



STUDENT ATTRACTION INTENSIVE

OUTSIDE THE BOX MARKETING





WELCOME TO

OUTSIDE THE BOX MARKETING

There are over a hundred places now that you can advertise your dance classes. Let's just think about that.

OVER ONE HUNDRED

Of course this may make you feel overwhelmed, confused, mind-blown, stressed out...just to name a few!

And the mistake that so many studio owners are making time and time again is they try and do too many at once. Then what happens? Well they don't reach anyone, because they're spreading themselves far too thin by doing "a little bit of this" and "a little bit of that." This is yet another example of the dangers of behaving reactively with your marketing instead of developing a strategic plan.

When it comes to effective marketing there are 10 proven ways for dance studio owners to get their message out there...aside from Facebook and Instagram advertising - they are both my #1 way!

BUT...even though I've narrowed things down to 10, you need to understand that you won't be able to do all 10 at once either! It's possible of course, but trying to market in all 10 distribution channels is simply not going to work. Once you have digested your 10 main options, it will be time to narrow it down to the very best mix for you.



1/ Direct Mail



One option is direct mail, which is super exciting because very few studios are doing it well (ie - here's your chance to really stand out) and it's a bit nostalgic at the same time.

Now, the thing is that traditional flyer box drop generally doesn't work anymore. But there are new and innovative ways to do a flyer box drop that are highly effective. The strategy here is all about working out where the majority of your studio's clientele is located, really targeting those specific areas, and running a full week campaign around that.

A direct mail campaign certainly does still work but not in the old school way. You've got to do the 2019 way of direct mail.

Use specially designed envelopes to match your studio's branding for a professional look. Be careful not to make the design too busy or people will know it's an ad and toss it in the trash. So, your best bet is to get a professional graphic designer on the task - whether it's an invite to your latest event or a newsletter with a coupon attached.

Direct mail is a little more personal than an email because it shows extra time was taken to write and deliver it. It also has a better chance of being seen, as people are less likely to receive very much snail mail compared to the truckload of spam email they get every day. People also tend to keep things they receive in the mail for reference, giving direct mail a longer shelf life.

Promotional products are another excellent inclusion in your direct mail to get customers to form an emotional connection with your studio. Think bumper stickers, magnets, custom post-it notes, etc. Before you design your items, make sure you have a great logo to put on them. You can double-up here and also make them available to distribute at your studio. You can also take them to community events for people to pick up. Another option is to work with strategic partners (we'll talk more about these in a moment) to see if they would give out some of your items if you return the favour for them.

AdWords is probably something you have heard of as it is part of Google's advertising spectrum. More specifically with AdWords, one of the most powerful distribution tools at your fingertips is **RETARGETING**.

Imagine you've Googled a dance costume or a dance studio software provider.

Then the next time you jump onto Facebook or Youtube, an advert for the same suppliers appears and they seem to follow you around on your laptop for a few days.

In your dance studio, you could use this strategy when someone goes to your landing page or your website and looks at your core offer (for example, your Seven-

Day Unlimited Class Pass). They might see the offer and become distracted, or they may think "No, I'm not going to sign up for that" before leaving the page. Then the behind-the-scenes technical stuff kicks in and a 'pixel' is created. Google has a pixel that you install on your website that tracks the person almost everywhere they go online. If they have left your page without putting in their details to claim your offer, you can follow them around digitally reminding them about your "Seven-Day Unlimited Class Pass."

That is retargeting (in a nutshell) using AdWords, and today the same process is available on the Facebook Platform.

2/ AdWords



RETARGETING DEEP DIVE

Creating a successful retargeting campaign can be a complex endeavor - which is great news for studio owners since very few of your competitors are using it right now. The following list details several helpful tech-tips that can save you time and headaches when you're creating or outsourcing your retargeting campaign:

- Separate Google, search partners, and display network traffic into different campaigns. Keep your traffic streams separate so you can track the visitor value from each stream individually; optimize your sales funnel for each group.
- Separate broad, phrase, and exact match types into separate campaigns (or if volume doesn't allow, separate ad groups) in order to monitor how differently those match types perform.
- Create tightly focused ad groups with closely related keywords. Avoid sloppy ad groups with thousands of words all pointing to some loosely related ad. Group common desires and mindsets, write targeted ads, and send each to a targeted landing page.
- Place underperforming keywords in new ad groups and optimize the ads for those keywords. If one of your top traffic keywords in an ad group is getting a significantly lower CTR than the rest, move it to its own ad group and write an ad with that keyword in the headline (and perhaps in the URL).
- Build ad groups with enough traffic to split-test in a timely fashion. Don't take too long to declare split-test winners.
- Add long-tail keywords to decrease CPC and increase traffic. Three- and four-word phrases tend to have less competition and represent buyers rather than lookers.
- Focus your energy on the changes that will make the biggest difference. Before managing and optimizing your account, sort campaigns, ad groups, and keyword lists by impressions. Start where the most traffic is so your improvements lead to increased or more qualified visitor flow.

3/ Strategic partners

Strategic partnerships may take on a variety of forms, and typically the partnerships that take place with dance studios see varying success. Often you may 'partner' with a business and ask them to send an email or two to their clients, or perhaps you have left some flyers on their counter.

The reason this doesn't work the way it should is because it's hard to measure and easy to forget about.

Instead, you can use the following strategies for a strategic partnership in your studio that starts strong and stays strong.

Finding the right strategic partner is similar to finding any of your studio's key hires. You'll be working closely together, so it's important to have a good connection. Don't be afraid to trust your gut. If your instincts tell you that something isn't right, even when everything looks good, it's smart to be cautious.

- Establish clear objectives. Making sure all parties are on the same page greatly improves your chances of a good outcome. It also gives you benchmarks for measuring a project's success. Understand what you want to get out



of a partnership, and have a rock-solid grasp of your partner's goals. This will make sure that everyone is aligned and has the same or complementary visions.

