

Studio and Project Best Practice – Customer Service and Dealing with Complaints

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This resource provides some advice on customer service, which is important for all dance businesses. Feedback from customers and students is a vital way of developing your dance business and ensuring it meets the needs of your students of all ages and backgrounds. Complaints can also be seen as an opportunity to learn and change. Having a policy on how to manage complaints effectively and with the least negative impact is also important for good business health and practice. Remember the marketing rule that negative experiences have 7 times more impact on people than positive experiences and people are more likely to tell others about negative experiences than positive experiences, so taking the right approach is vitally important.

A Template for a Complaints Process

All studios and projects should have a policy and procedure for dealing with complaints. You will find a draft policy document at the bottom of this resource.

Tips on Dealing with Customer Feedback

Here are some useful tips from the USA Dance teachers Summit. For the reference go to <http://danceteachersummit.com/>

Learning to handle complaints and criticism with grace and professionalism is a necessary part of good studio management. The ability and willingness to address dissatisfaction from parents, students, teachers and staff gives you the access to improving services and programs.

Here are **three ways** to help you solve problems, work effectively on your business, and expand your leadership skills. They are your access to delivering outstanding dance studio customer service.

Get comfortable with the on-going process of setting and communicating expectations:

On occasion you will fail to meet expectations set by yourself and others. A complaint is often the access to a problem that needs solving. Learn to distinguish between areas that you can and are willing to improve versus a person or problem who takes an unfair measure of your time and energy. Clarify your studio's values, mission, and ethics and use them as a guide to help you address issues effectively. Learn to run your business from your own personal style and not as an attempt to please everyone.

Learn how to distinguish feedback from criticism: People will have opinions about every aspect of your business. Learn to listen, evaluate, and respond to people's experience of your business by giving them an adequate opportunity to communicate with you in a constructive way. Use evaluation surveys and structured meetings to address issues and concerns as they arise. Develop emotional fortitude by knowing what you do well and having the confidence to take responsibility for the actions necessary to improve your studio.

Embrace your leadership role at the studio: You always have some control, especially in regard to your own response to any perceived criticism or complaint. It takes maturity and experience to accept that you and your studio cannot be all things to all people. Make peace with who you are. Celebrate the wonderful profession and career you have chosen. Do what you do best, gather a great and supportive team who appreciate and respect your generosity, spirit, artistry and commitment. You will gain the trust and respect of everyone at your studio when they know that their opinions and experience matter.

You deserve joy and satisfaction from all your hard work. Make improvements, implement change, and enjoy success as you listen to and learn from all the people you serve at your dance studio.

Dance Studio Complaints Policy Template

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[Studio/project name] views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure (*e.g. on your website*) so that

people know how to contact us to make a complaint.

- To acknowledge all complaints within five working days.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To ensure all complaint investigations are concluded within four weeks unless a different deadline is agreed with the complainant and there is a good reason for this.
- To keep the complainant informed about the progress of the investigation.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Making a complaint

A complaint can be made in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

Written complaints may be sent to [Name] at [address] or by e-mail at [e-mail address].

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to [phone number] or in person to [Studio/project name or principal's name].

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant privacy and data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the studio/project owner/manager [Name].