



THE ART OF YEAR-ROUND *Enrollment*



Introduction:

Offering year-round enrollment at your dance studio can offer several benefits for both the students and the studio itself. It can also be tricky when you must navigate costumes and choreography, etc. for a newcomer towards the end of your regular season. In this masterclass, we are going to break down how to make year-round enrollment work for you, work for your staff, and work for the students!

Goals:

By the end of this masterclass, you will:

- Be able to introduce year-round enrollment at your studio.
- Gain tools and ideas to successfully prepare ALL your students for recital.
- Be able to combat challenges or concerns raised by your team.
- Learn how to train your admin staff and teachers so they can adapt to year-round enrollment.

Things to consider before implementation:

1. Year-round enrollment is a larger, overarching system within your studio. There are several moving pieces that need to be ready for this to be implemented as smoothly as possible. This masterclass is designed to help you do that!
2. You do not need to wait for a new season to implement this. Implementing this system as soon as possible is crucial to the profitability of your studio.
3. Be prepared for your team's concerns and questions (which we will address later). Your team buying into year-round enrollment and understanding the huge benefit it will have for the studio is important to the overall success of your business.
4. The biggest consideration will be the student's ability to catch on to choreography. We will offer suggestions on how to successfully prepare your new enrollee further down.
5. Make sure your costuming systems are set up to accommodate year-enrollment. Here is the [Costuming Systems Masterclass](#) that provides examples on how to successfully navigate costumes for students who enroll after costumes have already shipped/arrived.

Special thank you to Jodi Shilling, Annie Thistle, Meghan Retseck, and Kim Field for contributing to this workbook.

Top benefits of year-round enrollment:

Year-round enrollment at a dance studio can offer several benefits for both the students and the studio itself. Here are some advantages:

1. Flexibility for Students:
 - Year-round enrollment offers flexibility for students to join and start classes at any time, rather than waiting for specific enrollment periods. Families who participate in other activities or sports are not excluded. They join after their other season finishes.

- This flexibility can accommodate varying schedules and commitments, making dance accessible to a wider range of individuals.
 - By offering year-round enrollment, you'll stand out from your competitors, who did not allow those students in. This will give you a great reputation as welcoming and friendly studio!
2. Opportunities for New Students:
 - Year-round enrollment allows new students to join the studio whenever they are ready, without having to wait for a new session or semester to begin. Gatekeeping classes until next season will drive those leads to competitors who will accept them year-round.
 - This can contribute to a diverse and dynamic dance community.
 - Culture can become very strong as students become used to welcoming, befriending, and helping new students.
 - This can give current students opportunities to display leadership within the classroom as they support their new buddies!
 3. Increase Revenue for Studios:
 - Year-round enrollment allows you to increase your revenue from dance classes all season long as you do different marketing pushes throughout the year.
 - It will also provide you with more opportunities to increase your class capacity.
 - Allowing new students to join year-round and participate in recital increases recital profit and other revenue streams.
 - This financial stability can help studios maintain facilities, pay instructors/staff, and offer a variety of classes.

Getting start with year-round enrollment:

The key to success for year-round enrollment is the [11-Step Enrollment System](#). Having an enrollment system that is repeatable and the same for every new customer allows every person to have a great customer experience so that they stick with you for the long-haul. This system is one of the first you should implement in your business as this will allow you to convert customers year-round and increase your revenue.

Top apprehensions:

While year-round enrollment at a dance studio can offer numerous benefits, there are also potential challenges or pain points associated with this approach. To get your team to buy in, you need to be prepared for these and be ready with solutions. Here are the top 3 apprehensions:

1. Administrative Challenges:
 - **Scheduling and Planning:** Year-round enrollment may complicate class scheduling, making it challenging to plan for different skill levels and age groups throughout the year.

- Record-Keeping: Managing continuous enrollment requires more record-keeping to track student attendance, progress, and payments.
2. Student Progression and Class Cohesion:
 - Continuous Intake: New students joining classes throughout the year might disrupt the flow of instruction and hinder the progression of existing students.
 - Class Cohesion: It may be challenging to maintain a cohesive group dynamic when students can join at any time, potentially affecting the sense of community within the class.
 3. Marketing and Promotion:
 - Promotional Challenges: Marketing and promoting classes become an ongoing effort. You may need to hire an additional resource to take this on year-round.