- Be honest and strategic around your own weaknesses and gaps in business. Trying to do too much at once is something we all experience as studio owners, and it can be a hard habit to break. But seeking partners who are experts in a particular area will free you up to focus on your core competencies. For example, if you hate selling dance shoes in-studio, then partner with a local dance store or supplier. Ditto with photography, hair and makeup, etc. You'll be able to focus on the critical activities that keep your business functioning.
- Understand what makes your dance studio unique. Having a clear grasp of your own intellectual property and the value you bring to a partnership will help you negotiate the terms of any agreement. It also helps to determine when you should work with a partner or do the work in house.
- Do your research. You need to be confident that a partner can deliver what they're promising before you enter into any kind of relationship. Ask your network for recommendations and look for local businesses with an established track record. Always ask to see evidence of results.
- Keep communicating. Once you've found a great partner, established a good relationship and figured out your objectives, don't forget to keep communicating. Maintain contact with frequent check-ins to talk through results, challenges, wins and problems. This will keep confidence levels high on both sides, and means you can deal with any unexpected issues or changes swiftly.

This is old school but we still love it!

You can Google lead box (or check out www.leadbox.com) to see exactly what this looks like, but I am sure you have seen it before. A Lead-box is one of those ballot-style boxes with an offer attached to it.

The offer needs to be a great incentive, and might say something like, "Enter this competition to win a year's worth of dance classes."

The ultimate question is, do lead boxes still work? The answer is yes; they do work, but if not used well, they are not as effective as they were in the past. There are a few things to consider to ensure they are as effective as possible.

1. Are you in a rural area? Lead boxes tend to work best in rural areas. In larger metro

areas, you will find that many of the people who would enter a lead slip live too far away and would pass half a dozen dance studios to get to yours. In rural areas, people have fewer choices and are more likely to use services near where they work and/or live.

2. Don't limit your lead-box to have people enter to win a grand prize. People are too smart for that, and these don't always work as effectively if a) they think the grand prize is an unlikely win, and b) if they feel the transfer of information will lead to a bombardment of sales calls and spam email.

Tell people exactly what they will receive. On the lead box label it should say, "Enter your information to receive a Free week of dance classes at ABC studios." You can add other taglines or benefits that you've previously developed.

4/ Lead Box



3. Put your dance studio's lead boxes in businesses that cater to your target audience. Don't put them in a childcare centre if your studio caters to competitive dance teams.

Follow these guidelines and you will find that lead boxes can still be highly effective.

When it comes to shopping centres and malls, you need to build strategy around it for a full week in-store.

The key here is setting up your booth or a stall near a hub where your target market will be spending a lot of time. For example, if you are filling dance classes for children, then supermarkets and grocery stores are perfect for this because the places you want to be is where moms are going to buy

groceries, and where they are doing their shopping for the week.

Step 2 is to make sure that you set up a visually attractive table or booth where you've got some of your senior students there, or trusted team members with shining personalities. You don't have to be there personally BUT I would encourage you to be there, especially if it's your first one.

During the days that you're there (maybe a weekend, or during the holidays) you want to enroll people into an offer, and then get them to your studio.

Do not give up hope when it comes to shopping centres and malls because they are working so well if you are doing them correctly - engaging potential clients and giving them an irresistible reason to contact you again to trial a class.

5/ Shopping Malls

6/ Community events.

Local event such as street fairs, holiday markets, parades, art walks, outdoor concerts, and sidewalk sales can be a great place to meet members of your community and introduce them to your dance studio.

If you have never attended local events in your community, now may be the time to start.

Before gathering the tools to market your studio at an event, it's a great idea to attend similar events to provide you with a feel of how they work and what kinds of people will be there. Then, you can prepare by doing some research.

It is important to gather all of the information about the event you are planning to market your business at so you have a clear picture of the audience you will be marketing to. If your dance studio provides classes across a number of styles and ages then it's okay to market a general

event that has a variety of different kinds of people (though you will still be highlighting your 'Hero Offer'). Similar to the shopping centre set-up, avoid locations that won't typically be attracting your ideal customers.

For example - if you are targeting child's dance classes you would typically avoid setting up at a truckers convention, and instead look at a child-focused parade or gala.

Also find out if the event is just local or will there be out-of-towners visiting. Even though the event will be held in your local area, it could potentially be a big event so be sure to research and know how important the event is to its attendees. If the audience is a mixture of local residents and out-of-town residents, you may reconsider your involvement as out-of-towners are not going to be signing up for your dance classes.

Make sure to thoroughly plan your



marketing strategy ahead of time. Depending on what kind of event you're going to be using, if there are important activities throughout the day, you will want to be able to engage and enroll your new customers quickly and correctly. Taking up too much of their time may cause them to leave before you have reached your selling point. Read the bonus section for more on this.

SETTING UP YOUR BOOTH.

After you have either done your research or attended several similar events, buying a booth may be the best choice to market your business in a professional and organized manner. Booths can provide a number of benefits:

- A booth projects an air of professionalism and assures customers you are a legitimate business.
- It gives interested customers the ability to approach you, so they don't feel pressured into listening to an unsolicited marketing pitch.
- Using a booth is a great way to display your photos and offers allowing attendees to see them from a distance and hopefully capture their interest.
- A booth is a great opportunity to get creative with eye-catching colors and visuals. You could have balloons and gift bags ready to hand out; a selfie-station; have a dance display (or even better, a live free class); have some mascots walking around; or free face-painting.

Speaking with other local businesses who have held their own booths or worked an event can give you tips on what steps you need to take. Not only can they give you advice on what works, but they can let you know what kinds of tactics don't. Every business is different, so some things may work

for you that did not work for them, but knowing what drives traffic away can help you more in the long run.

Some extra tips to keep in mind when marketing your studio a local event include:

- Run contests or giveaways at your booth. This can be an easy way to attract attendees and make new connections. Everyone loves free stuff!
- Allow an easy sign-up at your booth. Having a lead-box or a short sign-up sheet set up at your booth can help you to collect valuable customer info such as mailing addresses or email addresses.
- Bring an easy payment method or mobile card-reader to the event.
- Have fun and enjoy yourself. Customers want to approach people who look like they enjoy what they are doing. Even if your booth is not as successful as you may have hoped, show care and concern for the customers who do approach your booth. It's a great way to make inroads with the community and build a great reputation for your studio.

