

DATE: April 25th, 2024

TO: Linda Moore

FROM: Hannah Hasselius

REF: Enhancing operational efficiency within the business

<b>Key Question/Problem Statement:</b>	Enhance customer value and experience by delivering what amenity that also simplify operations for the establishment?
<b>Recommendation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What: Develop a dance studio mobile app</li><li>• Why: Introducing a mobile app would unlock a comprehensive suite of features designed to promote convenience and efficiency.</li></ul>
<b>Current Situation and Complicating Factors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heightened daily usage of technology in today's society</li><li>• Delayed enrollment and payment system in current practice</li><li>• Contends with the issue of poor communication with customers</li></ul>
<b>Alternative Recommendations Considered:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Offer hybrid dance instruction classes<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Expands the studio's reach by accommodating clientele from various locations with different schedules</li><li>ii. Could dilute the the strong community built in in-person sessions, potentially disengaging local participants</li></ol></li><li>2. Explore the realm of competitive dance<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>iii. Judge's feedback can provide valuable insights that can guide dancers and instructors to improve their technique(s)</li><li>iv. May detract from smaller, traditional elements of studio</li></ol></li></ol>
<b>Other Considerations:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of a mobile app would give the studio competitive advantage by offering conveniences competitors do not provide</li><li>• Features such as direct messaging and announcements would enhance communication between the business owner, instructors, dancers, and parents</li><li>• Administrative tasks such as registration, scheduling, and payments can be streamlined through the mobile app</li><li>• Concerns of data privacy and security can be mitigated by ensuring robust cybersecurity measures are in place</li><li>• Offering in-person tutorials and detailed instructional emails can ensure clients have confidence navigating the mobile app</li></ul>

Throughout the Spring 2024 semester, I conducted a comprehensive analysis of Linda's Ballet Workshop in Woodbridge, Virginia, aimed at enhancing its operational efficiency. My primary recommendation, based on extensive research, is the implementation of a dance studio mobile app to modernize the studio's operations and align with contemporary needs.

My research began with a STEEP analysis, identifying ten key external trends across social, technological, environmental, economic, and political dimensions that impact the dance industry. This analysis revealed how Linda's Ballet Workshop can incorporate these trends into its operations to stay competitive and responsive to market changes. For example, as society increasingly relies on technology, integrating digital tools into the studio's operations is essential to meet modern consumer expectations. A subsequent VRINS analysis emphasized the studio's unique attributes, like its family-owned status, which fosters strong community ties and boosts customer loyalty. By aligning these strengths with the pervasive use of technology, such as implementing a mobile app, the studio can enhance operational efficiency and remain relevant in a digital age.

In examining the studio's economic elements, I proposed adding an online payment feature to the app, which would provide exceptional convenience while removing conventional payment obstacles, thus streamlining financial transactions. Regarding talent management, it was recommended that the app allows instructors to select their schedules prior to the commencement of the dance season. Additionally, proposed benefits such as offering free classes for instructors' children and organizing annual team-building excursions aim to enhance job satisfaction and foster a supportive, cohesive community within the studio.

The one-year objective sets the app's launch as the initial phase in a series of strategic quarterly goals aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction. Subsequent actions include the creation of new merchandise, the enhancement of lobby furniture for increased comfort, and improvements in the quality of year-end photoshoots. Each initiative is carefully designed to strengthen the studio's community atmosphere and enhance customer engagement.

Following the establishment of a one-year objective, a premortem analysis was conducted to address potential risks such as fluctuating attendance, health and safety concerns, and inconsistent customer satisfaction. The mobile app addresses these concerns by offering links to vital resources and instructional websites, enabling students to enhance their skills, deepen their learning experience, and inquire more knowledge pertaining to health and safety. The establishment's safety measures would be accessible to all clientele. Additionally, implementing a pay-as-you-go attendance system adapts to students' diverse schedules and attracts new participants, thereby underscoring the studio's dedication to flexibility.

Introducing a mobile app at Linda's Ballet Workshop is essential for upgrading business functions and aligning with current trends. This app centralizes registration, payments, and communication, featuring tools like announcements and direct messaging to enhance interaction between the owner, staff, students, and parents. This technological integration not only improves the studio's internal operations but also strengthens its competitive edge by appealing to a clientele that values convenience and modern interactions. Ultimately, the app is designed to optimize operational efficiency, ensuring the studio remains relevant and efficient in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

## **PROJECT ONE**

The competitors of the dance studio, Linda's Ballet Workshop, include Woodbridge Dance Company, Accent Dancers, and Adorn Dance & Fitness.