It's crucial for dance studios to carefully consider these challenges and develop strategies to address them when transitioning to year-round enrollment. Effective communication with both students and staff, implementing robust administrative systems, and maintaining a focus on the overall student experience can help mitigate these pain points.

Solutions for each apprehension to make year-round enrollment work:

1. Administrative Challenges Solutions
 - Scheduling and Planning & Record-Keeping
 - i. Our 11-Step Enrollment System will make year-round enrollment possible. By having this detailed system in place, you and/or your admin staff will have a guide to successfully following through from leads to conversions year-round.
 - ii. Consider hiring an [Enrollment Coordinator](#) whose duties include managing all enrollment.
 - iii. Invest in a robust dance studio software like [DanceStudio-Pro](#). Their Elite level program allows you to automate pieces of the 11-Step Enrollment Process. (Inner Circle members also receive Elite at 50% off!)
2. Student Progression and Class Cohesion Solutions
 - Continuous Intake & Class Cohesion
 - i. When students join late in Spring close to recital, consider starting them in a lower-level class so they're not overwhelmed. Communicate to the student and parents that this is for the student's utmost success, and they will be moved up to the next level (if applicable) for next season.
 - ii. You can also offer a Private Lesson Catchup Package, which is additional revenue stream that benefits everyone!
 - iii. Level set expectations with new students and their families about recital choreography. Perhaps it is too late for them to be in all of that class's dances, but they could be in one of them or could be in the finale.

- iv. Have an open conversation with your classes about your year-round enrollment. Encourage them to be welcoming and open-minded and remind them that you have everyone's best interest in mind! Use fun dance games and icebreakers to build community with new students.
3. Marketing and Promotion Solutions
 - Promotional Challenges
 - i. Set up a successful Facebook Ads campaign that you know works. Take the time before your Fall season starts to build out an evergreen leads funnel so that you can sit back and watch it work throughout the year.
 1. Be sure to update and swap out this ad as needed throughout the year
 - ii. Identify key enrollment periods such as Fall Enrollment, Black Friday, and New Year and build dedicated campaigns to get a surge of new students around the same time.
 - iii. If you don't have one already, hire a [Social Media Coordinator](#) or [Marketing Manager](#) who can regularly assess your various marketing efforts and make changes for continued success.

How to get your team on board with year-round enrollment:

If you don't have an Enrollment Coordinator and aren't ready to hire one yet, year-round enrollment might be a heavy lift for you and/or your admin team.

In Week 5 of On-Ramp, we walk through the 11 steps with you. [Use this template to walk through the steps with your staff.](#)

Top apprehensions from teachers:

The main apprehension from teachers is that year-round enrollment makes teaching technique and choreography more difficult if you have new people constantly joining. While this is a valid concern, there are several ways to make it work so that everyone feels supported and successful.

Solutions for teachers to make year-round enrollment work:

1. When students enter the season later, they develop at a faster pace. Teachers may be surprised at how quickly a newcomer might pick up technique and choreography.
2. If time and space permits, the new student(s) can take private catchup lessons which will provide more compensation for the teachers.
 - a. Some studio owners have implemented bonus monetary incentives per added and retained student over a set minimum number of students.
3. Most students that register late will be the first for summer registration and then they'll stay into the following fall season.
4. Remind teachers the expectations for choreography in recital is not that of your competition program. They should approach their recital pieces with the goal to show

confident, fun dancers who know what they are doing but do not need to be executing perfectly.

5. Have your teachers wait until January/February to start recital choreography so that students who join up until that time don't have to catch up.
6. Consider doing year-round enrollment for only certain programs. Maybe your competition program has a cut-off enrollment date, but your recreational programs do not.
7. You can also set up programming specifically for year-round enrollment that does not include performing in recital or require a performance costume. These students take class regularly, but ideally the class structure would allow new students to join all year. You can then funnel those dancers into recital classes the following year if they choose.

