



Introduction:

Summer is a kid's favorite time of the year! How do you attract the most students to your studio during the summer months?... By having the best dance camps & programs in your community! In this masterclass, you'll learn how to get ahead of the game and be ready for your families to fall in love with your summer camp offerings! This system is applicable no matter where your studio is located in the world. It can be applied for holiday break camps or workshops, summer camps, and other programs. Let's dive into creating successful summer camps that work for your families and creating marketing tactics to attract new families!

Thank you to our IC members who have contributed to this system that the DSOA has created: Meghan Retseck, Angela Mannella, Shawna Kwan, Kathleen Kelble, Shannon Denney, Dani Archer, and all of our Studio Growth Coaches!

Goals:

By the end of this masterclass:

1. You will know which teachers to hire for your summer camps and have ideas on the most popular and best-selling camp themes/activities.
2. You'll create a strategic marketing plan for advertising your summer camps and have a launch plan in place.
3. You can then repeat your system year after year for successful summers that take half the planning!

Top 3 benefits:

1. By considering the guidelines in this workbook, you will stand out among your competitors as the best summer camp offering in your area.
2. Having a planning/marketing/launch system that you know works year after year will save you and your staff from working overtime, yet you'll see steady and consistent revenue.
3. Parents and students will be able to see the thought and care that went into planning your summer camp, and you'll likely build a long-term relationship that converts into a full-season student!

Things to consider before implementation:

- You want to maximize your studio space during the summer so that you continue to generate a profit year-round. Otherwise, you must plan for your revenue to carry you over during the summer months.
- What worked last year? A great way to refine your marketing for this year's summer camps is to look at last year's data. Digging through data can feel dull and tedious, but those numbers will reveal important insights that will help refine your summer camp marketing and offers for this year. Here are some good metrics for you to dig into:

- What were the enrollment rates across various camps? Was there a particular age group, theme, or dance style that really knocked it out of the park? On the flip side, which camps weren't as full as you had hoped?
- With this information, you'll know which offers to keep the same and which ones you might want to revisit to switch up the marketing for this year.
- Which families and dancers actually signed up? Was it the customer avatar you were marketing to, or was it a different group than you expected?
- Understanding who signed up for the camps can help you refine your marketing copy and offers so you're directly speaking to your target customer. If it was the avatar you intended, how can you lean into their needs even more to further increase enrollment? If it was a different type of customer, how can you enhance your marketing to appeal to them instead?
- Are you new to camps and don't know where to start? No problem! Look at the metrics described above for your current classes. Which programs/age groups/customers currently generate the most revenue for you? Creating and marketing dance camps to these groups is a great place to start and will likely bring you success!

Create your customer avatar:

- Are you focusing on targeting existing students, gaining new students, or both?
 - Keep in mind that summer camps can attract a different type of student than your regular season dance programs.
 - What is the data from last summer telling you?
- Create your summer camp student avatar to help you focus on who to market to and what their needs are.
- Create your summer camp parent avatar.
 - Who are the parents of the children you are trying to target?
 - Brainstorm their pain points and use those in your marketing (i.e. needs summer daycare, socialization for my child, release of energy, creative outlet, etc.).

Your customer avatar should dictate your plan:

Once you've determined your customer avatar, you need to build your entire summer camp plan around it. If your plan does not match the needs of those individuals, there will be a disconnect. Either they will not sign up at all because the structure of the camp doesn't work for them, or they will sign up and then be disappointed, because it didn't fully match up to their needs.

A profitable schedule:

When is the best time to offer your summer camps to make a profit and serve most of your marketplace?

- These are the things you should consider when deciding on the best time:
 - Look at only doing certain weeks during the summer.
 - Ask for input on what times would be best (half day or full day).

- Consider which age groups your program would appeal to the most.
- Once you know what your parents' needs are, create a camp schedule that will work for them. Consider if you need to provide:
 - Full day camps
 - Half day camps
 - Before-camp care
 - After-camp care
 - Lunch (You can provide for an extra cost or just have a supervised lunch hour for those students that stay.)

Some studio owners design a schedule that allows families to opt-in to a half day or full day. Here are [3 different scheduling examples](#).

