



VOL. 02 · STUDIO EDITION

THE STUDIO OWNER'S GUIDE

Reviews & Reputation for Dance Schools

Build the kind of online reputation that fills classes by itself, the practical, no-criinge playbook for studio owners.

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WELCOME

Hello, and thanks for downloading.

Reviews are the quietest, most under-used marketing channel a dance school has. This guide is about putting them to work without ever feeling like you are begging.

Every studio owner we work with says the same thing. Word of mouth is our best marketing. What they often miss is that, in 2026, word of mouth lives on Google, Facebook, and a parent's group chat. If you are not visible in those places, the kindest things your families say about you never reach the parents who need to hear them.

The good news: gathering, responding to, and using reviews is one of the cheapest and most reliable growth levers you have. The work is small, the compounding is large. Twenty minutes a week, done consistently, will outperform almost anything you could pay for.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read it in one sitting, then come back to the worksheets. The templates are written so you can copy them straight into an email or WhatsApp. Stick the monthly tracker on the studio fridge. Tick the boxes as you go.

WHO THIS IS FOR

- Studio owners who know reviews matter but never get round to asking
- Schools sitting on five or fewer Google reviews and unsure why
- Anyone bracing for a tough comment and wanting a calm response ready
- Studios who want their reviews working on the website, not just on Google

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PART ONE

Why Reputation Matters

Before the asking, the responding and the showcasing. The three things that quietly determine whether your reputation works for you, or sits silent.

Why reviews matter more than your website.

Your website tells parents what you say about yourself. Your reviews tell them what other parents say about you. Guess which one carries more weight.

A parent in your town searches "ballet classes near me". Google shows three local pack results before your homepage ever appears. Each result has a star rating, a review count, and a snippet from a recent review. The parent decides which studio to click on the strength of those three pieces of information, before a single image of your studio loads.

93%

of parents read online reviews
before enquiring

4.7+

the rating most parents now expect
from a local business

12wk

how recent the most recent review
needs to feel

WHAT REVIEWS ACTUALLY DO

- **Lower risk.** A trial is an unknown. Forty parents saying it was lovely makes it feel known.
- **Lift you up the rankings.** Google rewards businesses that gather reviews steadily over those that gather none.
- **Pre-handle objections.** "My daughter is shy", "we tried another school and hated it", real reviews answer real worries.
- **Close the sale.** The parent who has read your reviews is already half enrolled by the time they fill in the form.

MINDSET SHIFT

Stop thinking of reviews as a vanity number. They are the deciding factor for the parents who never even meet you. A studio with 60 Google reviews and a 4.9 average wins enrolments without ever knowing the family was looking.

Where reputation lives.

Reputation is no longer one thing in one place. It is spread across four channels, and you need to pay attention to each.

THE FOUR CHANNELS

Google Business Profile

The most important channel for local discovery. If you only do one thing this year, focus here.

Facebook reviews

Strong with parents of younger children, especially in local mums groups. Recommendations matter more than stars now.

WhatsApp group chats

Invisible to you, the most powerful of all. A parent's group chat can fill three trial slots overnight.

Word of mouth

The classic. Hard to measure, impossible to ignore. Reinforced or undone by the three channels above.

WHERE TO PUT YOUR EFFORT FIRST

- **Google.** Always first. Owns local search and the map pack.
- **Facebook.** Second, if your parent community already lives there. Reply to everything.
- **Your own website.** Third. Pull reviews from Google and Facebook onto your site too.
- **Referrals.** Last but vital. The WhatsApp share is what closes the loop.

You do not need to be on every platform. A studio with 80 strong Google reviews beats one scattered thinly across six sites.

The maths of reviews.

Three numbers decide how your reputation reads at a glance. Get them in healthy shape and you will rarely lose a parent to a competitor on the basis of social proof.

VOLUME, AVERAGE, RECENCY

40+

Google reviews is the comfortable minimum for a busy studio

4.8

average rating that signals real, not fake, excellence

30 days

since the most recent review is the gold standard

A studio with eight reviews and a 5.0 average looks suspicious. A studio with 120 reviews and a 4.7 average looks real, busy, and trustworthy. Volume earns the average. Recency proves you are still going.

