different types of service a technician might recommend for their piano.*
3. *Provide referrals for those looking for a technician.*
4. *Educate visitors about the RPT certification and the benefits of hiring an RPT.*
5. *Encourage visitors to explore www.ptg.org and use it to find expert advice on piano care and piano buying.*

B. Use visual aids. These should illustrate your message and goals. Look for things like models, tools, and piano parts that people can actually touch. Large posters and illustrations are also effective.

C. Design your booth to be seen from a distance. Find out ahead of time the size and layout of your booth. The location may also matter. If you are not placed in a high traffic area, you may need to work harder to make your booth visible. How many tables and chairs are provided? Lettering should be at least 2 inches high for your main points. As you organize items, arrange them from top to bottom and left to right. Keep things simple, big, and bold. Put the most important points at eye level. A poster on an easel or large signage like a table drape can help draw attention. Use bright colors. Use literature stands or bookracks to elevate written material. Have handouts available to explain information in more detail. Be sure there is contact information printed on everything you distribute.

D. Staff your exhibit with those who are comfortable meeting new people. They should be dressed neatly and wear a nametag. Keep someone at the exhibit booth at all times who can answer questions and explain visual aids. Have several copies of a referral list containing the contact info for local members. If staffing a booth for a statewide event, include all PTG members in that state on your list. Contact the PTG Home Office at ptg@ptg.org or 913-432-9975 for up-to-date information.

E. Get people to stop at your booth by giving something away or providing an opportunity to win something. Giveaways like imprinted pencils, large paper clips, rulers, and magnets continue to impact consumers long after the event is over. Have a drawing for a free tuning or appraisal. Use the names in the drawing for a follow-up mailing thanking them for stopping by your booth and reminding them who to call for piano service.

Contact your PTG Regional Vice President or PTG Home Office staff for additional ideas.

C. Working with Teacher & Music Organizations



- Join your local music teacher's association.
- Sponsor an event by providing in-kind services or a financial contribution.
- Attend meetings, concerts and other events.
- Write an article for a newsletter .
- Volunteer to give a presentation.
- Invite a presenter to a chapter meeting who can speak on a topic of mutual interest to technicians and teachers. Invite teachers to attend or hold a joint meeting of the two groups.
- Invite a few teachers to your chapter meeting to be an expert panel. Topics of mutual concern could be addressed (i.e. why do students drop out of lessons, how can we best advise parents on piano purchases, etc.)
- Offer to provide an in-service training for a local school district's music teachers.
- Seek opportunities to distinguish yourself as an expert in the community.

Contact Information

American College of Musicians/National Guild of Piano Teachers –

www.pianoguild.com

American Guild of Organists (AGO) – www.agohq.org

Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) – www.mtna.org (includes a teacher search page)

National Association for Music Education (MENC) – www.menc.org

National Band Association (NBA) – www.nationalbandassociation.org

National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) – www.nfmc-music.org

Special Events

Partner with a local music organization, teacher or school to celebrate music and piano appreciation. Start planning 6 -12 months before the event and distribute promotional material 3 - 6 months before the date. Below are a few that could create good opportunities for you to increase awareness of your business and generate some new contacts.

March • Music In Our Schools Month • The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) promotes this in conjunction with schools and teachers and offers both ideas and promotional merchandise on their website (www.nafme.org). The World's Largest Concert is one of the premier events they encourage. Whether throughout an entire district or in one local school, there are many ways a piano technician could work with teachers. Sponsor a local musician to present a concert for a school assembly. Organize a poster contest highlighting the value of learning to play an instrument and provide the prizes. Join with a music advocacy group to promote music instruction in the schools.

April • Jazz Appreciation Month • If you are a jazz-lover, this might be just the event for you. Many communities sponsor jazz concerts and festivals around this time. Advertise in concert programs. Join a planning committee. Give away promotional items at concerts. Donate your services, but make sure your business is promoted in concert publications.

