

By Martha Spizziri

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

A NEW LOCATION AND A RENTAL AFFILIATE PROGRAM HAS HELPED THE MUSIC SHOPPE SEE STEADY GROWTH

According to owner and President Randy Wood, The Music Shoppe “was built on school music service.” When Wood’s father, Tom, bought a music store in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1941, he immediately began calling on schools. The store’s motto was “specializing in service to music education.”

The Music Shoppe now stands on a broad foundation. It gained some of its current territory when Springfield, Illinois-based Samuel Music closed its doors this summer. Wood took over Samuel Music’s school music clients and bought much of its inventory.

But Wood didn’t stop there. He hired four of Samuel Music’s former employees, including a road rep and a repair tech.

“Of course there was sales potential for taking on the business,” said one voting supplier. “[But] had Randy not stepped in, at least three-quarters [of the] people could have been out of a job.”

The Music Shoppe’s Champaign location, in particular, has grown as a result. The store expanded its reach with a savvy affiliate program where The Music Shoppe provides other music stores with new instruments to rent out, carries the inventory, performs repairs and service, and the affiliates get a commission. The company partners

with about 10 stores throughout Illinois. Wood, Champaign store manager Christopher Moors and the field reps stay in close touch with these affiliates.

“The educational representatives visit them as they visit schools every week, so that we can keep a nice flow of instruments and accessories going into these farther out communities,” said Moors.

Lesson Builders

Many colleges and universities offer a pool of highly qualified music teachers. Moors took full advantage of that when he started as manager in Champaign five years ago. Back then, that location didn’t offer lessons. Today, it has about 25 teachers. Every instructor has a music education degree or a performance degree except guitar teachers. Overall, the shop’s approach seems to have paid off.

“We’re looking at expanding our studios in both locations,” Wood said. “They’re pretty much maxed out, which is great.”

And Moors said it’s a measure of a successful transition after the purchase of Samuel Music. “Our goal is to make sure we continue to serve the students in the schools and keep them going, because we all care about music education, first and foremost,” Moors said.



Randy Wood

THE MUSIC SHOPPE
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

Principals:
Randy Wood, Terry Houchin, Joy Hippensteele, Monica Irwin and Christopher Moors

Founded:
1961

Employees:
49

Locations:
2

Annual Revenue:
Over \$5 million