

Breakout 1 Notes

What are some of your best practices for inventory management?

- One deal at a time. As a piano store, changed business model to appointment only, which has been easier on inventory management.
- POS system to track SKU, and a worksheet that reviews best sellers with great analytics & tracking.
- Getting rid of obsolete product and selling online.
- 67 years in business. Switched from basic POS to Rain system. Prior to that, the store was on paper. Still working to get everything into system during pandemic. Taking things one day at a time.
- Rain system provides online access to work orders, though it is not as detail-oriented as others.
- Donated old products.
- Uses AIM-POS software. They input all incoming merchandise upon receipt of shipment. All their brick and mortar and online sales channels track the inventory so that they don't sell more than what they have in inventory. Always looking for new/alternative product lines to add to inventory to deal with current supplier shortages.
- Also uses AIM-POS and its analysis tool. The AIM software tracks items by category and/or SKU and provides details. Helps identify aged inventory as well.
- Work closely with MI Reps to locate and find the product. Remain persistent and consistent.

Breakout 2 Notes

What are some of your best practices for staffing?

- Wanted to keep everyone during the pandemic and flexibility has been key. Job roles have changed a lot, which helps keep staff engaged with new and different roles.
- Good communication has been essential. Kept staff on, and didn't want employees to worry about their jobs.
- Social gatherings and games to boost morale. Little things go a long way.
- Community outreach events with local high school's National Honors Society members, who need to complete volunteer hours.
- New Employee Training program. Made it more organized than in the past with outlined steps and scripted presentations. Observing first two days, then step by step training afterwards. Hired three people since start pandemic. Found that interviewing with mask on changes the interaction too much. Used video calls for interviews to help communicate more fully.
- Spend time with junior staff on telephone etiquette and role-playing training.
- Small chain. Sales Floor Manager is leaving and having difficulty finding qualified/interested replacement candidates. Particularly stressful heading into school band season in August. One suggestion was to look into hiring temps - knows of some music stores who have successfully used temps.
- Commented that they are facing similar challenges and in the meantime, they are having to deal with small staff and minimal floor coverage.
- Noted that there is an influx of new residents in the area, so there are many job inquiries. Important to manage expectations because it is challenging to afford to live there on the local retail hourly wages. Suggested being flexible with scheduling to allow hourly employees the opportunity to work a second job.
- Communicating to customers and B&O Directors about job opportunities and asking for referrals/recommendations.
- Keep in touch with employees - don't find out in an exit interview about an issue that you could have resolved. And make sure that the staff has everything they need to accomplish their tasks and to serve the customers.