Woodbridge Dance Company- Bears a resemblance to Linda's establishment in terms of the services provided, ambiance, and clientele.

Accent Dancers- In comparison to Linda's Ballet Workshop, Accent Dancers offers a wider variety of dance instruction courses tailored to serve adults as well.

Adorn Dance & Fitness- Located approximately four miles from Linda's Ballet Workshop, Adorn Dance & Fitness studio caters to both adults and children by offering dance instruction courses to promote health and well-being.

Dear Mrs. Moore,

In my quest to ensure the continued growth and success of the dance studio, Linda's Ballet Workshop, I have embarked on a thorough research endeavor to identify external trends impacting the dance industry. Through extensive research of the dance industry itself, I have identified ten distinct external trends. Based on a thorough review of these external trends, I have organized this data through what is known as a STEEP analysis. A STEEP analysis categorizes research by its impact on social, technological, economic, environmental, and political factors. The external trends identified as most significant in the dance industry through my STEEP analysis were: hybrid (online/in-person) dance classes, the growth of competitive dance, an increase in technological props, creation of dance studio mobile apps, and an increase in the use of virtual reality headsets. Recognizing the intricate relationships of these trends across various aspects of the operating environment, it becomes paramount to incorporate them comprehensively into a futuristic plan. Furthermore, to promote the growth of Linda's Ballet Workshop, the establishment must consider integrating these external trends into its operation. In addition, because the establishment has several leading competitors, including Woodbridge Dance Company, Accent Dancers and Adorn Dance & Fitness, it is imperative that change is conducted in a timely manner. In summary, Linda's Ballet Workshop is recommended to timely explore hybrid instruction models, competitive dance opportunities, and technology including virtual reality sets, props, and dance studio mobile apps to foster growth in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Hannah Hasselius

STEEP

<b>5</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Technological</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Political</b>
Increased social media presence	X	X	X		
Hybrid (online/in-person) dance classes	X	X	X	X	
Advancement of Screen dance (cinematic dance films)	X	X			
Development of Competitive dance	X	X	X	X	
Increase in therapeutic dance/movement	X	X	X		
Increase in technological props	X	X	X	X	
Development of dance studio mobile apps	X	X	X	X	
Development of Neo-classical dance (combined classical and modern dance styles)	X	X			
Increase in VR use (during class to recreate experience of performing before an audience)	X	X	X	X	

## VRINS

Customer description/demographics:

Customer demographics at Linda's Ballet Workshop consist of school-age children spanning from three to eighteen years of age, with a predominantly female presence. Additionally, the clientele includes families from a wide variety of income levels, further proving the Workshop's value of inclusivity by their acceptance of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

<b>Business name: Linda's Ballet Workshop</b>					
<b>Product/Service Differentiators</b>	<b>Valuable? (yes/no)</b>	<b>Rare? (yes/no)</b>	<b>Inimitable? (yes/no)</b>	<b>Non-substitutable? (yes/no)</b>	<b>Sustainable? (yes/no)</b>
Family-owned	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Location	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Annual Recital	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Linda's Ballet Workshop Merchandise	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Dance Birthday Parties	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Visitor week	Y	N	Y	N	Y
"Princess" days (One young child randomly selected to dress up)	Y	Y	N	N	Y

Innovation through addition, subtraction, multiplication, division:

1. Addition- Studio camera for broadcasting dance class instruction to lobby
2. Addition- Dance Studio mobile app; For communicating effectively from instructor to parent, vice versa, and parents to other parents.
3. Summary:

Dear Mrs. Moore,

I have conducted a meticulous VRINS analysis for Linda's Ballet Workshop to identify the attributes that distinguish the establishment from competitors within the dance industry. This comprehensive analysis entailed identifying several key attributes that have value, are rare, inimitable, non-substitutable, and sustainable. The distinguishing attributes for Linda's Ballet Workshop include family ownership, location, the annual dance recital, merchandise offerings, dance birthday parties, visitor weeks, and specialty event days. Among the identified attributes, the significant differentiator Linda's Ballet Workshop possesses is family ownership. This quality embodies a sense of personal investment that fosters a strong sense of community and connection. Furthermore, it is imperative that Linda's Ballet Workshop remains family-owned and reflects the value of tradition. I have devised two additional innovations: installing a studio camera for broadcasting the dance class instruction to the lobby and creating a dance studio mobile app- for communicating effectively from instructor to parent, vice versa, and parents to other parents. In summary, Linda's Ballet Workshop should consider reflecting on the key attributes that distinguish the establishment from other competitors within the dance industry and should work to facilitate growth by emphasizing these qualities.