When I talk about database marketing, one strategy that will really set you apart from the crowd is to build and nurture two separate databases in your dance studio. Database number one is your existing customers, your active customers. These are the people who are coming to dance classes every single week with you and you are regularly emailing with updates, newsletters, and class information.

The second database (the one most studios don't have in place) is one that goes to potential customers whose contact details you have on file from a previous enquiry, and customers who have

7 Database Marketing



left for one reason or another.

A great way to promote your offer is to build out an email campaign across four weeks that has videos, voice memos, and engaging copy to your second database because they know who you are already. Marketers would refer to these contacts as “warm leads,” and one of the reasons why warm leads are “warm” is because they already have a slight idea of what your studio offers – and they’re open to it.

The emphasis is placed on the word “slight” because they still don’t know enough about your studio to make them buy. Look for ways to tell them about the added benefits of your classes or tell them about the testimonials of your existing dancers to make them feel secure about it.

The first thing to think about when it comes to database marketing is to nurture your email list. If each and every email you send is geared at getting a sale, you’re likely to miss out on those potential customers who aren’t ready to sign up for classes just yet.

Consider including value-added items in your emails to help you build relationships with prospective customers and allow you to warm up leads that haven’t responded to a “buy now” offer.

Value-added items could include PDFs to download, free ‘learn a dance move’ videos, non-dance related resources (like holiday activities or lunchbox ideas). You pretty much want to share anything that will get people to raise their hands and say, “That’s interesting, tell me more!”

Once you get those potential customers to raise their hands, you’ll be better able to create future emails based on what ideas and topics they responded to.

One really effective way of using this approach is through your newsletters that already have a variety of topics and

headlines covering several aspects of your studio. By adapting these and sending them to your list, you will be able to see which links were clicked on most.

The key, of course, is to test. You will not know what works and what doesn’t without evaluating the numbers, like your open-rate and your click-rate. Most email automation or studio-software (we love ConvertKit) provides these statistics at the click of a button.

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Networking is part of a much bigger marketing picture, so unless you have some great long-term plans this will typically be more time-consuming and involved than you would need for your one single marketing plan. In saying that, networking is a hugely valuable tool so it's certainly worth considering.

When creating your networking plan, first you need to figure out why you want to network. Is it just so you can enroll more students in your classes? Are you trying to gain new long-term contacts? Maybe you want to work on professional development and learn from other business advisers in your area? You could network to better position yourself as an expert in your field, or it could be to secure strategic partnerships.

Whatever the reason for networking, set goals to aim for and estimate the number of contacts you will need. Then, identify the kinds of people you need to meet. Review your networking efforts to see what strategies worked best.

The first thing you need to do (which is generally very helpful, regardless of what your networking goals are) is to write an "elevator pitch." An elevator pitch gives the people you meet a quick look at your business. It is a simple but powerful tool where you include the following information:

- Who you are
 - What you do
 - The problem you solve
 - Who you serve
 - What makes you different
 - What you want to happen next
- memorable way to explain more about your dance studio. When presenting

8/ Networking



this pitch you want to be comfortable, so practicing it helps you sound natural. Always make sure the pitch reflects both your brand and your 'why.'

When it comes to networking, you also need to really pay attention and listen to what other people are saying. Peers and potential clients can offer valuable insights that will help you make better studio decisions. Show that you're interested in conversations, and be a good listener.

Good first impressions are another important part of networking so whether you're meeting someone for the first time or talking to someone you've known for 15 years, always be courteous and professional. You also should be personable when meeting with your connections. Even though you're in a business setting, don't be afraid to be warm and engaging; tell a personal story when it's relevant, for example. Your network should be built on people you want to work with and people who want to work with you.

As a dance studio owner you have the advantage of creating meaningful connections within your neighborhood. A strong network of businesses within a community creates a healthy local economy, and becoming a part of your community will help your studio and other like-minded small business owners succeed. You can achieve this by being an active player in your local business scene. Volunteer and attend local events that give back to the community. Support other small businesses by shopping locally and becoming a member of your local chamber of commerce. You can also attend conferences, host a networking event, and participate in community events.

Don't forget - following up is one of the most crucial elements to networking in any business.

As you build your network, don't wait for new connections to contact you - do a 24-hour follow-up with the people you meet. This will help foster valuable relationships so they don't fizzle out. When you follow up, mention some specific points from your conversation. It might be a good idea to write down key details right after the meeting. If next steps were discussed initially, talk about them in the follow-up.

Also, give new connections a way to follow up with you. Business cards are still perfect for this, and always put your contact information on your website, social media accounts, and marketing materials.

When it comes to utilizing visual merchandise in your studio, the posters, flyers, postcard and business card ideas below go hand in hand with some of the strategies we have already gone through (direct mail, shopping centres, and community events.)

You need to always ensure that your visual materials are being seen by the people most interested in your offer, which will guide you best on where to display them, hand them out, and even mail them.

For example, you might send them to customers of your strategic partners or business owners in your network that you know already sell to your targeted market.

Here you might like to design your postcard to look at first glance like a

9/ Visual Promotion



message from a friend instead of like a magazine ad printed on a postcard. This personal touch will almost certainly stand out and boost the number of replies you get because postcard that looks like a friendly message and produces a pleasant emotional reaction from potential customers, as opposed to the the harsh emotional reaction most people have to blatant advertising.

Don't try to close sales directly from your postcard or flyer. You don't have enough space to provide all the information most of your potential customers would need to make

a buying decision. Instead, use your postcard to generate inquiries and engagement.

You might like to begin your postcard/flyer copy by briefly stating the major benefit you offer. Then use the remainder of your postcard/flyer to motivate readers to get more information from your studio by jumping onto your website or calling you on the phone. Get right to the point to capture the reader's attention immediately. This makes it difficult for them to avoid reading your visual marketing - especially if your entire message is brief, catchy, and easy to read.

