5 BEST PRACTICES TO MANAGE YOUR COSTUME PROCESS

For Maximum Efficiency and Profit




When you support
Small Business,
you're supporting
a Dream

Best Practices



1. Know what your **time is worth**
2. Put a **price on the costume process**, not just the garment
3. **Communicate the value** of what the costume fee includes
4. You are the middle woman/man, so **be prepared for anything**
5. Use **offline and online tools** to save time and effort

BEST PRACTICE #1
KNOW WHAT YOUR TIME IS WORTH



Calculate your hourly wage from annual salary/earnings



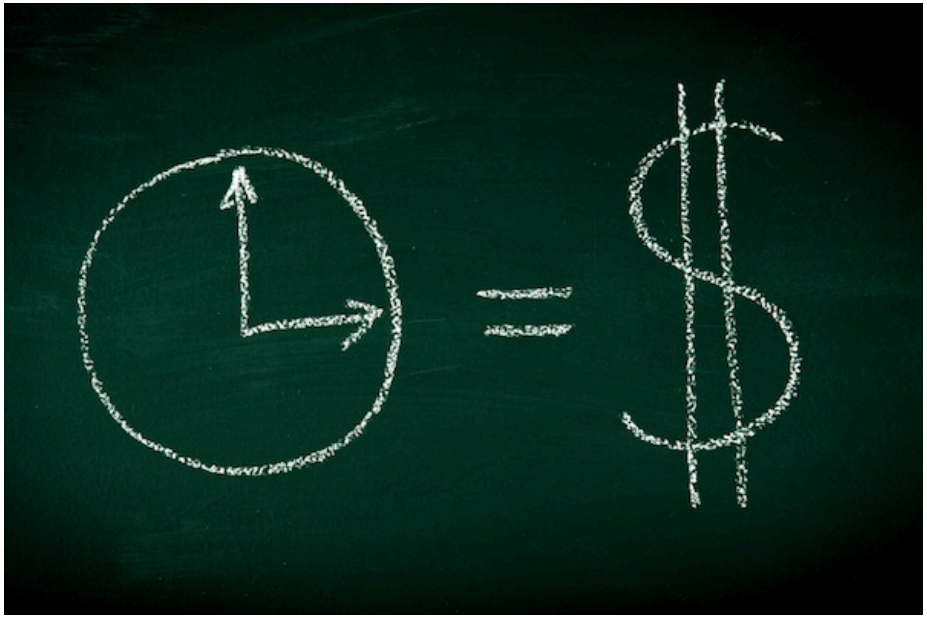
- Online Calculator http://www.calculators.org/savings/wage-conversion.php
- How many hours a week do you work? (Studio owners…usually much more than 40!)
- The average, full-time, salaried employee works 40 hours a week. Based on this, the average salaried person works 2,080 (40 hours x 52 weeks) hours a year.
- To determine your hourly wage, **divide your annual salary by 2,080**.

Example Hourly Rate Conversions

- If you make $75,000 a year, your hourly wage is $75,000/2080, or $36.06.
- If you make $50,000/2080 your hourly wage is $24.03
- If you make $35,000/2080 your hourly wage is $16.82

How much time does costuming take?

- Artistic Direction; concept and ideas
- Selecting
- Prop creation or sourcing
- Measuring
- Sizing
- Tracking
- Ordering
- Shipping & Handling
- Receiving/Tracking
- Fitting
- Altering & Exchange if necessary
- Accessories (hairpiece, tights)
- Processing payments



Be confident in your fees!

- Once you identify the true costs, you can confidently set fees/prices
- This information should guide your entire process
- Be focused on efficiency as well as profitability for your business health



BEST PRACTICE #2
PUT A PRICE ON THE COSTUME PROCESS, NOT JUST THE GARMENT





Resource on DSO: Learn new ways to approach the process of setting fees for your costumes. If you are ready to properly charge for your time when it comes to selection, the costume itself, shipping, handling, fitting, altering (if necessary), accessories, and more then this webinar will show you how to calculate.

https://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/Setting-Costume-Fees-Flat-Rate-vs-Variable-Pricing.cfm

Example Pricing & Fees

- **Flat fee pricing**
- Same Price for all costumes to customers:
  - $75. all costumes (recital), Exception if the dancer supplies leggings, reduced to $55
  - $90. for competition costumes
- Does *not* include tights
- Does include garment bag
- Sales tax state: IE: $75 costume + $4.50 tax = $79.50 fee

- **Variable pricing**
- Applies a $25-$30 admin fee to each costume wholesale price.
- Price *does* include tights
- Prices to customers range:
  - $70 - $75: Preschool
  - $80 - $85: Recreational Youth
  - $90 - $95: Recreational & Intensive Teen/Adult
  - $100 - $125+: Advanced Ballet & Competitive

BEST PRACTICE #3
COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF WHAT THE COSTUME FEE INCLUDES



Tell them what the fee includes



- Use the vendor write up, it always describes the costume well!
- Include details about any accessories or props if included
- Create a picture page or look book
- **Sample Text:** *"Costumes are of a superior quality and include sizing, shipping, handling, fittings, and alterations (if necessary)"*
- If you print a document with important info/dates/deadlines, have parents take a photo of the paper…they can't lose the photo as easily!

Kathy Blake Dance Studios

presents

"The Past, The Present, The Future"

Saturday June 21st & Sunday June 22nd

The Groton Dunstable Performing Arts Center

Your Class:
Ballet, Level 1, Age 8-12
Monday 4:00pm, Miss Rachel

Your Show Time:
Saturday 3pm

WUNDERKIND





Costume Description: Spandex leotard has yoke of sequins and gold spot sequin trim. Attached romantic length tutu has a top layer of green turquoise glitter tulle over layers of solid green turquoise tulle. Includes bun cover, arm ruffles.

