Gibson: The Warning Siren

The music products industry would be an exceptional business if it weren't filled with musicians. As the t-shirt says … ***Musician*****:** ***Someone who puts*** **$5000** ***worth of gear into $500 vehicle, drives 100 miles to play a $50 gig.***

The demise of Gibson shouldn't surprise anyone with a little common business sense and a calculator. While I have never been involved in the retail sales of guitars I have spent more than three decades entrenched in our industry. The Gibson problem is symptomatic of the stagnation the music products industry faces.

Everyone involved in our industry should share one common goal. Create more musicians. When our population is growing and our industry is not, then making music is becoming less prevalent. We are all to blame.

Gibson bought Baldwin around 15 years ago and it is a shadow of what it once was. At trade show this year a piano rep asked me if I had any interest in Baldwin. I replied, "Even Gibson doesn't have any interest in Baldwin."

Entrepreneur, philanthropist Naveen Jain said the secret to sales is …
"***Fall in love with your customer, not your product."***

I believe many manufacturers, suppliers and vendors have lost sight of who their customer is: their dealer network. In an industry more concerned with competing for the same end user through ridiculous MAP pricing; we would all be better served creating new musicians, sharing the joy of making music and selling them gear. In my mind the #1 goal of the wholesalers should be creating a prosperous, profitable dealer network. It is the only path to industry growth. The same vendors who shunned their local dealers for the short term gain of the Bain financed big box model will be crying the blues should these stores follow the Bain path of the Giraffe.

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