Public Relations (PR) covers a huge spectrum, from print journalism to TV exposure, and is also a highly untapped opportunity for dance studio owners to gain some wonderful, low-cost coverage.

Here are five PR tactics you can start using today that will help you get coverage in newspapers, magazines, on radio and on TV.

CONNECT WITH JOURNALISTS WHO ARE ALREADY LOOKING FOR HELP WITH STORIES

When you're starting out with PR, the idea of writing press releases and pitches can seem overwhelming, so a great starting point is to seek out media professionals who don't even know they are looking for you. You can type the #journorequest or #prrequest hashtag into the Twitter search box, and you'll find dozens of requests from journalists and bloggers looking for help with specific articles on every possible topic you can imagine. You should find at least

one request (if not several) that apply, so tweet them back or even better, research their contact information and call them to offer to help.

You can also sign up for online media enquiry services like Response Source, Journolink, Help A Reporter Out or Sourcebottle. You'll get regular email updates from journalists who are looking for experts and case studies to feature in their work. Some media enquiry databases are free and others offer free trials, so you can start building your media contacts immediately.

There are also a number of online directories, including expert sources and The Women's Room where journalists are actively looking for experts to talk to. It's worth responding to any request you can help with - even if it's not an exact fit for your studio right now. That way, when you do have a story to pitch that relates to your dance studio, journalists will be far more likely to read your email or take your call.



MAKE YOURSELF MORE 'FINDABLE' ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Most journalists hang out on social media, often using it as a search engine when they're looking for help with stories they're working on. This is why having an up-to-date profile (ideally with a well-monitored contact number), sharing content that relates to your area of expertise and using hashtags - which group together posts on a similar topic - is a smart PR move.

It's also a good idea to follow journalists you'd like to connect with. Check in regularly to see what they're talking about, then start a conversation by commenting on and/or sharing their content. This can help

you build a relationship over time, so when you do have a story to pitch your name should already be familiar.

NEWSJACKING

This is a great tip - now you can set up a Google alert for keywords that relate to your area of expertise (perhaps children's activities, pole dance, or boys in the creative arts) and you'll get regular updates on relevant news stories. If you spot a story where you think you could add value - in the form of expert comment on radio/TV or by writing an opinion article, for example - you can simply contact journalists and let them know you're available to help.

RELEASING A PRESS RELEASE

Your Press or Media Release is an official written announcement that your studio will issue to the news media and beyond when you have an exciting event or accomplishment to announce. Most press releases are succinct at just a page long - two pages tops. Ultimately, you want to provide enough information so your chosen news outlets have enough content for publishing their own stories about your announcement.

Don't go overboard on the marketing jargon or embellishing the facts, and remember: Press releases live in the public domain, which means your students and potential customers can see them. So instead of thinking of a press release solely as a ticket to earning news coverage, you should also think of it as a valuable piece of marketing content.

Here are a few examples of when your

studio may issue a press release to local or wider news outlets:

- New location opens
- You are launching a new brand or franchise of classes
- You are moving
- Introducing a new partnership or change of ownership
- Rebranding
- A student has achieved great exam results
- Students or teachers have landed a coveted professional role
- Your end of year concert tickets are on sale
- Your studio or a student is receiving an award

A regular cadence of (meaningful) news can help a studio stand out and build relationships with journalists over time, so that's where the press release comes in handy even when your content does not get published.

Once you've got your announcement in mind, it's time to get it down in words to



share with your community, industry, and followers. There are some basic rules to follow in creating your studio's releases to get the best possible exposure:

RULE 1: Make Your Headline Irresistible - Setting up your press release for success starts with your headline. You only have one line to work with, so be sure to make your headline captivating. Keep in mind that reporters get dozens, if not hundreds, of releases each day so you really want to stand out by using your catchy, benefit driven headline from Chapter 3.

RULE 2: Get straight to the point - For reporters, cold leads, or followers to be inclined to share your announcement, you have to tell them upfront why they should care. The first paragraph of your release should cover the who, what, why, where, and how of your new launch, update, or development. Reporters don't have a ton of time to sift through details and fluffy background information - they just need the facts that'll help them tell your story to someone else from a position of authority. Do the hard work for them and they'll love you in return!

RULE 3: Give them some quotes - Once you've set the scene, it's time to bring your details to life with a quote that reporters can use for context around your announcement and help paint a picture of how your news affects the dance industry, your customer base, and landscape. Pick one or two critical spokespeople and focus the quotes around their unique perspective on your announcement.

RULE 4: Provide Just Enough Background Information - In your last paragraph, keep in mind that the reader already has all of the vital details and information they need to file a story or spread the word. Offer details here that strengthen your news, like creative or noteworthy ways your studio became involved in the

project or announcement at hand. Or, when applicable, comment on future implications of your announcement.

RULE 5: Make the "Who" and "What" Obvious - Remember that not everyone reporting or reading your news is a dancer, so it's important to describe what your studio does in clear, plain English. Include a link to your website homepage early on, and make your announcement straightforward.

The key to keeping your Dance Studio's PR strategy fresh is to get out of a "what can I get out of this?" mindset and instead focusing on creating valuable content. Traditional press releases can still be really valuable when executed well, so instead of using releases as a marketing tactic, give them a modern makeover to be sure your readers get something out of it!

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

BONUS STUDENT ATTRACTION TIPS

Once you have mastered my main 10 ways to advertise above, here are some bonus ways to get your studio's name out into your local area.

CAR ADVERTISING

Do you have a car? If you do, is it branded? Car branding is an extremely effective way to promote your studio, especially if you do quite a bit of driving around your local area. You may also be able to park your car out the front of your studio to drive additional promotion. The most important thing is to ensure you have an offer; you either want people to call you directly for their trial class or something similar. In line with this you can create bumper stickers for your family that say 'We're part of the XYZ Studio Family. Join the fun!' with your website address. I've seen this work extremely well. Some studio owners incentivize their families by giving them one week of classes for free if they



take a photo of the sticker on the car and tag the studio in a Facebook post. You'd be surprised how many people jump on board!