## **PROJECT TWO**

### Economic Logic

Linda's Ballet Workshop operates under a family-owned service business model centered on a membership-based structure. Each month, customers are obligated to enter the establishment for payment in order to continue receiving dance instruction services. This poses an inconvenience not only for customers but also for the business. An avenue for potential enhancement lies in the adoption of a pay-as-you-go framework. The envisaged online payment functionality holds the promise of practicality and efficiency, aligning seamlessly with contemporary consumer preferences and industry trends. In addition, the revolutionary dance studio mobile application would be designed to integrate into the busy lives of dancers and their families. Unveiling a world of convenience, users would have the opportunity to effortlessly explore class schedules, reserve spots, and enhance their overall dance experience. With this innovative tool at their fingertips, flexibility becomes the new standard, empowering dancers to embrace their passion on their own terms, whether they seek to increase their class frequency or tailor their schedule to accommodate other commitments. By eliminating traditional payment barriers, Linda's Ballet Workshop not only enhances the customer experience, but also stands to streamline its own operational processes, underscoring a commitment to innovation and customer-centricity. Another way Linda's Ballet Workshop could promote their establishment would be by implementing a one-for-one business model. Through a one-for-one business model, Linda's Ballet Workshop would seek and engage in volunteer events. Not only enhancing its reputation, but also attracting a wider local customer base, solidifying the workshop's presence and impact in the community.

### Talent Management

The familial ownership structure of the establishment, Linda's Ballet Workshop, constitutes the primary catalyst for setting it apart from other enterprises. There are a multitude of perks the business can offer potential employees. First, the employees should be provided with merchandise, including uniforms and a shoe stipend. Given the diverse array of dance styles necessitating specialized attire and footwear, these expenses can be exorbitant. Therefore, this benefit would undoubtedly draw the attention of potential employees. Second, owing to its relatively modest scale, the business should prioritize flexibility by affording employees the opportunity to customize their schedules prior to the commencement of the dance season, mirroring the scheduling practices of district school systems. As a segue into the third suggestion for talent acquisition, the children of the employees should be permitted to attend dance instruction classes free of charge. This provision facilitates extracurricular engagement for the children and affords employees essential respite from parental duties while attending to work-related responsibilities. Fourthly, the business should consider offering employees a complimentary excursion, such as viewing a Broadway production in New York City. The excursion would serve not only as a great team-building experience but also as an informational and entertaining event. Finally, given the probable composition of Linda's Ballet Workshop's employee demographic, predominantly comprising young adults and college students, the job presents a valuable developmental opportunity. To further the advancement of its employees, Linda's Ballet Workshop should consider offering tuition assistance, particularly for disciplines within the arts realm.

## PROJECT THREE

### OKR

Objective: To improve customer satisfaction

Key result one: Enroll 95% of customer database in the dance studio mobile app by quarter two.

Key result two: Introduce 3 new merchandise styles

Key result three: Increase photoshoot sales by 15%

Key Result four: Grow Instagram following by 150 followers before next season

### Action Plan

<b>Objective-One Year Out</b>	To improve customer satisfaction			
<b>Quarterly Deliverables</b>	1-90 Days (Next quarter) Set up Dance Studio mobile app	91-180 Days (Two quarters Out) Create more merchandise designs	181-270 Days (Three Quarters Out) Buy new Furniture	271-360 Days (Four Quarters Out) Enhance quality of photoshoots
<b>Initiatives</b>	Hire individual skilled in media management to create server/app	Create flyer to notify customer base of wanted merchandise designs	Discuss appropriate budget for new studio furniture	Hire a seasonal skilled photographer
	Create video to show how to work the app and send email to parents/customers	Send out email and send home dancers with the flyers	Locate and buy comfortable new seating for lobby	Organize thought-out schedule for photography shoots
	Have flyers posted throughout business and on online platforms	Through the app, allow customers to select the top three designs	Input the new seating arrangements before the fourth quarter	Work with photographer to evaluate what settings will be available to customers and send home dancers with a letter/flyer