Pricing structure:

To create a profitable pricing structure, you need to be clear on all the expenses needed to run them. Here are things you will want to factor in for:

- The teacher's labor for the dance classes
- Childcare/additional staff labor
- Cost of materials for crafts, props, etc.
- Lunch (if included)
- Proper compensation for planning
- Any other costs necessary

From there, you will want to determine what profit margin you would like to make and figure out your pricing accordingly.

[Click here for a spreadsheet](#) you can use to help you figure out pricing.

Keep in mind that your marketplace will heavily influence your costs. You need to research other kids' camps, specialized programming, YMCA offerings, and childcare when comparing costs.

Example pricing (this depends on your marketplace):

- \$150 - \$200 for half day
- \$300 - \$375 for a full day
- Early drop off - \$100 for the week
- After care - hourly \$20/hour or set price \$100 for the week

[Click here for a full](#) example of summer camp considerations in regard to pricing from Studio Growth Coach Annie Leese Thistle.

Selecting staff for summer camp:

- First, think about the teachers at your studio who are high-energy, really love kids (especially younger ones), and are overly creative inside and outside of the classroom.
- Summer camps can involve more babysitting, games, arts, and crafts so choose staff members that are well-rounded and understand what it means to be more of a “camp counselor.”
- You can hire specifically for summer camps. This is a great trial period to see if they would be a good fit during your regular season.
- When hiring your year-round teachers, talk about your camps and choose hires that will fit into your regular dance season as well as your summer programming.

Other ideas for hiring summer camp staff:

- Consider your high school students as assistants for your camps as they can cater to your younger dancers and, if done right, be mentors/role models to your younger students.
- Maybe you hire dance teachers for the dance instruction portions and non-dancers at a lower rate for the camp sessions.

Once your summer camp staff is final, share your expectations, studio-wide camp schedule, and other references so everyone is on the same page. [Here's an example.](#)

Deciding fun themes, crafts & props:

The themes you choose should resonate with your customer avatar. Here are good ways to get ideas:

- Look at current trending kids shows and or movies.
- Look into popular toys, games, musicians and musicals.
 - Places to order crafts from:
 - [Oriental Trading Company](#)
 - [Michaels](#)
 - [JoAnn Fabrics](#)
 - [Unicorn Smiles](#)
 - [Five Below](#)

Ideas for themes:

- Trolls
- Unicorns & Rainbows
- Descendants
- TikTok
- Movie Time Magic
- Popstar Princess
- Pirates & Princesses
- Sports
- On Broadway

- Cheerleading

New and upcoming releases:

- Wednesday Addams, The Addams Family
- Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour
- Barbie
- Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse
- The Garfield Movie (May 2024)
- Inside Out 2 (June 2024)

Trending on Netflix:

- The Boss Baby
- Minions
- Sing 2
- Puss in Boots: The Last Wish

Popular TV Shows:

- Bluey
- Gabby's Dollhouse
- Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock
- Beat Bugs
- My Little Pony
- Peppa Pig
- Paw Patrol

Ideas for making your own props:

Creating crafts and props is a great way to add more value during summer camps and to fill time during a schedule. Again, what you select should be appealing to your customer avatar and work with the theme you've chosen.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Craft: Popsicle Stick Wand

What You'll Need: Popsicle stick (or a straw), Paper, Scissors, Crayons/Markers, Glue/ Tape



Craft: Princess Crown

What You'll Need: Paper, Scissors, Crayons/Markers, Glue/Tape



Craft: Rainbow Butterfly

What You'll Need: Toilet Paper Roll, Paper, Scissors, Crayons/Markers, Glue/Tape



Craft: Make Your Own Playbill!

What You'll Need: Paper, Crayons/Markers



Craft: Microphone

What You'll Need: Toilet Paper Roll, Aluminum Foil, Crayons/Markers, Glue/Tape



How to WOW the parents:

If your summer camp participant is brand new to dance and to your studio, remember to make them feel special and welcomed just like you would a new regular season family. Make sure to include extra touch points so they feel prepared and know what to expect:

- Send out a summer camp info email to parents prior to the first day and then send an SMS on the first morning of camp starting with reminders for what students need for camp - [click here](#) for the templates.
- Hand out [camp certificates](#) at the end of each camp day congratulating them on staying the length of the day and for trying new things.