STUDIO SIGNAGE

Some studio owners have better locations than others when it comes to being able to promote with street signage. Go for a walk around your studio and look for all the potential opportunities where you could advertise. Do you have windows or space on the building to have a sign? Maybe you have windows that are easily accessible that you could change once a month with a new promotion? If you're currently looking to move to a new venue, make sure you look out for street signage opportunities. This exposure can really help boost leads coming through the front door. Again, have your offer on your street signage to encourage people to take action - visit your website or call you directly.

COFFEE OR JUICE CARDS

You may have noticed that some of your local cafes have loyalty cards for their regular coffee lovers. An example is that they get nine coffees and their tenth is free. I've worked with a number of dance studios on a simple campaign where you sponsor their coffee cards. Basically, the studio pays for the cards to be designed and produced, and you get one side of the card to advertise your business along with an offer. The coffee shops love this as it takes away the cost from them, plus it adds more value to their clients. Your offer could lead them to your website or maybe you have them call you directly. Do a survey with your parents and ask where the best coffee in town is - and then target that coffee place!

BUSINESS CARD OFFER

Most studios owners I know don't have a business card. While technology is

taking over slightly in this space, a business card is still an excellent way to promote your studio when you're out and about speaking with people. The biggest mistake studio owners make when getting their business cards created is that they don't place an offer on it - but an offer with a strong call to action is what drives new leads. The great thing about this is when someone says, 'Oh, my friend is looking for dance class for her child' and you can either say, 'Great! I'd be happy to give her a call and take her details' or if you're not comfortable with that simply give them a few cards to pass on with the offer. Now, if you want to take this to the next level, you can include an expiry date space on your business card to put the month that the offer expires - this increases the urgency to get in contact with you. I'd also give your teachers and staff business cards with the same offer that they can hand out. Just print a generic card where there is a space for them to write their name and an expiry date. Some studio owners I work with privately incentivize their staff by offering them a \$50 gift voucher for anyone that comes in and enrolls in classes. It works great!

GIFT CARDS

This is something you can hand out to people you meet or maybe at community performances. Really, you can hand them out anywhere. It's like a gift card you would receive from a department store, but the great thing about this is people won't throw it in the bin. I also suggest including an expiry on these. These can also be handed out to your staff to circulate. Although these are more expensive than the business cards to produce, they're a great alternative and one I recommend testing for your studio.



BIGGER BUDGETS

Additional larger-budget ways of advertising include local radio, taxis, bus shelters and television. To be honest, I've never seen a great return on these with a dance studio due to the local nature of the business. Focus your efforts on what we discussed over the last two chapters when it comes to your marketing and you'll be set!

THE NEW WAY TO WORK WITH YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS

The way you work with and build effective relationships with schools to get them waving the flag for your studio and generate new student leads into your business has changed. You can no longer just reach out to them and ask them to hand out flyers, so I wanted to share with you how you can make this work.

First, you need to identify which schools your current students are coming from. First tip here is to include what school they go to in your online or offline enrollment form. Next, make a list of the top 10 schools your students are coming from. Depending on what country you're from, you want to identify the schools across the different age groups where the majority of the students are from. When you create the list, you want to know the principal and deputy principal's details as well as a sports coordinator. Get the contact details from one of your students or parents that attend that school if you're not sure.

Then, you'll want to approach the school, but let's talk about what you can offer the school before you reach out to them. A big mistake that studio owners make when they're going to schools is to barge straight in with 'Hi, how can I promote my studio to your students? Can I do an advert in your newsletter?' This is not going to build a long-term relationship with the school - this is a churn-and-burn approach which we certainly don't want. We want to think about long-term relationships. So think about what you can offer the school in terms of value.

Could you go and speak to students about a career in the performing arts? What it's like to work full-time as a performer and the 10 tips you can give them to prepare for working in the industry? You could do an hour-long presentation with a Q&A for the last 15 minutes. Then you could hand out free class passes or gift vouchers at the end of your presentation. This is a great way to get in. Also, you can do this for multiple age groups.

It's also a great idea to see who the teachers currently teach dance to for sport. There could be an opportunity here for you to supply a teacher from your studio to teach dance for school sport. Some studios have internal dance teachers while others have external suppliers. If they have external suppliers, ensure you keep in touch and tell them that you're interested to apply for the position when the new year starts.

Teaching at the school gives you the opportunity to really build a solid relationship with the students and teachers. You can encourage the school to feature the students at the assembly where the rest of the students would see them, as well as perform representing the school in the community. This promotes the school as well as your studio. It's a win-win situation. They could also run school concerts or musicals that you or your teachers could help with. This is also another great opportunity to get in with the school and build a relationship.

I'm not saying you do any of this for free (besides the career talk). The rest would be paid work, but more than that it's about building the relationships with the schools. Many studio owners tell me that they've tried to build relationships with the schools but rarely have they spoken to the right people and offered



the value up front. The other thing is you need to be persistent with the schools as they have other priorities, so you need to ensure you're helping them out first.

Once you make the initial approach with the school principal, deputy and/or sports coordinator, keep in touch with them every 90 days. Maybe it's around a birthday or you've seen that the school has performed really well at a sports competition or in an academic way. This will ensure you and your studio stay top of mind all the time.

Once you have built the relationship and have given value to the school, then you can speak with them about advertising your studio in their newsletter. This is only part of the strategy and over the years I've seen this work extremely well with the studios that have a long-standing relationship with the school. This process has been proven time and time again with studio owners and it's a great way to engage with your local schools to have them become a great referral machine for your studio. Sure, it takes a little bit of work, but in the long run this will certainly pay off!

GET PEOPLE INSIDE YOUR STUDIO - OPEN HOUSE/DAY

It's one thing for people to have a look on your website, but it's another to get your prospective students and their families in the door. Running an open day once a quarter and more in the lead up to the new dance year is a fantastic way to promote your studio to the local community. From running free workshops to uniform fashion parades and talks from experts, in this chapter I'll share with you the steps for creating an open day that generates new leads and boosts your studio culture.

