

How to Run a Successful and Well-Organized Private Studio

Presented by Nancy Allwein, Denver Violin LLC

Monday, July 11, 2016 at the CASTA Summer Conference

1. How to Get Started?

- ❖ What is your personal goal? Do you hope to make this your career, a side job, or a little extra money? You decide. No matter your personal goal, the approach you take to running your studio should be the same.
- ❖ Ask local instrumental music teachers if you can come in to help with sectionals, chair auditions, etc. – Yes for free
- ❖ Build a Website
- ❖ Design a business card
- ❖ Figure out your studio philosophy and curriculum (Suzuki, goals for your students, will you help with orchestra music, etc.)
- ❖ What age group do you wish to teach?
- ❖ Where will you teach? Home, music store, rent studio space in a church, go to each student's house. (If you teach in your home, be sure to make rules so that you don't have folks taking over your house.)
- ❖ Private lessons/group lessons

2. Scheduling

- ❖ Decide what days and hours you plan to teach – then stick with it
- ❖ Will you do make-up lessons? Parameters
- ❖ Length of lessons
- ❖ I send out a sign-up form for each session. Students sign up for their first, second, and third choice of lesson time. I do first come, first served. Priority is given to families with two siblings studying. I build my schedule using this information.

3. How to charge your students

- ❖ Figure out what you are going to charge by the hour, half-hour, etc. Find out what others charge in your region – don't charge too high or too low
 - ❖ Families need to pay for the month at the beginning of the month – do not collect at each lesson
 - ❖ Pro Rate Idea – Figure out how many lessons there are per session. Multiply the number of lessons in the session by the single lesson rate. Divide by the number
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of months in the session. (I do September – December/January – May/June – August) Charging this way gives you a monthly salary that you can plan on.

- ❖ Students pay for the number of lessons they take each month. (Problem – what about fall break, spring break, etc. – then your income goes down)

4. Be organized and very business-like

- ❖ You are building a business – run it like a business. You cannot appear to students or parents that this is your little hobby.
- ❖ Obtain an LLC
- ❖ Monthly invoices
- ❖ Do your homework – prepare music, scales, etc. ahead of time
- ❖ Don't let students rearrange their lesson time every week. It will drive you crazy.
- ❖ Come up with your policies and stick with your policies.
- ❖ Have students/parents sign a contract.
- ❖ I purchase music ahead of time and then have students reimburse. It really helps getting music on time and the correct edition.
- ❖ Keep track of income and expenses. Be diligent with this record keeping for tax purposes.

5. Questions

Resources:

"Private Music Studio Guides" by Mimi Butler - www.privatemusicstudio.com – Excellent Guides for setting up a private studio with teaching and business ideas.

"My Music Stand" - www.mymusicstaff.com – Website specifically designed for private studio teachers. Provides online scheduling, invoicing, attendance and other record keeping software. \$12.95 per month and worth every penny.

"Shar Music" - www.sharmusic.com (they ship for free, with a discount) – Great resource for music and anything string.