September • Classical Music Month • Donate recordings or videos to libraries (check to make sure your name can be included on the case). Distribute bookmarks that have pictures of classical composers on them. Shop through music supply catalogs for other merchandise ideas.

September • National Piano Month • Partner with a local music store to give away free piano sheet music. Sponsor piano concerts at the local mall, at a local business that has a large number of employees or in a public building like city hall or county courthouse. Partner with a music teacher to offer a free piano lesson. Offer your services as a speaker to local groups and school classes. Talk about piano history, buying a piano or how a piano works. Donate children's books that feature pianos to local libraries or schools (see the list in section H for suggested titles). Partner with a local museum or library to set up a display of historic pianos. Give out subscriptions or individual issues of piano-related publications. Visit www.instrumentalistmagazine.com to learn more about *Clavier's Piano Explorer*, a fun, activity-filled magazine for students. Distribute press releases to local media highlighting National Piano Month with tips for caring for your piano.



D. Reaching Individual Teachers

- Send a mailing to all the music teachers in your area. You can find lists through local teachers organizations, phone books, local music societies, music stores and by searching www.mtna.org and clicking on “Find A Music Teacher.”
- Refer your customers looking for piano lessons to local music teachers.
- Give teachers free piano care literature to distribute to their students.
- Ask a teacher to give a presentation with you. Use the team-teaching approach to talk about piano history or to describe and demonstrate the importance of a well-maintained piano.
- Take piano lessons yourself. Learn about piano care from the viewpoint of a student and a teacher.
- Provide great customer service by making it easy for teachers to reach you, returning calls promptly and always being on time. Add value to the service you provide by offering something additional that may cost you little, but mean much to your customer.
- Sponsor a recital by providing in-kind services or a financial contribution.
- Give teachers discounts or special offers when they refer piano students to you.
- Send holiday cards. Recognize them with a note if they have a special achievement or receive some publicity.
- When working with a school district, don’t forget the individual music teachers. Develop good relationships with administrators and individual teachers.
- Teachers can always use free resources. Be on the lookout for ideas and items they can use with their students.
- Attend piano recitals and school concerts that are organized by the teachers you serve. Make sure to congratulate them on their events (and be sure they know you were there).

E. Online Resources for Teachers and Students

Visit www.ptg.org and click on Piano Teachers.

Piano Info & Resources

Teacher Resources

Welcome! We hope these free, downloadable resources will enrich and enhance your lesson plans and student learning. Visit frequently to find new materials. Click on the subject areas for a drop down list of downloadable items and web links.

Lesson Plans

Group Games

History

Art

Intermediate

Advanced

How a Piano Works

Virtual Factory Tours

Literature

Teaching Tools

Puzzles/Worksheets

Videos

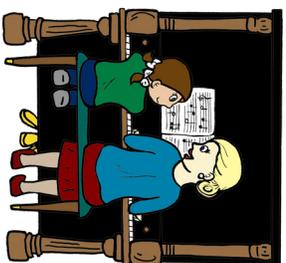
Science

Beginners

Helpful Links

Something fun, educational and free for students, teachers & parents from the Piano Technicians Guild...

Resources to help students and families discover the joy of playing the piano

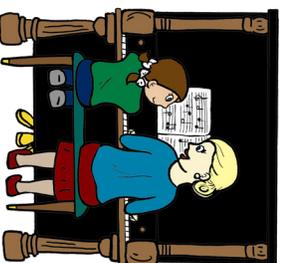


Teacher & Student Resources at ptg.org

Look for...online games like Music Hangman & Piano Concentration • worksheets & activities like word searches & an origami piano • lesson plans for teachers • models that show you how a piano works • tips for piano care • info about the history of the piano • and links to more cool piano sites.

