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# FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

# music inc.

One of the more interesting — and enthusiastic — perspectives from the manufacturing end comes via Hailun USA, the distribution company for China-based Hailun Piano Company in the United States.

“We are probably the most aggressive acoustic piano company right now,” said Joe DeFio, Hailun USA’s executive vice president of sales. “We’ve seen an increase in our productivity and an increase in sales. And the largest increase has been the amount of dealers who are calling us — they want to sell our product.”

Having witnessed dramatic changes in the acoustic piano industry, DeFio, an industry veteran with extensive retail experience, predicted that “only companies that are farsighted are going to be around” in the future. “And we plan to be there,” he emphasized. “One of the reasons I’m involved is that I have a great vision for us. I’m seeing immediate results, and it’s because of the foresight of the company.”

DeFio attributes Hailun’s success to high product quality and extensive retail sales training. “We are the Hyundai of the piano industry,” he said. “Twenty years ago, everybody bought Toyotas. When Hyundai and its sister brand Kia came up, they were the new guy. Who was going to buy a Hyundai or a Kia when Toyota and Honda were around? Guess what: They started with a better warranty, steadily improved quality and are now a great success. The new thinking in the world today, in my opinion, is that value doesn’t have to have a familiar brand name if the quality level is high and the warranty length proves it.

“We do now have the best warranty in the business — 15 years parts and labor and transferable. In our case,

by offering quality, price, the best warranty and a social media presence, we have motivated consumers to contact us to find a retail location.”

DeFio wouldn’t share Hailun’s secret to building better-quality pianos, but he was willing to reveal the thinking behind the company’s dealership-building strategy.

“It used to be that 20 to 30 years ago, there were piano stores everywhere, with seven or eight stores in an area,” he said. “Now, a lot of markets have only two major stores. So, we’re going into those areas with smaller dealers building our brand name. Part of our business model is to be in areas where nobody else is, areas that can’t support a standalone piano store. We’ve done it with piano technicians setting up what we call ‘tech dealers’ in very small shops with representations of Hailun pianos and also working with MI stores that can have small piano departments in their locations.”

DeFio’s parting advice for acoustic piano dealers nationwide was realistic and cautionary. “If you’re going to do things the old way and get the same results, good or bad, then that’s going to continue,” he said. “But not for long.”



*Joe DeFio*