Here is a [checklist template](#) to keep you on track during the:

- Planning phase
- Marketing phase
- Execution phase

Creating your summer camp marketing plan

1) Decide on when you will launch:

We recommend communicating about camps in January. Most other camp options share their offers in January/February, and if you launch too late, people may have already made arrangements.

2) Decide on key offers between your launch and when camps start:

When you launch your camps, your first offer should be the best offer. You can create other additional offers along the way to create urgency. These should not be as good as your first-time offer.

Here are two examples (for each example, let's say the camp is in July and these are the first offers are going out in January):

Example A: Full day -- \$350 / Offered over 5 days

- Deal 1 –
 - Register for 4 days by Jan. 31st and receive the 5th day FREE
- Deal 2 –
 - Register for 1 day of camp by Jan. 31st and receive 30% off your 2nd day

Example B: Full week -- \$1,500 / 5 days of camp

- Deal 1 –
 - Register by Jan. 31st and only pay \$1,000
- Deal 2 –
 - Pay in full by Jan. 31st and receive a \$200 credit towards your Fall season tuition
 - This is a great way to entice the students to be thinking ahead and encourage them to become repeat customers.

Here are examples for your second-best offer:

Example A: Full day -- \$350 / Offered over 5 days

- Deal 1 –
 - Register for 4 days by April 1st and get your 5th day ½ off
- Deal 2 –
 - Register for 1 day of camp by April 1st and receive 10% off your 2nd day

Example B: Full week -- \$1,500 / 5 days of camp

- Deal 1 –
 - Register by April 1st and only pay \$1,250
- Deal 2 –
 - Pay in full by April 1st and receive a \$100 credit towards your Fall season tuition

Then your final offer can still offer some discount or incentive, but it will be closest to the full amount.

Example A: Full day -- \$350 / Offered over 5 days

- Deal 1 –
 - Register for 4 days by July 1st and receive \$50 off your 5th day
- Deal 2 –
 - Register for 1 day of camp by June 1st and receive 10% off your 2nd day

Example B: Full week -- \$1,500 / 5 days of camp

- Deal 1 –
 - Register by July 1st and get a free camp T-shirt
- Deal 2 –
 - Pay in full by July 1st and receive a \$50 credit towards your Fall season tuition

As you can see, there is always some incentive to register. Build this into your budget. Your first offer should be what the camp costs plus your desired profit margin. Then, your following offers are going to ensure even more profit gain for you!

3) Determine deadlines for each offer:

Like the example above, these need to be set and clear. If you move deadlines around, it will be very confusing to the customer.

4) Decide on a marketing campaign schedule:

1. Decide on which days you will send emails and texts:
 - a. 2 touchpoints per week is recommended.
 - b. As you approach a deadline to your offer, you can increase the number of touchpoints with 48-hour and 24-hour reminders.
2. Decide on which days you will post on social media:
 - a. You can include teaser posts for a big reveal announcement.
 - b. The number of posts at the beginning of the launch should be higher.
 - c. They can be less frequent once you have announced (2-3 per week).
 - d. They should increase in frequency as the deadline approaches.

Here is a schedule of an email/Facebook post/SMS cadence during April's peak summer camp enrollment season. You can use this cadence as a reference for the months leading up to and following April to maximize your communication.

Date	Email	Social Media	Optional SMS
Tuesday, April 20, 2021			
Wednesday, April 21, 2021	Email 1	Post 1	
Thursday, April 22, 2021			Message 1
Friday, April 23, 2021	Email 2	Post 2	
Saturday, April 24, 2021			
Sunday, April 25, 2021		Post 3	
Monday, April 26, 2021			Message 2
Tuesday, April 27, 2021	Email 3	Post 4	
Wednesday, April 28, 2021		Post 5	
Thursday, April 29, 2021	Email 4		

5) Decide if/when you will launch Facebook ads:

First, determine what your offer will be on Facebook ads. Here are two Facebook Ad copy examples you can use when starting to advertise for your summer camps. You'll want to change details to reflect your studio, area, and the offer but these are examples of copy that actually work!