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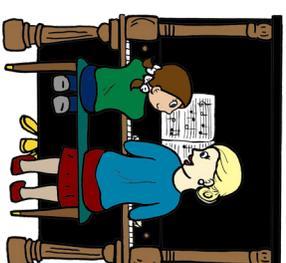


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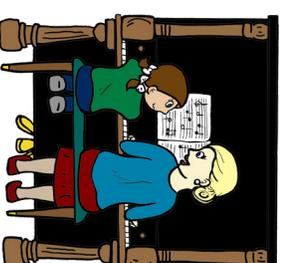


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Tips for using the teacher resources found at www.ptg.org to promote your business.

- **Distribute Piano Coloring Books (purchase from the PTG Store) to attract new students.** You always need new business! Give them to current students to reinforce why they are studying piano. In addition, you can provide your students with an extra book to give to a friend or a family with small children to create new students.
- **Utilize the lesson plans to educate students about how pianos work.** We have piano teachers creating lesson plans for other teachers using our site as a resource. You simply download a free lesson plan that covers the information you want the child to learn about the piano. The lesson plans are designed for all ages, so that as the child develops, you have an appropriate lesson for their learning capacity.
- **Inspire and motivate parents and students to upgrade to a quality piano from a poor playing piano or electronic keyboard.** One of the biggest challenges facing teachers today is motivating students and parents to purchase a touch sensitive, quality acoustic piano. There is a lesson plan specifically designed for this task! The *Buying a Piano* section is particularly helpful for parents to identify why they need a quality instrument and how to purchase one.
- **Have your students take advantage of all the fun in the student resource area.** They can play online games that focus on developing their learning skills, have a blast with downloadable word searches and games, and make their own paper origami piano. These are all activities students can do after practicing to keep piano playing fun and exciting!
- **Help teachers answer questions posed by students and parents about caring for their piano.** Now you have a resource to accurately provide information on piano care. The *Piano Care* section contains all our PTG brochures that you can download, read, or refer the parent to answer their inquiries.
- **Use the classroom lesson plans to create new demand for your services.** Contact your local school teachers or administrators and share the excitement of our program with them. Kids pre-school through 4th grade should receive a PLC companion coloring book along with the school lesson plan to stimulate interest in piano playing. There is space on the back of the coloring book for your business information. Contact your local piano dealer to help with the costs of the coloring books if you or the school is unable to purchase them. The lesson plans are designed for kids pre-school through 12th grade.

F. PTG Resources

The next time you receive an invitation to speak or exhibit at an event, check out these PTG resources. Get the word out! Visit the PTG Store at www.ptg.org to see a complete catalog of PTG resale merchandise. Order by calling (913) 432-9975 or online at www.ptg.org. (\$) denotes cost items.



Brochures (\$)

(all publications also include information about PTG and member categories)

- ***How should I take care of my piano?***

Great tips for any piano owner.

- ***How often should my piano be serviced?***

Manufacturer recommendations for the most popular piano models.

- ***The special care and maintenance of the teaching piano***

Information targeting the special needs of piano teachers.

- ***Celebrating 300 Years of the Piano (The Piano Then and Now)***

A brief history of the piano inspired by the popular 2000-2001 Smithsonian display.

- ***Why use an RPT?***

Tells customers why choosing an RPT is a good decision and how to find one.

Technical Bulletins (\$)

Fact sheets for piano care and specific services.

- ***Pitch Raising***
- ***Regulation***
- ***Humidity Control***
- ***Voicing***
- ***Finish Care***
- ***Rebuilding***

Piano Coloring Book (\$)

Share this 8-page 8.5 x 11 inch coloring book with teachers, parents, students, schools and music retailers. Each page starts with "I am going to play the piano because..." and adds a different reason why learning to play is beneficial. Parent discussion notes are included. One page features a piano technician. Also directs readers to PTG's Piano Learning Center. Plenty of space on the back to add contact information. Package of 25. Bulk discounts available.

Customer Service Sample Pack (\$)

One each of all PTG brochures, bulletins and business aids.

