



| BY ALEX HARRELL |

# SLOW AND STEADY

*Woodwind & Brasswind keeps customers coming back for more by implementing alterations when necessary*

**W**oodwind & Brasswind is no stranger to change. After closing its brick-and-mortar doors in 2011, it became a catalog retailer — implementing a “direct-to-customer” business model. In recent years, the company, which is owned by Guitar Center, has expanded its online presence. Now, the retailer has created a mobile-friendly website to further captivate consumers and simplify sales.

“Nearly every segment of our business can be analyzed, challenged and optimized,” said Kurt Witt, director and general manager of Woodwind & Brasswind. “Just doing the same things we’ve always done won’t grow the business.”

Although it seems counterintuitive, the ability to be flexible derives from hard, concrete numbers, Witt explained. “We use a lot of data to make decisions about which marketing tactics make the most sense,” he said. “Even when we have a ‘gut instinct’ for what is right, we’ll always look for a way to attach the data in order to make the best possible decisions.”

One voting retailer commended Woodwind & Brasswind for its “great job migrating from [being] a catalog retailer to an online retailer,” while another stated that the new, mobile-friendly site has been “much more intuitive and easy to navigate.”

“We knew it couldn’t be just about selling reeds and mouthpieces,” Witt said, regarding the website. “Customers need to find value in what we do; we need to support their music making with videos, articles, unique and hard-to-find products,” he explained.

The website’s Article Library houses resources on every instrument and even an “additional resources” section, which is full of links such as “How to Start a Band” and “Do I Really Need to Own a Tuner?”

By peppering the site with more than just products, Woodwind & Brasswind can be as inclusive as possible for the exclusive consumer.

“We can’t be everything to everybody,” Witt said. “But we can be everything to those customers in the school-music category.” **MI**

Kurt Witt



**Woodwind & Brasswind**  
Frederick, Maryland

**Principal:** Steve Zapf

**Founded:** 1978

**Employees:** 30

**Locations:** 1

**Annual Revenue:** Undisclosed