Many studios organise open days when they start off the new dance year but

many don't leverage the opportunity as much as they could or should. You see, by running these events you can get a large amount of people through your doors that generally wouldn't have the opportunity to see what you do! Not to mention, it's great to run these events to re-enroll current students into the new year.

Let's run through the different types of open day or open house events you can put on at your studio.

2-HOUR MINI OPEN HOUSE/DAY

You may want to run this each week on a different afternoon during the month leading up to the new dance year starting. These mini events simply give potential new students and their parents the opportunity to come and see your studio, as well as meet you and your teachers and ask any questions they have about enrolling for classes. You should always get a number of teachers to come along to these events. Your teachers are the backbone of the studio, so it's very important that they are there speaking with the people who are interested in your classes. By having the teachers there, it also shows parents and students the level of commitment your teachers have. During this event I would encourage you to set up one or two televisions that can play videos of your classes, competitions or recitals. You may even want to cut together a five-minute reel that showcases all of the different aspects of your studio; your classes, teachers, highlights of your achievements over the years, etc.. You can just put this on a loop so it continues playing it. This doesn't need to cost you the world, either - jump onto Upwork or Fiverr and get a great looking reel at an affordable price. Just make sure you spend time creating a detailed brief that they can follow. You also want them to use royalty free music so you can use it everywhere you like.

During the two-hour event, you will need to make sure that you have everything on hand



that a new enrollee needs to make their decision. You'll need enrollment forms (some studios are doing enrollments only through their management software which can be done via an iPad or tablet which is very convenient). You'll also need on hand any information like timetables, rules and regulations, and uniform price lists to give them when they sign up. Also, make sure you have enrollment gifts ready to hand out.

I also encourage you to ask if they'd like to organize their uniform then. Some studios I work with say to the new family that if they purchase their uniform today then they will halve the enrollment or registration fee. Not everyone will register as a student on the day, so the most important thing is to make sure you get contact details so you can add them to your newsletter. Think about when you go to view a house to rent or buy and the real estate agent will ask for your contact details - it's the same thing here. They will then receive your newsletter making sure your studio stays top of mind! You may also like to have some balloons in front of the studios and inside the studio to create a more energetic environment. These should be very low cost events to you, but highly effective in confirming new students enrolments.

SUPER SIZE OPEN DAY/HOUSE

Your other option is to run a 4-6 hour open day or open house where you have special things happening across the day. This is a much larger event that you can run two or four times per year. It's as much about new student acquisition as it is retention of current students, and generally works best on a Saturday between 10-2 or 10-4pm.

As with the small event, you must have all new enrollment materials available, but you also run a number of other things during the day. Create a schedule that you can email out and share on social media. As this is a big event, you should spend some time working out your strategy for marketing it. Start marketing four weeks out from the event by emailing your current student list encouraging them to share the event with their friends. Not only can they forward on the email, they can also promote the event through social media. Give them access to a Facebook cover photo that you'll have designed that they can upload to their profile. Current students love to get involved in these events, so give them all the promotional materials they need to promote the event.

You could even run a promotion where you say "bring along one friend to the open day or open house event to receive one weeks' worth of classes free." The parents love that one! This would run separately to your referral program, which we will talk about in an upcoming module. Other ways to promote the event are through paid Facebook adverts, strategic partners through distributing flyers and posters, and a direct mail campaign. If you're putting the time and energy into running this event, be sure you spend the time really getting it out there. You need to be proactive and discover every promotional opportunity that is going to provide you with an excellent outcome. The other thing is that you don't need to organize this all on your own. Get your office staff and teachers involved in making this happen. They will love being a part of this!



MORE WAYS TO CREATE AN AWESOME OPEN DAY/HOUSE

Here are some ideas of great things you can do on the day:

- **Face painting** – Speak with a local birthday party business and ask them to supply one or two people who can come, dress up and paint faces for a few hours. In return they can promote their parties on the day and will be included in the promotional material.
- **Workshops** – You can run a few workshops with your current awesome teachers, or maybe you want to look

at getting a guest teacher or two in that has a profile and will bring more students through the door. If you bring in a guest teacher, make sure that as part of the deal, they promote that they will be appearing at the open event and include the poster with the details. In regards to the classes you offer, offer the ones that are most popular across a number of age groups. For example, it could be a jazz class for ages 6-10, 10-13 and 14+. Make sure you get loads of photos of the workshops that you and your students can share on social media. Allow 10 minutes after the workshop for photos.

- **Class viewings** – If you're running your open day on a Saturday during a regular dance week, have a number of classes that are open which means people who are interested in coming to see one of your dance classes in action are able to. Make sure you get written permission from the parents prior to the event. It is best to include this on your enrollment form so you don't need to get additional paperwork filled out.
- **Q&A teacher panel** – In between a workshop or class, you may want to hold a 20- minute Q&A panel with you and a few teachers. Here people can ask you questions about the studio, but also about having a career in the industry. This is great for your current students and potential new students and their families.
- **Expert talk (future career in the entertainment industry)** – You may also like the person who runs your workshop to do a 20-30 minute Q&A where students and parents can ask them questions about their experience and career. There's a lot of value in this and people love hearing

inspiring stories from people they admire and want to be like. If it's okay with the person, you could video parts of the talk and post them on your website and social media accounts.

- **Uniform fashion parade** – Some studios offer modelling, so this is a great one for them. Have a fashion parade that shows off your uniform. Even if you don't offer modelling, this can be a great addition to your event as it gives your students something really fun to be part of while promoting your uniform range. You may also like to do a special for the day where if they spend \$100 they'll receive something for free like a top or dance bag.
- **Prizes from local businesses** – It's always fun if you can give out prizes during the day and what better place to look for prizes than from local businesses. Go to your local beautician, hairdresser, car wash, or gym and see if they will donate a prize for the day. In return, you can provide them with advertising on the day and on the promotional material.



Now it's your turn to start planning your next open day or open house. I encourage you to open your diary and lock in some dates that will work so you can start getting them underway.

Remember, you ideally want to run one small event per week for four weeks and a larger event 2-4 times per year.