Review the 11-Step Enrollment System with your teachers and be upfront about your expectations and goals of year-round enrollment. Share solutions for their apprehensions and be consistent with your check-ins so they know you are there to support them.

Onboarding with the 6-Week Onboarding System:

[The 6-Week Onboarding System](#) is a fantastic way to begin retaining students from the moment they set foot in your studio. From training to implementation to execution, this important system goes hand-in-hand with the 11-Step Enrollment System, allowing you to both attract and then retain your newly acquired students for years to come.

Top benefits of the 6-Week Onboarding System:

1. It begins retention from Day 1 in a systemized way that allows each client to feel cared for and important.
2. It creates a clear model for delivering your values directly to your clients on a consistent basis.
3. It establishes great communication from the start.
4. It sets expectations for new parents in a structured method.
5. It allows space and time for parents to ask questions and/or provide feedback.

Top apprehensions from staff:

1. Time Constraints
 - Your staff might be concerned about the increased workload associated with implementing this new system. It will involve training sessions, adjustments to existing workflows, and potentially overcoming a learning curve associated with the new system.
2. Value Perception
 - Staff members might question whether the benefits of the new system justify the time and effort required for implementation. This apprehension often stems from a lack of communication on how the system will directly contribute to the team's goals and improve overall efficiency.

3. Information Overload
 - The staff may be feeling especially overwhelmed by tracking everything.
4. Inclusion
 - The existing students might feel left out with the influx of new students and the change in the attention to detail to their onboarding process.

Solutions for each apprehension:

1. Time Constraint Solutions
 - a. Train them clearly on 6-week Onboarding; have them role play and practice scripts. Set check-in points after each completed week to see how it goes.
 - b. Build it smartly into the calendar for them at times when they are less busy. During Week 4 phone calls, enlist and train additional staff to help with this.
2. Value Perception Solutions
 - a. Remind your staff that clients feel cared for, informed and are impressed with high levels of communication.
3. Information Overload Solutions
 - a. Create clear copy and spreadsheet/project manager for tracking. Utilize any automation tools you already have. As you add new students over the weeks, you can either:
 - i. Catch them up to join your main onboarding cohort.
 - ii. Create monthly cohorts who are at the same onboarding week together.
 - iii. Manage it in the way that makes sense for your unique studio.
4. Inclusion
 - a. When you begin your Onboarding System for the first time, include all students. Additionally, you can have your entire studio go through onboarding at the start of each year. You then add in onboarding cohorts at key times as the year progresses. Sometimes there are natural starts to a new cohort as well, such as the start of a new mid-year session (like January).

Overall Solution: Assign and/or hire a Client Experience Coordinator. It could also go in tandem as another responsibility with Enrollment Coordinator.

[Click here for your Masterclass Homework.](#) This will help get you and your staff on the path to maximizing your enrollment opportunities!

WINS:

[ASK] I am changing over to a full-year program with automatic, recurring enrollment, but I need some help.

- 1) For those who do not want to dance through the summer AND do not want to bank classes as an option, what happens to their registration and/or priority status?
- 2) We have an annual membership fee. Should this be higher for new students and lower for those opting into the recurring annual program?
- 3) How do you handle those who push back and do not want the full year?
- 4) What benefits do you give those who don't terminate their contract after recital?

Thanks so much!

We enroll year round. We put dancers in the appropriate skill level of where they currently are. If we are able to get a costume we do, if not, they wear all black on stage and are put near the back. Or we only allow participation in finale depending on the situation. These are the kiddos that usually tell their parents to enroll for the whole next year. Win win everyone is happy. I always remind myself, things don't have to be perfect.

We enroll all year and in my little classes I always order atleast 1 extra costume per class that I know will fill before recital and we just put new kids in the back or on a side so they can follow along

~~From Donagh~~

I don't turn anyone away I just make it very clear. I may or may not be able to get you a costume and yes they miss on the technique. However, the hope is that they return for the following year in full. I do not turn anyone away. I had the kids register last year in May with four classes left, and they all returned for September.

We offer year round enrollment for what we call non-recital technique classes (leaps & turns, strength & stretch) and let anyone register as long as it's age/level appropriate, and open our summer session in March, so if parents call us in January or February we say to hang on. Summer will be out soon!