

DSOA TEAM GUIDE

Finding teachers and team members that fit into your ideal studio can be difficult. You want someone who suits your customers and also takes the pressure off you as the studio owner. Someone that is trustworthy and will be loyal, and most importantly, will embody the culture of your studio.

Just like you have your ideal student avatar, you also need to identify *who is your ideal staff member*. Write down all the things you want for each position. Ballet teacher, jazz teacher, office manager, program manager, etc.

Just like your role as a studio owner, we all have our strengths and specialties in the business. Don't expect to find someone who is brilliant at every style you offer in your studio, because your studio doesn't need "all-rounders". Your studio needs the perfect people in their perfect role, whether that is a teacher, an office manager, an accountant or a competition manager.

“To be in a position to guide and help someone reach their full potential both as an employee and as a 'human' is such a gift.”

Jane Grech, DSOA Studio Leadership Expert



Take The Lead: Behind The Scenes Of Dance Studio Leadership" video series

When it comes to creating and embodying the culture in your studio (and expecting your team to do the same), you need to remember these key things:

- **Clearly define expectations:** Your team will conform and endorse your cultural expectations if they are clear, well defined, and are frequently reinforced.
- **Trust and empower:** Empowered employees leverage the power of your culture. Think about the power of your entire team if they all treat your clients the way you would.
- **Lead by example:** YOU are the chief cultural officer. You set the tone and you have the best chance to ensure that others will follow your lead.
- **Include everyone:** Culture spreads when your whole team is informed, involved, and held accountable for driving it forward.

DSOA LEADERSHIP EXPERT, JANE GRECH'S TOP 10 LIST ON HOW TO BUILD YOUR STUDIO CULTURE

- Your role as leader is 'developer of potential' -
"Plant a tree under whose shade you may never sit."
- Happy team = happy customers and students. Therefore TO YOU, customers don't come first - your team comes first. Invest time in them. Invest money in them.
- What you allow is what will continue AND you get what you settle for. These principles guide me frequently. When holding people accountable "Make it about the process, not the person."
- Culture cannot be underestimated. Create a CULTURE BY DESIGN & hold everyone to the values.
- Do not be mysterious. There should be no grey areas as what is expected of people. Be upfront with what you expect and have this in writing
- There is no one size fits method. Just as students respond differently, so will your team. Get to know their personalities and how they work
- You can NEVER have too much Acknowledgement, Recognition or Encouragement. NEVER.
- Genuinely care. Remember that every person you work with is 'somebody's somebody' - someone's wife, daughter, sister, friend. Treat people with respect and care about their well-being.
- Remove your ego. Everyone has something of value to add to a team.
- Communicate OFTEN - schedule time for this or it won't happen.



DSOA Leadership Expert, Jane Grech

WHERE TO FIND YOUR DREAM TEAM

Directly from resumes emailed to you

Have you ever had a resume sent to you via email or post from a teacher interested in working for you? This is great as it has come directly to you and the applicant has taken the effort to reach out. You can encourage this by adding a short “Join Our Team” link on your website or social media pages where you can provide a description of your studio and your ideal teachers, as well as your email address for them to send their information.

Recommendations

Make people in your community aware that you’re always on the lookout for great new teaching talent – your parents, students, strategic partners, family – basically, everyone you know. You could even introduce a teacher referral program, where if someone refers a teacher to the studio and that teacher is brought on board, the referring family receives a gift voucher for \$100.

Talk to your dance studio owner network

As a dance studio owner it’s important to build a network of other like-minded people, which includes other studio owners who you can ask for teacher referrals. Sure, some won’t give away their secrets, but you’d be surprised how many will open up to you if you’ve already built the relationship.

Dance companies / College and full-time dance studios

Reach out to dance companies or colleges in your city who are working with amazing dancers and see if they have any teachers who are keen and available. You would be surprised how many beautiful dance teachers come from ballet and contemporary companies – not to mention all the knowledge and technique they can pass on to your students!

Social Media

You’ve got a Facebook page, right? Simply put the word out there that you’re looking for teachers and encourage your communities to share and let their circle of contacts know.

Online resources

Thanks to the world of online there are many directories, forums, magazines, job boards, job websites that you can post on and most of them are for free, so create a list of the online platforms in your city that you could approach.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR STUDIO

HOW YOUR STUDENT TEACHERS CAN ASSIST IN CLASSES

Demonstrate	Help	Manage	Care	Prepare	Support
Your assistant teachers must become acquainted with the classwork, the dances the class is learning, and be ready to demonstrate any of the work to the class as needed. They will need to get a feel for how the teacher relates to the class, and how the teacher guides the class through their work.	If your student or assistant teacher sees a student having trouble with a movement, they can offer some help, quietly, gently, and with a friendly and positive attitude. They can give praise, and help the class as needed in lining up, forming circles, being ready to start.	Encourage your student or assistant teachers to learn the students' names as soon as they can. They may help dancers find the right place to dance, and guide their behavior to help them learn what is appropriate for dance class.	Your student and assistant teachers share responsibility for keeping the students safe from injury, and for encouraging friendliness within the class. They should be positive in helping the class keep the rules of safety and courtesy, and keep and eye out for any behavior that might lead to injury, or to damaging property.	It can be a huge help for your teaching assistant to run the music, so the teacher can concentrate more on the students. Teach them how to work and quickly find the music as well as props ready. During class they can help to make sure the props are passed out and gathered up with minimal disruption.	Your assistants and student teachers should come dressed in accordance with your teacher's dress code, and support the teacher while showing respect for the studio. Student teachers can be a huge asset in talking with parents before and after class, and should be encouraged to always be positive, encouraging, and supportive.