BECOMING COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Reaching out to your local community, showcasing your studio, and assisting local charities where suitable all form part of your yearly community strategy. From performing at local events to raising money for local charities, there are multiple ways to give back to the community while raising awareness of your studio and generating new business and student enquiries.

So let me ask you right now - how much time per week do you spend on community-focused activities? I understand that you're probably time poor, but it's super important that you're dedicating a small amount of time each week to nurture your community relationships and really maximize every opportunity you have to raise the awareness of your studio and classes and get people enquiring about them.

THE MAGIC WORD IS LEVERAGE

Many studio owners come to us having tried community outreach with very little return on their time and money investment. The truth here is they didn't leverage each opportunity, and today I'm going to explain exactly what leverage means and how you can do it effectively to increase your results.

First, why do community marketing in the first place? That's an excellent question and probably one you're asking if you have tried a bunch of localized marketing strategies, but they've never felt like they're worthwhile due to their time commitment and, sometimes, money investment.

Let's discuss the benefits of getting out into your community and showcasing your school:

SUPER TARGETED - The majority of people you'll be speaking with are local to your area, meaning there's a higher chance of them coming along to a class than doing a broad marketing piece.

INCREASE REFERRALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Your current students are able to tell their friends about what you're up to. If you're performing at a local fair they can promote this to their networks and get them down to watch.

RETENTION - If you're performing at a local event, this is a great opportunity for your students to do what they love - performing. The parents will love this and will not only be grateful to you for the opportunity, but it will make them more loyal to your studio. It's about creating a tribe, and by bringing your students together outside of their regular class environment you will certainly accelerate this process.

BRAND AWARENESS - The more you get out and do things in the community, the more people will start to recognize your studio name. Make sure you have a striking uniform that students wear to all performances and class. This will increase the interest in your studio, which in turn will boost the amount of enquiries coming into your business.



GIVING BACK - It feels great to give back to your local community - and it's even better if you can include your students in the process. You may go to a nursing home to perform a few Christmas songs in December and spend some time with sick people in a home.

Let's get into the types of things you can do within your community to give back while generating new business! You'll see here that I'm going to talk about what you can do and then I'm going to explain how you can take the opportunity to the next level by using the concept of leverage.

For me, leverage means taking an existing opportunity and slicing it up to maximize the opportunity. Remember to always review your ideal student avatars when approaching these strategies. You want to make sure there's always a match - meaning your ideal students and parents are going to see or be a part of the community activity you get involved with.

Sponsor local activities such as kids or adult sports teams, school events, church activities, hospitals, meet ups and networking events. You may give away a term or month of dancing or a ten-class pass...as an example. Now to leverage this opportunity, ensure you get a link to your studio on their website. It would also be great to include your logo and a short blurb about your studio on their site. If you're sponsoring an event, ask if you can have promotional material at the event, maybe even a table where you can talk to people about your studio. I'd also ask to be included in any emails that get sent out pre and post event which includes a link back to your website.

You could also do a special offer for the people on their list which provides them with more value for their customers.

Perform at local events, whether it be a fair or an opening of a shopping mall. Maximize the opportunity by handing out flyers or cards for your studio with a strong call to action and expiry date. As an example, you might offer seven days of classes for free, but it has to be used within the month. Encourage these people to take action quickly; this will greatly increase your conversion rate.

Engage your dance families in volunteer activities around four times per year. For a few hours, round up a group of students and parents to go and feed the hungry or maybe work in a community garden or animal shelter. Get loads of photos while you're there to share on your website and social media and see if the local media would cover the story.

Choreograph for local groups to get in front of more of your ideal students. It might be for the community musical theatre group or similar. Either you or one of your dedicated teachers would be great to get involved. It's a fantastic way to give back, promote your work and increase new student enquiries.

Provide local schools with a special offer for any students that sign up for classes with you. This would be exclusive for the schools. Maybe they would receive some free merchandise on sign up or similar. If possible, ask the school to promote this offer through their newsletter, social media and website with links back to your studio.

Give support for local charity organizations and ask them to put your link on their website as a supporter. In



addition to the links, this strategy builds trust for your business. You want this to be a long-term strategy. Work on a year-long strategy with them that includes you providing them with dancers for special events.

Right there, you have six community strategies you can start putting into place immediately. Now, don't try and do all of them! I suggest if you can do one thing a month, that would be awesome. You would certainly see an increase in enquiries, plus you'll increase current student loyalty and the overall happiness of your studio by giving back.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

We can't talk about offline marketing and community involvement without going into strategic partnerships. A strategic partnership is a formal agreement between two or more complementary businesses, often formed to build stronger and desirable market positions for the parties involved.

So basically, it means you form a relationship with a business that also serves your ideal students and/or parents, but they are not a competitor and you work on a plan together to increase brand awareness and new business enquiries. There is generally no money exchanged and the relationship needs to be mutually beneficial so that everyone wins.

What benefits do we get from putting in place strategic relationships with local businesses? Let me tell you right now the top four reasons you want to work on building strategic partners today!

1. ACCESS TO COMPLIMENTARY SERVICES.

Let's say you form a relationship with a local singing school. As you only offer dance, you can refer people both ways which is perfect, as dance and singing go hand-in-hand. You're not interested in offering singing lessons, but you will be able to offer a solution to students who want to sing as well as dance - meaning you won't lose that student to an all singing and dancing studio.

2. OPPORTUNITY TO REACH NEW MARKETS.

Maybe only a small percentage of your student base comes from a particular city. If so, you can form a relationship with a local business who serves moms in that area. This means your studio is reaching people who generally wouldn't have known you existed.

3. INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS. While increasing awareness doesn't always result in someone taking action immediately, if they see your studio enough they will start to take notice which increases your chances of them reaching out to you.

4. BOOST IN SALES AND AUDIENCE. This is the greatest benefit of creating a strategic partnership. It's going to boost your new student enrollments and build your audience. The great thing about this is you only need to have a handful of strong strategic relationships to bring a LOT of enquiries into your studio each week.

