



Puttin' on the Dance Session Notes

“To Market To Market...Jiggity Jig”
with: Chrissy Fowlser and Lisa Sieverts

Transcribed by: Catherine Elliott

Chrissy and Lisa teach us to think like entrepreneurs.

The dance as a micro-business

- *There are consumers*
- *There is a product*
- *You, as the dance organizer, are selling the product*
- *So, how do you do that effectively? Read on.....*

Know what you're selling

What is the product that people buy when they go to a dance?

- *Joyful experience*
- *Exercise*
- *New people*
- *Substance free environment*
- *Networking*
- *Fliers*
- *Full calendar*
- *Low impact social interaction*
- *Live music*
- *New experiences*
- *Love of music*
- *New friends*
- *Food*
- *Vocational training*
- *Community*
- *Tradition/history*
- *Dance!*
- *Shared experience*

Know the competition

What competition exists in getting people into the door?

Direct Competition (things that fill the same product niche as brainstormed, above)

- *other dances*
- *Contradances*
- *English dances*
- *other gigs*

Indirect Competition (things that fill parts of that same product niche)

- *sports*
- *fitness centers*
- *parks*
- *TV*
- *Alcohol (spree with Paul)*
- *House*
- *Movies*
- *Super bowl*
- *Internet*
- *Garden*
- *Bars*
- *Partner*
- *Museums*
- *Family*
- *Sleep*
- *Work*
- *Religious activities*

Group activity: GO VIRAL

- *Negative inspector general.* Chrissy and Lisa led a great activity where one person was secretly dubbed the “negative inspector general” and had to “infect” other people with negativity by scowling. Once someone was infected, he or she had to infect three others by scowling. At the end of the game, the group was asked to identify the source of negativity, which was easy to do.
- *Positive inspector general.* Same idea as above, but reversed. Instead of scowling and infecting people with negativity, one person smiled and infected people with joy. The problem? At the end of the game, nobody knew where the joy came from; it was hard to pinpoint the source of happiness.
- *The point? Bring the positive inspector general to your dance! If there is positive energy, people will come, and people will return!*

Back to business: How do we get people to come to dances to begin with?

Two groups of dancers:

1. Existing dancers.
2. New dancers

BUT new dancers come because, “**My friend [motion to experienced dancer] brought me.**” So really, there is **one audience**. To be successful, we must keep selling the product to the existing dancers, because they are the ones who will return and bring their friends.

So, convince the returning dancers that they make the right choice by coming back.

What do we have to bring dancers back?

Group brainstorm about successful marketing to existing population of dancers.

The social element: Why do our dancers come back?

- *Volunteers*
- *Membership*
- *Buy-ins*
- *Post-dance social opportunities*
- *Nametags*
- *Being friendly*
- *Party/social outside of dances*
- *Potluck*
- *Welcoming committee*
- *Break time*
- *Personalized welcome-to-the-dance email*
- *Is your dance like Cheers, where everyone knows everyone?*
- *Familiarity*
- *Know names, greet people by name*

Reaching out: How do we remind our dancers to come back?

- Facebook
- Performers advertise themselves
- Website
- Printable calendar
- Press releases
- Flash mob
- Email list
- Social media
- Newspaper
- Consistent branding
- Mission statement
- T-shirts and bling
- Photos with all publicity
- Thank you's, written and verbal
- Word of mouth
- Radio announcements

Cost/Admission: Why do they keep paying admission?

- 2nd dance free (for newcomers)
- 10 dance punch card (11th dance free)
- Discounts for bringing new people
- Low admission
- "dance angels" get in dance free
- Raffle
- Prepaid dance series
- Frequent dancer cards
- Make it a bargain

****SPICE**:** Basically, what's so special about our dance?

- Special talent
- Special events
- Holiday themes
- Great music
- All-comers band
- Occasional complicated dances (to "thank" people for teaching newbies)
- Workshops
- Good/dynamic/different callers
- Something during the break
- Photo albums from special events (on the welcome table)
- Stylish dances
- Build a dance tradition (ex. Salty Dog Rag)

Organizing

- Start and finish at the designated time
- Good venue/good acoustics/good floor
- Core repertoire of dances that people can count on
- Good timing of social activities (workshops, potlucks)
- Quality—callers, music, etc.
- Fans (comfortable hall)
- Make room for the sitters
- Get positive and negative feedback from participants and ACT on it

To sum it all up: Reinforce the fact that existing dancers have made the right choice. They want to be at the dance; there isn't anywhere else they would rather be. It is *your* job as the organizer to convince them of that!

Now, go forth and conquer.