



Dance Studio Owner Guide to Building A Great Team!

By Steve Sirico

"Nothing great or new can be done without enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the fly-wheel which carries your saw through the knots in the log. A certain excessiveness seems necessary element in all greatness." Dr Harvey Crushing

This plan will be the fuel for your team enthusiasm and will help your business stay on the right track

Let's get started!

To build your ideal business you will need to identify who will be part of your team. If you need to replace someone, do it sooner rather than later. Now you want to empower them with your help and also receive their input on ideas on how to do things better or differently. Don't be surprised if this is a constant work in progress. Even the most seasoned dance studio owner's need and want new ideas that will help facilitate change that will improve their businesses as they proceed forward. Document everything and it will need constant altering, nurturing and focus. You will work with it and you will get your people to help you construct and modify it as you move forward.

Let's focus on your front desk staff

Chances are, in many cases, this will be the first person your customers or prospective customer will come in contact with. Whoever is answering your phone or greeting customers as they walk in are an extension of you. How your phone is answered is one of the big factors whether someone will even come into your school. Read that line a few times and really let it sink in. Do you listen to how your phone is answered? Do you answer your phone? Are all calls answered in a similar manner? These are very important questions you need to ask yourself. If your phone is being answered in a manner that is not in line with your overall philosophy you are probably losing business.



Here is the solution;

Create a general script that anyone answering your phone will use. You can change it up from time to time but when someone calls your school you want the experience to be the same. Why? Because it is the first voice and contact a new or returning customer will be exposed to. If you are not careful and do not give exact directions on how you want things handled, then you will be exposed to the whims of those who answer the phone, good or bad. Scripts need to be created and a simple protocol on how to handle general questions and complaints need to be created. These are guidelines and we encourage our staff to add a bit of their own uniqueness but we want things to be handled in a friendly, courteous and professional manner. I know a studio owner who was not sure why one of the staff members who were answering the phone was not retrieving the correct information when a prospective client would call in. I recommended that she have a few friends call in and ask for information. She was horrified to find out that the staff member was not only abrupt and somewhat rude but was not asking very pertinent questions like, "How did you hear about us?" "Can you please give us your address so we can send you more information?" Like I mentioned earlier, if you leave it up to your staff, they will answer the phone like they do at home! Not recommended in 99 percent of most business transactions

Here is the plan;

Craft a general welcome when people call. This is and will be individualized for each studio, just keep in mind what is important to you. You can also coach your staff on how they speak including their tone and overall enunciation.

Here is a general welcome that you can build on: "Hello this is (whoever is answering your phone) thank you for calling (your studio name) how can I help you!" When this is said with sincerity, energy and enthusiasm this will put the caller in the right frame of mind. You may be thinking to yourself that your staff may not want to answer the phones in this way; if that is the case it is time to get new staff. Either they are with you or against you. Every year we review how the phone is being answered. We adjust and add some fun phrases as the year progresses "We are having a great day here at (your studio name), how can we help you to have a great day too!" No matter how long our front desk staff has worked for us, and most of our front desk staff has worked for 10 to 15 years at our studio, we review and have everyone work at their answering skills. The key here is that we are trying to make it better for them and our customers, period.

DANCE TEACHER WEB

Focus on Your Faculty

While Angela and I still very much love to teach, we have been blessed to have many wonderful teachers be a part of our school. The most important thing you can do is to support, encourage and promote your faculty. Don't worry about who might burn you or who will try to take your students. Let's face it, if someone is not trustworthy then you are better off in the long run without them. Plus, teaching and running a business are two completely different things. Just because you can teach doesn't mean you can run a business. The key is to make sure you hire the right people and if you find you have made a mistake, a quick response needs to be taken on your part.

Here is the solution;

A very important key to helping and nurturing your faculty is to give them tools and guidelines that will help them do the job you desire. One of the most important things any teacher needs is continuing education. As a teacher we are always learning. You never stop, if you are smart. Help your faculty stay current, motivated, and energized by giving them access to tools like videos, memberships to websites like Dance Teacher Web.com and by taking them to conventions and workshops. This continuing education will be a BIG factor in the success of your studio. If you want your studio to be on the cutting edge and your faculty to avoid burn out, then it is up to you to help them.

Here is the plan;

I recommend that you create a faculty manual that is exclusive to how you would like them to teach. If you are looking for a sample to follow and use you can download this as a word document in the template and forms are of the website This manual does not necessarily need to tell them what to teach, although I think it is important to determine the technical content that you want each level to master, but it should also explain to them how to handle all situations that might occur at your studio. If you don't have this in place, then teachers will do what they want when an issue arises. Here is an example, let's say that a student is misbehaving in class. The teacher needs to know the exact protocol of how to handle these types of problems. Are you comfortable with someone just screaming and yelling at the students? I recommend that students be dismissed from a class without much fanfare when they misbehave and that they are required to go to the front desk. If you are available, you can have a sit down immediately with the student to find out what the problem is and then I would recommend a meeting with student and the faculty member involved where you are the mediator. If you are not present at the time of the incident, I would still set up the meeting



between you, the teacher and the student to get things straightened out, this will avoid all of the drama that can be caused by a teacher reprimanding a student. If you want a certain atmosphere then it is up to you to spell it out to your faculty and staff. Let's face it, teachers who are too harsh and abrasive will eventually cause you a problem. They may have great knowledge and expertise but if they cannot teach children in a dance school setting then they are of no use to you.

Good luck and here's to your success!

Did You Know? That Dance Teacher Web is the LARGEST online resource for dance teachers and studio owners with 1000+ videos, 100's of articles and lesson plans so that you can stay current and creative all year long. For the busy Dance Studio Owner, we offer fantastic articles on topics like marketing, how to get more students and increase revenue, business building video seminars, downloadable manuals, sample ads and forms that can help you increase your profits 30% or more!

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