It's important to point out here that there are a few challenges with securing the right type of strategic partnership that you need to be aware of:

NO TRUST - Your gut is not just there to digest your food - it's also there to guide you with decision making.



You know when you meet someone and you either warm to them quickly or you think to yourself that there's something off about them? This applies to finding the right people to form a strategic partnership with. You need to trust one another. Think of it as a marriage; without trust you have nothing. Without trust, you won't refer new business their way, nor will they refer students to you. Make sure there is loads of trust there and that you remain transparent.

NO DRIVE - Both parties need to be passionate about making the relationship work. You both need to be drivers. It doesn't work if one partner is driving all the activity while the other one sits back and relaxes.

LACK OF RESOURCES - As a small business, I know you don't have loads of resources to be promoting another business, and I'll address that very soon. You know what resources you do have though, so when you negotiate what's involved in the partnership, be honest and transparent. Know what you can handle and what you can't and be open about this. Your partner will appreciate it!

DIFFERENT VALUES - Again, I relate this to a romantic relationship. The relationships where partners have conflicting values don't last, and this is the same with strategic partnerships. Make sure you're on the same page in regards to your values.

5 STEPS TO CREATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

So now that you know the benefits and the challenges to beware of, let me walk you through the five steps of how to set up your strategic partnership.

1. HAVE A CLEAR VISION FOR YOUR BUSINESS. Where do you see your business headed? What do you want for your studio? It's important that you're clear, as a switched-on partner will want to know this. This also sets up the foundation for the partnership.

2. WHAT ARE YOUR IMMEDIATE BUSINESS GOALS? What do you want for your business over the next 90 days? Come up with 1-3 goals you want to achieve over the next 90 days.

3. DETERMINE HOW A STRATEGIC PARTNER COULD HELP. What could they do for you so you can reach your goals? We'll talk about some examples shortly, but you can get really creative here.

4. DETERMINE YOUR STRENGTHS AND CAPABILITIES. What can you offer a partner? Maybe you have a large student and parent database or a big following on Facebook, or you could be connected to the local community. Come up with a list of strengths and capabilities that you can bring to the table.

5. BRAINSTORM AND CREATE A LIST OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS. Let your imagination run wild here. Think about your current students and parents. Where are they going before and after they come to class? These are the businesses you want to approach as there will be people



just like them there! Get together with your team, your partner or speak with parents and get a list of about 20 businesses to start with and number them in order of the ones you really want up at the top.

THE APPROACH

Once you've done this, it's time to approach the business owners and start to build a relationship with them. If you already have a relationship with them, that's great! But if you don't, then you need to start. This is a crucial part of the process because you simply can't walk up to a business owner and say 'Hi, do you want to promote each other's business?'

I'm a big believer in giving value. By giving value upfront, people are more likely to engage with you on a deeper level. The approach I created which has worked with my private mentoring clients is around creating a VIP directory of local businesses that you promote to your studio families. This directory can be on paper as well as online and lists a number of local businesses that you support. These businesses can include gyms, hairdressers, beauty salons, cafes, real estate agents, florists, pre schools, singing studios, doctors carwash, nutritionist, lawyer, Pilates or yoga studio...and the list goes on. Basically, find anything you know your families would find valuable. You would approach your ideal strategic partner list by introducing yourself and mentioning that you have a range of parents and/or students that use their services and you'd love to include them on the local business directory that you're promoting at your studio. No one will say no to this. You may also

like to ask them if they'd like to promote a special offer for their business to encourage your families to test them out. Again, most business owners will give you a special offer for your families.

At this point, you gather the details you need and tell them that you'll be in touch. What I love about this approach is that it's all about them and you're wanting to provide more value to your students and their families. Now, you can do this via a phone call or email, but as they are local, I prefer a face-to-face hello. If they are busy, you can simply email them and follow up with a phone call. Aim to have the directory up and happening within two weeks. You should be able to turn this around quite quickly. I would then give them a call when the directory has launched and then two weeks later give them another call to check in. This is where you make an offer to them where you can give them a bunch of gift cards for their clients that gives them two weeks free of classes or similar. You can come up with the offer, and they will jump at it because it's a way they can give additional value to their customers plus you've already done something for them so they'll naturally want to do something for you. This is called the rule of reciprocity. From here you would organize the offer and get some business cards or gift cards made up that they can offer to their clients. Over the years working with studios, I've found this to be the most effective way to start a strategic partnership relationship. From there you can do a number of cool things with your partners to generate more enquiries as well as local press.

Here are a few ideas that have worked with my private studio owner clients in regards to activities they've done with their strategic partners:



REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Generally, a real estate agent gives a pack to new homeowners or new renters that has information in it about the local area. You could include a postcard in this pack that offers their new family the opportunity to come to classes. I've done a Brady Bunch type of card with photos of our parents and students that say "New In Town? Join our dance family." It's worked extremely well and again has an expiry on the offer for the month that they move in.

GYMS OR PERSONAL TRAINERS

Many gyms have open days where they invite all their members down to do classes with guest instructors or team competitions. A great idea is to have a table at these events where you can promote your studio and classes. You may even offer to teach a special dance class for their members. It could even be a Mummy and Me class where members bring along their toddlers. This is a great opportunity for you to get them to come along to a preschool class at your studio.

CARWASH

Depending on where your studio is based, I've worked with studios who work with their partner car wash to create an offer

that hangs from the rearview mirror in the car so when they pick up their car there is an offer there for them to redeem that is transferable so they can give it away.

TEAM CLASS

You may want to offer your strategic partners the opportunity to come for a jazz class together so they can meet each other, exercise, and network. These work really well and further cement your relationship with everyone. Alternately, you may just want to organize a networking event at your studio and invite a few speakers to come along and present on strategies for small business owners.

PRE-SCHOOL CLASSES

Speak with your preschool partner and offer to go in to help choreograph a dance for a show where the parents come to watch.

SINGING STUDIO

For your concert or recital you might invite the local singing studio along to perform a few numbers. This will be great for both businesses as their students and parents will see what you're all about and vice versa.

