

Have Your Best Recruitment Ever!  
Tips for Bringing More Students into Your Music Program

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*Recruitment is not an event. . . it is a process.*

*We must never be too busy to recruit.*

Successful Planning of Your Recruitment

1. Build a Timeline
   * Backward develop your timeline from the date students select courses
   * Don’t forget to schedule meetings and/ or instrument rental nights
2. Determine Your Audience
   * Students
   * Parents
   * Other Stakeholders (administration, counselors, classroom teachers, etc.)
3. Develop Your Message
   * Specifics about your program
   * Important dates and events
   * How enrollment works
   * Benefits to joining/ advocacy materials
   * Other important information
4. Plan How to Communicate- different audiences require different methods
   * Rule of Seven Touches
     + Demonstration concert
     + Classroom visits
     + Instrument demonstrations
     + Instrument fittings
     + Informational letter/ email
     + Social media posts
     + Posters/ flyers
     + Infographics
     + Phone calls
     + Parent meetings
     + Videos
     + Giveaways
     + Student to student/ parent to parent
     + Website
     + Advocacy materials
     + Word of mouth

***Targeted communication is the key to success.***

***Your message should be:***

* + ***Brief***
  + ***Impactful***
  + ***Tailored to the specific audience***
  + ***Utilize a variety of methods and formats***
  + ***People need to hear your call to action multiple times***

5. Organize it all with these time saving (and free) tools!

* + Google Forms and Sheets
  + Sign-Up Genius
  + Mail Merge
  + Canva

6. Partner with your Local Music Store

7. Meet the kids and let the fun begin!

*Build Enthusiasm Through the Instrument Fitting Process*

* Getting kids on the “right” instrument jump starts their learning and puts them on a personal path to success.
* It is the Instrumental Music Director’s responsibility to try to place each student on an instrument where he/ she has a strong chance of succeeding.

Success on an instrument can be influenced by:

* Musical aptitude
* Shape and size of lips
* Formation of teeth and jaw
* Size of hands, fingers, arms and body

An Instrument fitting allows the teacher to evaluate:

* Embouchure issues related to the physical characteristics of the lips, teeth and jaw
* Whether the student has the potential to produce a characteristic sound after coaching/ instruction
* Size of hands, fingers, arms or body that might influence success on the instrument
* Potential on a variety of instruments to determine which are more likely to be a good fit.

**\*And it helps the student know what instrument feels most comfortable and natural to play.**

Forms

* Color Coded for easy sorting
* Pre-printed with student info collected via Google Forms and mail merged into document
* Download Wendy’s forms at [www.onandoffthepodium.com](http://www.onandoffthepodium.com) under the “Materials” tab

Tips for Success!

1. Start with the “small instrument” (brass mouthpiece, flute head joint, clarinet mouthpiece/ barrel, saxophone mouthpiece/neck). It is crucial that the tester place the mouthpiece in the correct position.



2. To get a sound on flute: place index finger under bottom lip and pout lower lip over the finger. Blow as if saying “pooh.” Once this is established, replace the finger with the head joint.

3. Double reeds: Use a synthetic reed for instrument fittings.

4. To get a characteristic clarinet embouchure, have the student pretend to put

Chapstick on their lower lip.

5. I do not recommend using a hard reed as a method of “discouraging” students from playing saxophone, as you will wind up with students prone to forcing the sound. Instead look for students who can maintain a relaxed but steady air stream on a 2 or 2 1/2 reed.

6. To further distinguish your potential sax “superstars,” put the neck strap and instrument on the student and see if they can add a finger at a time and play from B down to low D. Some won’t like the weight of the instrument or will find this task too difficult and will gravitate to another choice.

7. Too many saxophones? Try them all on clarinet too.

8. If a student has trouble creating a sound on a trumpet or horn mouthpiece, “move up”

to a larger mouthpiece. Many students will have an easier time, and then you can go back to the smaller mouthpiece once they get a sound going. And you might gain a low brass player in the process!

9. An enthusiastic and bright student who gets a nice sound on trumpet might make a fantastic horn player.

10. A bright student who is drawn to woodwinds may make a good double reed player.

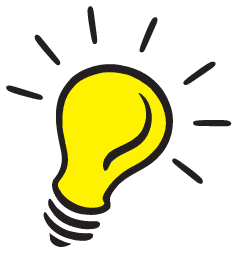
11. When dealing with too many potential percussionists:

* + Educate families as to what percussion “is” and “is not”
  + Cap percussion enrollment if necessary
  + Develop well-rounded percussionists

In my percussion fittings I look for:

* + Coordination (Can the student use hands and feet together while keeping a steady pulse?)
  + Rhythm Discrimination/ Echoing
  + Melodic Echoing
  + Ability to focus amid distractions
  + IMMA Rhythm Test- available from GIA

Finishing Up:

You must take the time to find out what instruments the student prefers and feels most comfortable playing.

Student buy-in is essential if you want to retain them in your program

* Sign-Out Card for determining child’s preferences
* Some students will change their mind after trying instruments
* Recommend an instrument based on (in order of priority)
  + Child’s preferences
  + Instruments that are a good fit
  + Needs of the ensemble

A highly organized recruitment and instrument fitting process can do wonders for your ensemble. I firmly believe that getting kids on the "right" instrument-- one they love AND can be successful playing-- will jumpstart their musical achievement. Through your expert guidance and care during this very important process, you can help your band to blossom!

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