- *Example A for between now and New Year's:*
 - Thinking about joining [STUDIO NAME's] summer 2024 season? Registration opens in January. Subscribe to our email list today and be the first one to know about all upcoming details!
- *Example B for New Year's (adjust pricing to fit your offer):*
 - Parents in [AREA] are lining up for our incredible New Years' DEAL where they will save over \$1200 on their child's summer camp membership! Instead of the normal price of \$2,697 you can save your child's spot for only \$1497! Dance, crafts, games, snacks, and much more is included for ages 5-12! Visit our website for more details!

By starting to build anticipation around your studio and summer camps and building your new customer list, you're able to take time to communicate with potential customers adequately and appropriately about why they need to choose your summer camp.

Always pair your Facebook ads with an enticing visual component. We discuss visual assets a little further down.

Then, you'll need to decide on your overall budget and daily budget (minimum of \$5 per day).

6) Create a registration page:

Your registration page must restate the offer and allow people to sign up. Less is more; be clear and concise! Make sure it's a user-friendly online registration process all the way through providing payment.

Look at Studio Growth Coach Jodi Shilling's [2023 Summer Camp registration page](#).

7) Create copy for all your marketing touchpoints:

1. Your copy should include:
 - a. Dates
 - b. The value
 - c. Benefit(s) of your program
 - d. Pricing
 - e. Your special offer
 - f. Schedule
 - g. Explain "What you get!"
 - h. CTA Link

2. Your messaging should be consistent across all your communication channels! This is often overlooked!

8) Create visual assets for your marketing for ads, social media, your website, and your emails:

Try to use real images of your dancers if possible. We suggest not adding text to the images. Let the images do the talking for how wonderful your studio is!

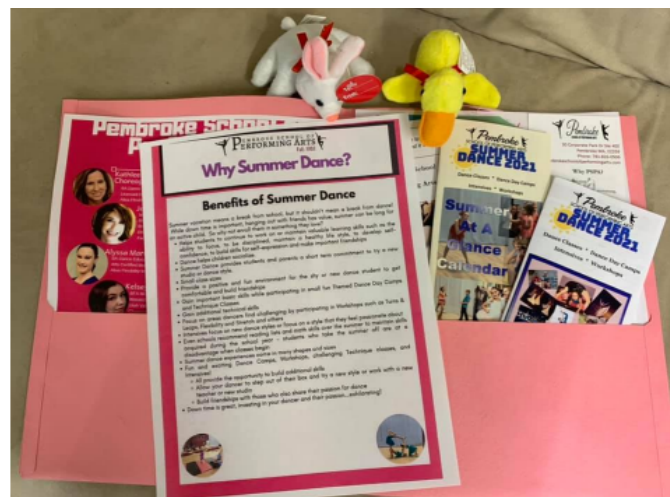
9) Schedule all your communication and watch it do the work for you!

1. Facebook Ads - Be sure you're looking at your ad data regularly. You may need to swap out images or copy depending on what is working best.
2. Emails – Be sure people are taken out of email sequences once they've registered. People don't like to be marketed to once, they've taken you up on your offer.
3. Social Media – Notice what posts are doing well and have the most engagements. This is a good indicator that this would perform well as a Facebook ad.

10) Build excitement with your current students:

Build excitement within your studio by creating a Summer Camp Theme Week at your studio in late January or early February and celebrate open registration of summer camps all week long:

1. Promote for 2 - 4 weeks leading up to this special week.
2. Give students leis when they come into the studio and take a photo by a summer theme decorated photo wall. Have parents/students post their photos and use your hashtag (#YOURSTUDIOsummercamp2024).
3. Play summer-themed music in class and make it more of a fun-oriented week.
4. Give summer-themed stickers or stamps.
5. Send kids home with a summer camp flyer or packet and a QR code to register.
 - a. Check out Kathleen Kelble's "Why Summer Dance" info:



6. Create a promotion for any current students who register for summer camp within the Summer Camp Theme Week.

Keeping students into your dance season:

- Promote your Fall session/dance season at the end of each camp.
- If you do a show at the end of your camp week, talk about your Fall session/dance season.
 - Have a script about why dance is important!
- Give a deal to summer camp parents to get them to enroll for the Fall session.
 - *Example Offer:*
 - Get a \$50 credit towards costumes when you register for Fall session during summer camp!