## Summary

The primary focus of Linda's Ballet Workshop, located in Woodbridge, Virginia, is to improve customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is an evaluative metric that consists of assessing the level of contentment customers experience pertaining to a company's products, services, and overall performance. Customer retention rates increase by 5% for every 1% increase in customer satisfaction (Jaby, 2023). With this knowledge, a tangible, timely action plan has been developed in order to reach this objective in a year time period. To ensure that the primary goal is attained, the timeline has been divided into four quarters, each with specific expectations for deliverables to be met. In quarter one, the dance studio mobile app will be designed and launched before the following period. Analysis of external dance industry trends suggests that implementing such a platform would boost productivity for all users. The second quarter's emphasis lies on generating new merchandise designs. By enabling customers to provide input, they will feel a stronger sense of engagement with the business, increasing the likelihood of purchasing merchandise and demonstrating early-season spirit. In the third quarter, funds will be allocated for procuring new furniture to enhance customer comfort in the lobby. In addition, the purchased furniture can be utilized in the subsequent quarter. The culmination of the action plan will involve enhancing the quality of the year-end photoshoots. Concluding the year with these shoots is paramount, as they leave a lasting impression on customers and showcase the memories created- ultimately, enhancing the studio's value of tradition.

## PROJECT FOUR

Biggest Risks of Failure / Potential Challenges	Cause(s)	How to Reduce or Eliminate the Effect
<b>Risk # 1</b> Fluctuating Attendance	Holidays, seasons/ weather	Plan ahead for anticipated decline in attendance by offering pricing deals during these times
	Competitors	Place emphasis on promotional marketing through social media or traditional (posters, cards, etc.) to gain more exposure for business
<b>Risk # 2</b> Health and safety concerns	After COVID pandemic more people are cautious about health	Implement health practices such as mandating hand sanitizer use before and after practice
	Injury concerns	Ensure that protection such as mats are utilized during all (supervised) practices
<b>Risk # 3</b> Customer satisfaction	Dissatisfaction with class offerings	Make note of what classes are in demand and make change to class offerings accordingly
	Bad word-of-mouth	Send out bi-weekly/monthly surveys to customers to check concerns and or for every referral to the studio, the customer is awarded a free class

## Premortem

A premortem is an analysis for the anticipated decline of a business, serving as a risk management plan. In an article discussing the benefits of a premortem, the author states According to research, prospective hindsight increases the ability to correctly identify reasons for future outcomes by 30% (Martins, 2024). Through obtaining this knowledge, three main risks were identified in the construction of the premortem for Linda's Ballet Workshop. The first risk pertains to fluctuating attendance. Factors such as holidays, weather, natural disasters, seasonal viability, and competitors impact the number of customers in attendance. To mitigate this risk, promotional deals for slower seasons should be advertised via social media and traditional methods like mail to cultivate a more consistent following. Second, post-pandemic, people have heightened concerns for health and safety. To prevent and or reduce the decline of the establishment, Linda's Ballet Workshop is suggested to assure customers via email that proper practices are implemented daily. In addition, the business should also highlight the importance of health and safety through posting useful health protocols both internally and externally. Lastly, addressing customer satisfaction is crucial. To increase customer satisfaction, Linda's Ballet Workshop is recommended to send out bi-weekly/monthly surveys to gauge the satisfaction of customers and make changes accordingly. On top of that, because the business is a family-owned local business, the establishment should place an emphasis on promoting good word of mouth. To incentivize current customers to refer new ones, offer them a complimentary class for each successful referral.

## References

Jaby. (2023, October 18). *100 Stats on Customer Satisfaction, Retention, & Loyalty*.

SurveySparrow. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from

<https://surveysparrow.com/blog/customer-satisfaction-stats/>

Martins, J. (2024, January 21). *How to Conduct a Project Premortem [2024]* • Asana.

Asana. Retrieved April 12, 2024, from <https://asana.com/resources/premortem#>