PTG Identification (\$)

Don't forget to wear PTG logo apparel or pins to identify presenters or exhibit crew as a member of the Piano Technicians Guild.

Models (\$)

Use an action model, jig, or tool display to add visual interest to your exhibit or presentation. Order models from PTG or contact us for other suppliers.

Free PTG Materials

- ***Piano Technology Career Brochure***
Describes the qualifications, training and opportunities for someone interested in entering the profession.

- ***Teacher Resources Flyer***

- ***Member Recruitment Packet***

Includes a fact sheet about the benefits of joining PTG, a membership application and sample copy of the *Journal* magazine. Member information and application also available online at www.ptg.org.

G. The ABCs of Marketing and Promotion



Your marketing and promotional activities are an important part of your business plan no matter whether you are just starting out, wanting to maintain your current income level or planning to expand your business opportunities. There are many books and guides that help you develop a marketing plan. A marketing plan is a business tool that combines realistic goals with specific strategies along with ways to measure your results. It includes a timeline and requires you to learn as much as you can about your current and future customers (also called your target market), their needs and how your product or service can meet their needs. When you plan, you also look at all the different ways you can reach your customers and educate them about the product or services you provide. And most importantly of all, marketing is an ongoing process. As you and your market change, your plan needs to be reviewed and adjusted to meet new challenges.

Most guides to developing a marketing plan use these common elements:

- 1. Product. Define your product or service.** *What are you selling? Who needs your product or service? What is unique or distinctive about your business? What benefits or perceived value can you communicate to your customers? Your product/service mix includes both the tangibles and intangibles you offer.*
- 2. Price. Determine your pricing strategy.** *How you price your services or products depends on three factors: market demand, the financial needs and goals of your business, and competition. Determining your cost of doing business is only the first step in making pricing decisions.*
- 3. Place. Select your place of business and/or distribution method.** *Consider all the ways you can deliver your services or sell your products. Look at this element from the customer's viewpoint.*
- 4. Promotion. Make your target audience aware of your business.** *Your goals here are to educate, encourage, persuade and remind. Match your message and your method to the needs of your customers.*

A basic marketing plan includes:

- I. An overview of your company, why you need this plan and what you hope to accomplish.
- II. A description of the target market(s) you want to reach.
- III. An evaluation of your competition.
- IV. The strategies you have chosen to reach your target market(s) along with guidelines for measuring your results and reviewing your strategies.
- V. A timeline.
- VI. A marketing budget.
- VII. Notes, comments and source information.

Your goals/objectives most likely will be to:

- *Increase the number of new customers*
- *Retain current clients*
- *Educate current and prospective customers about the importance of maintaining their piano.*
- *Refine your client base to: include more customers in close geographic proximity, rebuild pianos, schedule more concert work, install humidity control devices or player systems, sell piano accessories, add a rental business, etc.*

There is a wealth of methods out there for promoting your business. They range from free (word-of-mouth) to millions of dollars (Super Bowl ads). Some require printed materials and others are

less tangible. Below are some of the standard ways people promote their products and services, but always keep your eyes open for creative, innovative ways to make people more aware of your business. Check the list below to see if you are taking full advantage of your promotional opportunities.

Element	Methods
<i>Personal</i>	<i>Face-to-face sales calls, telephone contacts, special events, store contacts, telemarketing, trade shows, community fairs, community organizations, upselling</i>
<i>Direct Mail</i>	<i>Brochures, letters, newsletters, catalogs, postcards, flyers, samples</i>
<i>Visuals</i>	<i>Signs, business cards, stationery, billing statements, contracts, equipment, name tags, packaging, report covers, business directories</i>
<i>Publicity (free)</i>	<i>Word-of mouth, trade journals, newsletters, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, electronic media, computers, movies, staged events, press releases, feature stories</i>
<i>Advertising (paid)</i>	<i>Newspapers, radio, television, direct mail, signs, magazines, trade journals, outdoor/transit signs, computer access, information services, coupon books, posters, banners, maps, events, books, billboards, directories, movies, seminars</i>
<i>Sponsorships & Partnerships</i>	<i>Special events, entertainment, scholarships, service trades, cross-selling, store displays, donated services</i>

While it seems that making the effort to market and promote your business may entail some risks, the greatest risk is to do nothing. Nothing stays the same!