Evaluating your summer camps:

- Meet with summer camp staff to do a debrief.
 - Go over the project plan and do a “grows & glows” debrief on your summer camps.
- Survey parents
 - Make the survey short!
 - This is another time to make an offer for early enrollment for the Fall season.
 - *Example Offer:*
 - Fill out this survey and get a FREE pair of tights when you register for the Fall session.

WINS:

We filled both camps and classes last summer! I offered half day camps (9-12 or 1-4) or full day 9-4. We themed each week but this year I plan to theme each half day because the full day kids seemed to be bored repeating it in the afternoon. Only kinder and up could do full day. Preschoolers had to do half day. Our most popular elementary theme was TikTok and Tumble. Pop star and Fine Arts also did pretty well. This year I plan to use some camp confetti curriculum to help. We ran 2 camps at the same time. Last year we did ages 3-8 and 8-12 but this year I plan to do 3-7 and 7-11. We don't get a ton of older ones. Mostly 3-8 and a few 9-10 year olds. For classes we were able to run 1 night a week for 6 weeks. We ran our normal preschool classes and did a sampler for elementary, middle and high school so each week was a different style. It went well but I lost some people who were committed to one style and I think I have the staff to run separate styles this summer so I plan to do that. Last year was our busiest summer ever!

Like Reply 3w



[Redacted]

[Redacted] what kind of marketing did you do?

Like Reply 3w



[Redacted]

[Redacted] just Facebook ads and emails. I had a square for each camp theme. For the ads I ran one for preschool and one for elementary and did creative dynamic and put each of the squares. I also did a summer brochure for current families with all the happenings

Like Reply 3w



The first week of January, we offer a huge promo for summer that offers 20% off for the first 20 people. We get tons of people and fill some camps that first week of January which is awesome. I used to run summer classes in different styles and the best decision I made was only having one class per age group and making it a multi style class. It's an 8 week session and they do jazz, ballet, lyrical, musical theatre, hip hop and acro. I market it as a way for kids to try everything. I post about both the camps and classes in mom groups on facebook and I always get a huge response. I hope this helps@

Like Reply 2w



Win!

Thanks to DSOA we had our best summer yet ...

Summer 2022 Revenue: \$18K

Summer 2023 Revenue: \$45k

As a bonus, we've had a 100% conversion rate from the new students who signed up for a summer camp then signing up for fall recreational classes (also got two new comp dancers as well!)

[Share + WIN] \$33,785 is our final total revenue for 2023 Summer Camps. I've shared about Summer Camps before but this is our best Summer Camp season yet, even I can't believe that number. Last week we finished our 8th week of Summer Camps!

Our success was 5 years in the making. Year after year we got rid of what didn't work and made pivots. This was our smoothest and most enjoyable Summer yet and it truly has become one of my favorite times of year at the studio.

I could share so much but the highlights of our success have been:

- ✨ A dialed in curriculum and camp schedule that is the foundation of every camp.
- ✨ Adorable themes and decor that are very unique to us!
- ✨ Monday-Thursday Half Day 9:00am-11:30am Camps or Full Day 9:00am-2:00pm Camps. No single-day or partial camp exceptions.
- ✨ A creative team of education experts. My own staff are rockstars and then this year we inquired with the local charter elementary school a block away and asked if any of their teachers wanted to teach Summer Camps. They thought it was way more fun than tutoring.
- ✨ BIG WIN! I worked 2 days total of Summer Camps, the rest was led by my team and I had time to work on Summer admin projects.

A big shift for me this year was how I shared and marketed these camps with confidence. I contribute so much of that support to this group. I am so grateful to each of you!



(Win) Opened summer registration yesterday with 40 summer camp enrollments (\$5200), 30 summer intensive enrollments (\$4000), and 41 class enrollments (money gets charged later). This week is Family Dance Week followed by our big summer week so I expect those numbers to triple! Money will be set up in our "Summer Account" so there's no summer stress 🧐 What we did: release our schedule Feb. 1st, advertise in our social media & weekly newsletters, talk about it in classes this week, and send home coloring sheets with info & QR codes. Camps & Intensives are BOGO 50% this week and classes had giveaways.



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20 comments