

NASMD

Winter 2005/2006 Newsletter



National Association of School Music Dealers, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



It's time to plan our pit stop

Every successful race car driver knows that if you want to win a long-distance race, you have to strategically plan your pit stops to re-hydrate your body, refresh your tires, replenish your fuel and fine-tune your vehicle.

If you make your living as a school music retailer or supplier, there is no more important "pit stop" than the annual NASMD convention. This year's convention theme, "Winning in Fast Time," was selected to help us focus on the issues that will best help our members thrive in today's fast-paced marketplace.

The NASMD convention is the only place you'll find all of the components necessary for a great school music industry pit stop.

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2006 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: JIM CATHCART

If the title of Jim Cathcart's keynote pep talk "Winning in Fast Time" makes your pulse quicken, perhaps that is exactly what its author would intend. A Toastmasters award winner—and author of 13 books, including *Relationship Selling* and *The Acorn Principle*—Cathcart will be headlining April's NASMD convention with his presentation on how to stay on top of, or rather ahead of, today's ever-increasing rate of change, or "fast time."



Jim Cathcart

According to Cathcart, who is a 30-year veteran of the professional speaking circuit, the generations raised in the last 20 to 30 years were brought up in a business climate that no longer exists. "There's more change around us today in more places, and in more categories of change, than ever in history," he says. "So if we're not changing the way we do business, we're obsolete."

Cathcart explains that excelling in these fast times means doing business in a way that allows your company to evolve faster than the rate of change. In other words, in order to survive—whether you're a music dealer, a software company or a widget salesman—your business needs to stay ahead of the curve. "So instead of waiting for change, we actually initiate change in the direction we want to go." He encourages businesses to "realize that they need to innovate, that creativity is a

required skill, that nobody is going to be able to get by just doing the work. That's the old model."

But "Winning in Fast Time" is only the beginning of Jim Cathcart's philosophy on winning. He is not just advocating speed and innovation; he places particular emphasis on the quality, not quantity, of business relationships. "The core of all relationships is trust, and trust is something that we need to manage intentionally."

Cathcart's proactive approach to relationships is a part of what he dubs "Relationship Selling." In fact, Cathcart was the first to publish the now-pervasive phrase in his 1985 book of the same title (updated in 2002).

Attendees of the April convention in Fort Myers, Florida can look forward to a series of talks by Cathcart on "Relationship Selling." He has split the topic into three sessions: Selling In a New Era; Creating Lifetime Customer Loyalty; and Keeping Yourself and Others Motivated to Sell.

"It's not just being nice to your customers," Cathcart says. "It's recognizing that each relationship is an asset to your business and needs to be managed. Profit is the fruit of business relationships, instead of business relationships being a product of profitable transactions. Relationships are the starting point, and sales continue to float from that indefinitely."

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Wally Bock—Beating Goliath

Wally Bock is no stranger to the life of a professional speaker. Born and raised in New York City, his father was a Lutheran pastor who regularly brought his work home with him. "My father was one of the finest preachers the Lutheran Church has ever produced," Bock says. "He preached three times every Sunday. After service we would all sit down for dinner and my dad would ask for a critique of his sermon that day."



Wally Bock

In his father's spirit of self-betterment, Bock will be giving two presentations at the NASMD convention: "Marketing In the Digital Age" and "Beating Goliath."

In "Beating Goliath" Bock uses the classic biblical story of David and Goliath to draw a comparison between small, independently-owned businesses, and the larger "monster" corporations.

"Despite my title, you don't have to beat Goliath if you can live profitably in Goliath's shadow," Bock says. "We

know that there are at least four basic strategies to prosper in Goliath country, and one that's sure to fail. The one that's sure to fail is competing with Goliath on his own terms."

Bock outlines four strategies for dealing with your own Goliath:

- 1) Strength against weakness (or the David strategy);
- 2) Profiting from Goliath's strengths (the judo strategy);
- 3) Choosing the ground (the niche strategy); and
- 4) Strength in numbers (i.e.

ganging up on the giant).

Much like David uses his own strengths, and exploits the 10-foot-tall Goliath's weaknesses, Bock suggests a similar plan for small businesses. "David chose a strategy where his lack of size, strength and armor didn't matter, but his ability to use a sling made the difference... You build long-term competitive advantage with things Goliath [big business] can't copy. That's almost always your people and relationships."

