



## Getting the Most Out of MTNA Professional Certification

A Guide For Incorporating The Nationally Certified Teacher  
Insignia Into Advertising, Promotions And Professional Support Materials

The FTD symbol for florists...the Underwriters Laboratory mark...the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval—these symbols instill public confidence and foster consumer preference because they are associated with quality, dependability and high standards.

The MTNA Professional Certification Program exists to improve the level of professionalism within the music-teaching field. It benefits members of the profession itself, as well as the public who interacts with the profession. For the music teaching professional, certification provides prestige, recognition and the potential for student recruitment and increased earning power. For the public, certification helps readily identify competent music teachers in their communities. The designation of Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM) is given to successful candidates who meet the professional competencies and standards required for MNTA Certification. All music teachers actively engaged in the profession are eligible for MTNA Professional Certification.

The NCTM insignia can be an effective tool for promoting your status, services, studio and, ultimately, your career.

The NCTM insignia's effectiveness as a promotional tool results from widespread public recognition of its significance. Public recognition is created by constant and repeated exposure to the emblem, along with consistent explanation of the benefits it represents.

You can get the most from your national certification by taking advantage of every available opportunity to expose the insignia and explain its significance. Your efforts will increase public recognition of certification, which, in turn, will enhance your promotional efforts.

## Professional Support Materials

Consider the effect of the NCTM insignia on a professionally printed invoice for tuition. Individuals receiving the invoice are subtly reminded of your high professional standards as a certified music teacher. The symbol reassures them they are receiving value for their expenditure.

The insignia can have similar desirable effects when included on all professionally printed materials used in the routine operation of your studio. For example:

- Letterhead stationery and envelopes
- Business forms, such as invoices
- Studio policy statements
- Tuition fee schedules
- Recital programs
- Business cards
- Press releases

## Websites, Social Media and E-mail

The digital age is upon us. As professionals, we must keep up with the way we market ourselves. Websites, social media and e-mail are vital ways people are communicating, sharing and advertising.

### Website

Whether you have an independent studio, or work for a large university, chances are you have your own webpage. This is the perfect opportunity to promote your certified status to any potential students. Prominently display the MTNA Certification insignia

### Social Media

While keeping up with friends, family and colleagues via social media, why not showcase your certified status? While working toward your annual certification renewal, share what an easy process it is by updating your status or tweeting about it. Make sure to boldly display the letters NCTM by your various handles, as well as using the Certification insignia.

### E-mail

In electronic correspondence, there are multiple places to highlight your certified status. Always use NCTM by your name in closing an e-mail. You can also set up a permanent signature to close each e-mail that contains NCTM alongside your contact information. And don't forget the certification insignia to go along with your closing signature.

## Advertising

Advertising in various print media can be an expensive, yet effective, way of promoting yourself as a certified music teacher. The opportunities for advertising range from magazines and newspapers to the Yellow Pages and programs for musical events. There are a few considerations regarding advertising:

### Research Price

Find out approximately how many people the piece in which the advertisement may be placed is expected to reach. Divide the cost of the ad by that number. This will give you an idea of which media type may be the best overall buy.

### Analyze the Potential Audience

Regardless of which type of media is the best overall buy, if it does not reach your target market, it is not economical. You will want to tailor your advertising efforts to those customers most likely to act upon your message. The medium reaching those people whose demographics most closely match those of your targeted audience at the lowest cost is a good choice for advertising.

### Consider Timing and Frequency

Plan your messages around periods of high consumer needs or wants and use the calendar for ad-theme ideas. For smaller budgets, several frequent small ads are usually more effective than one large ad. And remember, most publications offer discounts on rates for advertisements placed over a period of time.

## Promotions

Other opportunities to promote your NCTM status include a wide range of printed materials such as coupons, posters, direct mail pieces, brochures and novelties. If your community has an organization that welcomes newcomers to town, consider placing a brochure, coupon or novelty (such as a refrigerator magnet) in their informational packets. These types of items also can be distributed at festivals, informational fairs and other community events.

## Designing and Printing Materials

Today's technology makes the design and production of printed materials relatively easy. Many computer programs have step-by-step templates to assist with the layout and design of business materials. Office supply stores even carry special types of paper, such as business cards, that you can use with your home printer.

If you believe you lack the expertise to produce your own materials, other options are available.

### Graphic Designer

Many graphic designers work on a freelance basis. You can locate a designer through organizations for communications professionals or in the Yellow Pages. Once designed, the materials would need to be professionally printed or printed by the designer on the special papers mentioned above.

### Copy Shop/Quick Printers

Most printers and copy shops can provide design assistance if requested. Some nationwide chains have websites with step-by-step templates allowing you to select a predesigned piece with your information and the NCTM logo and then order the printing online.

### Students

Many of today's technology savvy teens (possibly one of your students) possess the equipment and skills to meet your design needs. As with a freelance designer, there are options for printing the final piece.