The 10 Biggest Marketing Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

By Peter Koeppel, American Management Association

1. Not Developing a Marketing Plan
2. Not Planning a Marketing Budget
3. Not Targeting a Specific Target Audience
4. Not Developing a Clear and Consistent Marketing Message
5. Believing Your Product Will Sell Itself
6. Not Clearly Defining The Product's Benefits
7. Not Diversifying Your Media Mix
8. Not Understanding the Lifetime Value of a Customer
9. Not Having a Back-End Revenue Program
10. Not Up-Selling the Customer

Sources:

- *Business Resource Manual, Piano Technicians Guild*
- *Marketing Without Mystery, Laura Dirks and Sally Daniel, American Management Association.*
- *Marketing Mastery, Harriet Stephenson and Dorothy Otterson, Oasis Press*
- *Twenty-Five Ways to Improve Sales Without Spending an Extra Dime on Advertising, Richard Johnson, Crisp Publications*

Visit the Small Business Administration site at www.sba.gov for more information about marketing, writing a marketing plan and general business planning. The SBA offers free online courses, counseling and low-cost training at sites all throughout the U.S.

H. Other Industry Resources

Start with the PTG annual *Guide to Resources in Piano Technology* to find the names and contact information for manufacturers and suppliers. This is published each year as a part of the PTG member directory. Visit the PTG website at www.ptg.org for an online directory of suppliers and manufacturers.



- **Manufacturers** • factory tour and history videos/DVDs
- **Local retailers** • action models, literature about specific brands
- **National Piano Foundation** • literature, posters, videos • <http://pianonet.com>
- **Dampp-Chaser Corp.** • research and literature about climate control • www.dampp-chaser.com

The Piano in Children's Literature

The following is a sample of books that feature pianos, piano playing and piano lessons in their storylines. Donate books to schools, read aloud out of one of these books for a preschool or library storytime, or place copies in waiting rooms. Don't forget to add your contact information inside the cover. Check amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com and your local booksellers for purchase information.



Storybooks and Picture Books

Anatole and the Piano, Eve Titus, *Bantam Books* • Anatole, the conductor of the Mouse Symphony Orchestra, travels deep inside a grand piano to solve a perplexing problem.

A Piano For Julie, Eleanor Schick, *Greenwillow* • A young girl and her father search for the perfect piano.

Miranda, Tricia Tusa, *Aladdin Books* • Miranda loves to play Bach, Haydn, and Mozart – until the day she discovers boogie-woogie, a day her family quickly regrets.

Mrs. Merriwether's Musical Cat, Carol Purdy, *Putnam & Grosset* • A cat named Beethoven inspires the students of a dedicated music teacher to play their best.

The Cat Who Loved Mozart, Patricia Austin, *Holiday House* • The music of Mozart creates a special friendship between a girl and her new pet.

Henry the Steinway and the Piano Recital, *Henry the Steinway: A Star Is Born*, and *Henry the Steinway Tours the World*, Sally Coveleskie, Peter Goodrich & Laura Friedman, *Yorkville Press* • Three wonderful stories about the adventures of a famous grand piano and a little girl.

Gus and Grandpa and the Piano Lesson, Claudia Mills, *Farrar, Straus and Giroux* • Gus has a hard time with his piano lessons until Grandpa shows him how to get the music in his fingers.

Nana Hannah's Piano, Barbara Bottner, *Putnam Publishing* • When Nana Hannah twists her ankle and needs cheering up, her grandson moves in for a week and is inspired to learn a song and discover that maybe there is more to life than baseball.