In his talk, "Marketing in the Digital Age," Bock will review some marketing basics, while emphasizing what has changed—and what hasn't—in the digital age.

"The basics of marketing still matter in the digital age because people are still people," he says. "The reason that's good news to you, if you're a businessperson, is that all of the basic lessons about why people buy your product or service, and what they use to base their decisions on, will still be valid seven years from today."

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SHELLING, BEACHES AND WILDLIFE. OH MY!

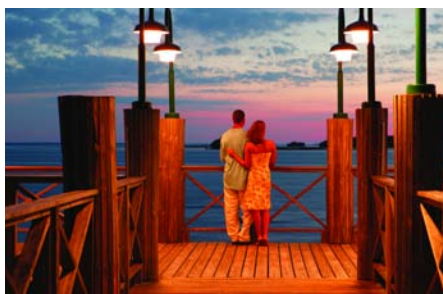
If you're beginning to ask yourself how you'll spend your free time at the April convention, a better question might be, What *won't* you do? With a myriad of possibilities sure to please every palate and personality type, you might be forced to choose which activities to eliminate.

"Shelling, beaches and wildlife" are the top three attractions cited again and again by hotel staff and area locals. A well-placed call to the Sanibel and Captiva Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center is a start toward learning about the area's more famous assets, and—whether it's by boat, bike, canoe or shuttle—how to get there.

Because of the area's unique geographical location on the Gulf of Mexico, the shores of the mainland and surrounding islands are veritable magnets for seashells. In fact, shelling, or shell collecting, is a kind of sport here. To start with, the beach at Fort Myers is loaded with every type of shell you can imagine—conch, mussel, cockle, whelk, scallop—but if it's a shell overload you're looking for, the islands of Captiva and Sanibel are only a couple of miles out from Sanibel Harbour.

"I would recommend seeing both islands if you can," says Joan Sims at the concierge desk of the Sanibel Harbor Resort. "You could shell all day long and never get tired of it. It's just a wonderful thing to do."

Visitors can plan day trips or, if short on time, can take a boat over to the Sanibel and Captiva islands for a few hours. Once there, one can enjoy the remarkably calm, aquamarine waters and stunning views. If you're feeling athletic, navigating the islands on two wheels is a



Sanibel Harbour resort, home of 2006 NASMD popular option; bike rentals are available from the islands.

Nature lovers won't want to miss seeing the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on the island of Sanibel. Part of the largest undeveloped mangrove ecosystem in the United States, migratory birds, or "snowbirds," make their winter home in the refuge. April is an ideal time to look for spoonbills, pelicans, eagles...and alligators.

For those who would like to stay closer to the creature comforts of the Sanibel Harbour Resort, there is plenty of

food, entertainment and exercise to be had within the 85-acre adult playground.

The hotel boasts four restaurants, including a four-star (jackets requested, but not required). For after-dinner drinks, there's Charley's Cabana bar, which overlooks the bay and stays open every night until 1 a.m. The bar is named after Hurricane Charley, which wreaked havoc two years ago, requiring the bar to be renovated.

The helpful Sims at the concierge desk might suggest a walk after dinner. "We have a nature trail that walks over to our courtside steakhouse, then goes over a bridge where you can see the mangrove trees. It's a beautiful trail, a half-mile walking trail, and all lit up at night."

If you prefer to eat on the water, visitors can book a dinner cruise that leaves from the resort every night around sunset. Menus for all the restaurants and the cruise, as well as more information about the resort, are available at sanibel-resort.com.

President's letter

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Great purpose: Unlike any other industry meeting, the NASMD convention is all about helping school music retailers and suppliers succeed.

Great program: Three days are jam-packed with educational sessions addressing topics such as marketing your business, relationship selling, competing with the big guys, developing your people, building in-store lesson programs and much more.

Great people: You'll have many opportunities to reconnect with old friends and network with the school music industry's best and brightest people.

Great place: The Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa in Fort Myers, Florida sits right on the water and overlooks beautiful Sanibel harbor. You won't want to leave!

Look through the enclosed information for more details, and then make your plans TODAY to attend the 2006 NASMD convention.

—Mark Goff

P.S. Don't forget to bring your staff! The NASMD convention is not just for store owners. Store managers, road reps and department managers will all benefit from the convention. Bring 'em!