It's a great idea to start a training program for senior students. These will be your best teachers - why? **Because you trained them!** Everything they learnt came from you. If you are a new studio, be patient. You will reap the reward after investing into the lives of your students.

YOUR 'X-FACTOR'

It seems simple, but the reason employees will be attracted to your business is because of the atmosphere you promote. Building a welcoming environment that makes team members feel they can be creative and comfortable to share with you as the business owner is so important. Having a relationship with your team is the key to creating an environment YOU want to work in. Ask yourself, would I want to work here?

Be creative with perks and demonstrate a great work culture. For larger companies, this means offering gym membership - for your studio it may mean having a free yoga class for teachers each week. You could hire a masseuse during recital/concert week to give mini-massages to our team for one hour each day.

Make people want to work for you!

STUDIO GROWTH COACH, KRISTY ELLIS' 3 GOLDEN TICKET IDEAS FOR FINDING AND KEEPING AMAZING STAFF MEMBERS

Make lifestyle part of your recruitment offer.

More recently we have seen a shift of employees looking for more work/life balance over money. Make your studio more attractive to potential employees/contractors by offering things such as flexible hours and work at home options. Some businesses offer 'fun' days such as bring a pet to work or 'family funday'.



DSOA Studio Growth Coach, Kristy Ellis

Give employees freedom for other pursuits.

Successful companies allow their team to continue building their career outside the business. For a teacher, this could be choreographing a local production or for an administration staff it could be doing some freelance work. Don't make your employees feel trapped. Empower and encourage them to talk to you about their ambitions.

Make yours the offer they can't refuse.

Simply, ask your ideal candidate what they are looking for in a job. If you can offer them their 'ideal job' without compromising your business values then you are on your way to building your 'ideal team'.

WHAT TO PAY YOUR TEAM

Depending on a number of factors (location, business type, etc) standard pay rates vary drastically.

It is crucial to get the right information to ensure you are paying and employing your staff in accordance with legislation - check with your Accountant or contact your local governing body to find out exactly what you need to be paying your employees per hour as well as any supplementary entitlements. In drafting your employee entitlements, you may consider 3 types of payment:

- **GRADED HOURLY PAY MODEL** (Increasing incrementally as the teacher gains experience or credentials)
- **HOURLY PAY RATE PLUS COMMISSION** (Add a percentage per student, per class)
- **COMMISSION ONLY** (Teacher is paid per student)

YOUR EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS

When drafting your staff contracts, it is vital to have a lawyer review, update and approve before asking your faculty to sign the dotted line as legislation does vary from region to region.

The key points you need to include in your staff contracts are:

- The names of the employer and the employee
- The date
- Scope of Employment (What they will be doing)
- Term of Employment (When they will start, and when their contract will end)
- Payment (How much they will be paid, how they will be paid, and details of any tax, bonus or superannuation entitlements)
- Code of Conduct (This includes punctuality, dress codes, behavioural expectations, and social media guidelines)
- Qualifications (if any qualifications or professional development is required to be maintained while they are in your employment)
- Exclusivity (If they are allowed to teach elsewhere, or if there is a non-compete clause in their contract)
- Confidentiality and privacy policy

YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTION CHEAT-SHEET

After you know your ideal team member, writing a list of questions specific to the position is key to getting the best person for the job.

Below are examples of some great interview questions for you to ask your future teaching staff!

- What gets you out of bed each morning?
- Tell me about your training and teaching experience to date?
- What do you love most about teaching?
- What challenges do you think come with being a dance teacher?
- What age group do you find you connect with most? Why?
- If we were to move forward together and have you as a teacher at our studio, what commitment could you provide us with in terms of availability? Days and times?
- Tell me about why you left your last two teaching positions?
- When teaching a dance class what are your top three objectives for the students in that class?
- What or who inspired you on a personal and professional level?
- Students can sometimes be challenging. Tell me about two examples of where you've handled a difficult child in class?
- Why do you love teaching?
- What aspect of teaching do you least enjoy?
- What are your professional goals over the next three months, six months, 12 months, three years?

... and some for fun

Some lighthearted questions are perfect for you to use when introducing new team members to your staff and dance families so they really feel like they are getting to know your new employee. Here are some fun ones to try!

- What are three things your friends say about you?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What does Sunday look like for you?
- If I was to make you a business card with your dream job title, what would it be?
- What's your spirit animal?
- Which celebrity would play you in the movie about your life?
- What book has had the biggest influence on you?