Costume Price: $85.00 *This fee includes sizing, shipping, handling, and all fittings and alterations.*

Tights: Revolution Pink Tights Included

Shoes: Pink Ballet Slippers

Payment Deadline: Saturday, January 25th

DANCESTUDIOOWNER.com

BEST PRACTICE #4
YOU ARE THE MIDDLE WOMAN/MAN, BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING



Be prepared for anything!

- **"Costume Subject to Change"** – Be ready to have a backup choice
- **Set Expectations with Parents & Teachers** – Just because you see it in the catalog and receive a ship date doesn't guarantee it every time. Vendors do not set out to miss ship dates; fabric is sometimes discontinued, there are factors that are beyond everyone's control.
- **Use sizing tools** – measurements don't tell the whole story, sizing kit leotards can show you whether the dancer is a Large Child vs Small Adult. Takes the mystery out for "bubble" measurements.
- **Needs by date** - buffer time in for fitting/alterations and size exchanges if necessary
- **Order early**, it does help in some situations
- **Use in-stock costumes** for classes where you'll accept late enrollment

Wardrobe 911

Quick hacks for costume emergencies



Gaffer tape: emergency hem repair

Sharpies: scuffed black shoes

Toothpaste: leather shoe scuffs (test first)

Clear nail polish: run in tights, also temporary fix for loose sequin/foil dots

Hairspray: fix static or reduce glitter shedding

Paperclip: broken necklace, missing button or even clumpy lashes

Bar Soap or Candlewax: stuck zipper

Fabric scrap: remove deodorant (same fabric as marked)

Pencil eraser: lost earring back

Deodorant: for blisters & sweaty Betty's (not just underarms)

Toilet seat covers: blotting paper

Costume Emergency Tips Provided by Jen Houghton Sr. Director, Revolution Dancewear Creative Development/Design

BEST PRACTICE #5
USE OFFLINE & ONLINE TOOLS TO SAVE TIME & EFFORT



Offline – Measure Correctly, it's Key!

How to Measure

1. Look straight ahead
2. Bend to the side (find natural waist)
3. Breathe in, Breathe Out, to avoid the tummy suck
4. The Awkward Inseam - "Where your tights meet your leotard"
5. Get your priorities straight: Girth First. Waist Second.



Priority #1

Center/fullest point

Bend to the side.
Breathe in. Breathe Out.

Turn to the side to view fullest point

https://www.revolutiondance.com/the-suzanne-series--video-guide-to-measuring-pages-333.php

Templates & Resources on DSO

- **Costume class pairing worksheet (for Costume Selection)**
  - You can use this worksheet to organize the costume style you are choosing and the information about the class or classes you are pairing it with. It is useful for setting the fee.
  - https://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/Costume-class-pairing-worksheet.cfm

- **Costume description page for customers (for Presenting to Parents)**
  - Use this to create the information about the costume, the price, and what it includes.
  - https://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/Costume-description-page-for-customers.cfm
  - Template you can edit https://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/programs/fileinfo.cfm?id=358&action=display

- **Music Editing Worksheet (for teachers)**
  - Use this for teachers to submit their music choices and required edits
  - https://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/programs/fileinfo.cfm?id=341&action=display

- **Costume Management Worksheet & Spreadsheet Template (for selecting hair, makeup, accessories)**
  - Use this when you are making decisions on hairstyle, shoes, accessories, and if any alterations are needed on a costume.
  - https://www.dancestudioowner.com/members/Costume-Management-Worksheet-Spreadsheet-Template.cfm



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Class/Day/Time	Instructor	Title of Dance	Hairstyle	Headpiece	Headpiece placement	Tight Color	Shoe Style	Tap Ribbons
3	Baby Ballet (Age 2-3) - Saturday - 9:30am	Theresa W.	Dance With Your Teddy Bear	Bun Center Crown	Ribbon Comb	Right Side of Bun	Pink Footed	Pink Ballet Slippers	
4	Ballet Foundation (Age 6-8) - Saturday - 10:15am	Connors	You Are My Sunshine	Bun Topknot	Flower	Dancers Right Front	Pink Footed	Pink Ballet Slippers	
5	Ballet Foundation (Age 6-8) - Thursday - 4:15pm	Becca M.	True Colors	Bun Center Crown	Flower	Right Side Of Bun	Pink Footed	Pink Ballet Slippers	
6	Ballet Foundation 1 (Age 8-12) - Monday - 5:00pm	Tiffany G.	The Aristocats	Bun Center Crown	Bow	Top of Head	Pink Footed	Pink Ballet Slippers	
7	Ballet Foundation 2 (Age 8-12) - Tue 5pm & Friday 5pm	Tiffany G.	La Fille Mal Gardee	Bun Center Crown	Ring of Flowers	Around the Bun	Pink Footed	Pink Ballet Slippers	

BONUS TIPS!

Additional Tips for Success



- **Be consistent!** If you, your teachers, staff or even parents are measuring dancers, train everyone to measure the same way.
- **Back up records.** Keep a written back up record of measurements, take a photo or scan of that as well in case systems crash or data is lost.
- **Deadlines are your friend.** Hold your staff to a firm date for costume selections. Order early when possible.
- **Build relationships.** Get to know the customer service team of the vendors. Seek loyalty benefits.
- **Seek quality and value for the price.** Seek costumes that are well made, great value for the price that delight your parents/customers.

Exclusive DSO Member Benefit



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Thank you!

- Connect on our Facebook Group or login to DanceStudioOwner.com, post on our forum. Ask questions, share ideas
- Let us know about future webinar topic requests!
- Thank you for all that you do for dance