Piano With A Soul, Richard Krzys, *Ivy House Publishing* • Anxious to honor her mother's memory by learning to play Beethoven's "Für Elise" on the piano, Elise soon discovers that the instrument her grandmother has purchased has a soul of its own.

Polly and the Piano, Carol Montparker, *Amadeus Press* • Polly is a dog who becomes involved in her owner's desire to play a piano concert at Carnegie. The story is told by Polly from her perspective. Polly's "most unusual doghouse in the world" is under the piano, where she is close up to her owner giving piano lessons and practicing Bach, Mozart, and Brahms in the hope of appearing in Carnegie Hall one day.

My Friend the Piano, Catherine Cowan, *HarperCollins* •

Nate the Great and the Musical Note, Marjorie Sharmat, *Yearling* • Miniature detective Nate the Great has yet another case to solve. Rosamond turns a phone message from Pip's mother into a music lesson with a secret meaning and Nate steps in to solve the mystery. For beginning readers.

Arthur Plays the Blues, Stephen Krensky, *Little, Brown & Co.* • Arthur has a new piano teacher, the renowned Dr. Fugue. After his teacher "fires" him, Arthur needs to decide how much he wants to learn to play the piano -- and then try to win back his teacher.

Stories About Real People

The Music Box: The Story of Cristofori, Suzanne Guy & Donna Lacy, *Brunswick Publishing*

Blind Boone: Piano Prodigy, Madge Harrah

Mozart Finds A Melody, Stephen Costanza, *Henry Holt & Company*

Look for other titles featuring individual composers and performers.

I. Reproducible handouts

Piano Buying Consumer Checklist

Check the Piano Learning Center www.ptg.org/learningcenter to download these and other resources you can copy and distribute.

Test Your Piano IQ

Piano Parts Word Search

Origami Piano

CONSUMER CHECKLIST FOR PIANO CONDITION

Make _____

Approx. Age _____

Model _____

Grand _____ Vertical _____

Serial # _____

Height/Length _____

I. Appearance and general case condition: Poor ___ Fair ___ Good ___ Excellent ___

- A. Color: _____ Wood Tone: _____
- B. Loose veneer: Y/N _____ Corners missing: Y/N _____
- C. Fallboard working: Y/N _____ Warped or damaged: Y/N _____
- D. Lid square and straight: Y/N _____
- E. Cracks or splits on surfaces: _____
- F. Finish: OK _____ Scratches _____ Checking _____
- G. Other damage: _____

II. Keyboard

- A. Ivory ___ Plastic ___ Other _____
- B. Loose naturals: Y/N _____ How many Heads _____ Tails _____
- C. Color of naturals: White _____ Yellow _____ Gray _____
- D. Keys level: Y/N _____
- E. Keys sticking: Y/N _____ What notes? _____

III. Playability

- A. All notes working: Y/N _____
- B. Dynamic Range: 1. Loudness (1-10) _____ 2. Softness (1-10) _____
- C. Tone: 1. Too bright _____ 2. Too soft _____ 3. About right _____
- D. Voicing and regulation
 - 1. Individual notes too loud or soft: _____
 - 2. Notes requiring more or less effort: _____
- E. Tuning
 - 1. General tuning condition: _____
 - 2. Individual notes out of tune: _____
 - 3. Entire section out of tune: _____
- F. Pedals
 - 1. Working: Y/N _____
 - 2. Noises: Y/N _____ What kind? _____
- G. Moving
 - 1. Can you get it out without difficulty? Y/N _____
 - 2. Can you get it in without difficulty? Y/N _____

This list has been compiled as a consumer-level check list for the piano buyer. Even after you have completed this checklist it is advisable to hire a qualified piano technician (preferably a Registered Piano Technician) to inspect the piano; this can help give you confidence in your purchase and prevent a possible misfortune.