THE TARGETS

- **Year one.** 25 Google reviews. One a week, end of summer term to Christmas.
- **Year two.** 60 reviews. Two a week in peak terms, one in quiet months.
- **Year three.** 100+ reviews. Now you are competing on volume.
- **Monthly.** At least three new reviews, even in your quietest month.
- **Average.** Hold steady between 4.7 and 4.9. Below 4.6 needs work. Exactly 5.0 needs more.
- **Replies.** Reply to every single one, good or bad, within 48 hours.

TIP

Track your numbers in a spreadsheet. New reviews this month, total, average. Five minutes the last day of each month. Patterns emerge after one term.

PART TWO

Gathering Reviews

How to ask without cringing. How to build a habit that survives the chaos of term-time. The templates and the friction-removers that turn happy parents into reviews.

Asking without feeling salesy.

Almost every studio owner says the same thing. "I just hate asking." There is a way to do it that does not feel like asking at all.



THE THREE RULES

01 Ask after a good moment

After the show. After the exam result. After a parent just told you their child loves it. The moment chooses the message.

02 Ask once, kindly, with a reason

Tell them why it helps. "It helps other parents find us" works. "It helps us keep prices fair" works even better.

03 Make it stupidly easy

A direct link to the review form. A QR code at reception. Never "Google us and leave a review".

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not offer anything in return. Google penalises this and parents notice.
- Do not write the review for them, even as a suggestion.
- Do not ask the same parent twice. One ask, then thank them either way.
- Do not ask if you sense the parent is unhappy. Fix the problem first.

The end-of-term review habit.

The single highest-yield habit a studio can build. Three weeks before the end of every term, you ask. That is it.

WHY END-OF-TERM WORKS

- Parents have just watched their child progress. Feelings are warm and specific.
- End-of-term shows, exams and showcases are natural prompts.
- It builds a predictable rhythm into your year, so it does not slip.
- Three asks a year, per parent. Manageable for them, transformative for you.

THE END-OF-TERM RHYTHM

01 Three weeks before term ends

Send the email. Focus on families who have been with you 6+ months.

02 Two weeks before term ends

Mention it from the studio floor. "A quick Google review really helps us. Link in tonight's WhatsApp."

03 Week of the show

Right after the curtain, while feelings are warm. "If you've got a moment tonight, would you mind?"

04 First week of holiday

One follow-up to anyone who said "I'll do it later". A single nudge, no more.

FROM THE STUDIO FLOOR

One school we work with went from 11 reviews to 84 in a single year using nothing but the end-of-term rhythm. No incentives, no campaigns. Just three asks at three predictable points, every term.

Templates: the email, the WhatsApp, the in-person ask.

Copy these into your drafts folder. Adjust the names. Change nothing else until you have used them for a full term.

THE EMAIL

SUBJECT: A SMALL FAVOUR, IF YOU HAVE TWO MINUTES

Hi [Parent first name], I hope [Child name] enjoyed this term. We have loved having them in class. A quick favour, if you have a spare two minutes. Word of mouth is genuinely how new families find us, and a Google review from a real parent helps more than anything else we do. If you have a moment, the link is here: [link]. No pressure at all. Either way, thank you for being part of the studio this term. [Your first name]

THE WHATSAPP MESSAGE

TO PARENT GROUPS, END OF TERM

Quick one team. If your child has enjoyed this term and you have a spare two minutes, a Google review really helps us. Direct link: [link]. Thank you, you lot are the best.

THE IN-PERSON ASK

AT PICKUP, AFTER A GOOD MOMENT

"Thanks so much. If you have got two minutes this weekend, a Google review honestly helps us more than you would think. I'll send a link tonight. No pressure either way."

The pattern across all three: a reason, a link, a permission slip to say no. Never push, never repeat.

Removing friction.

The difference between 80 reviews and 8 is rarely the asking. It is the number of taps between "yes I'll do it" and the review being posted.

YOUR DIRECT REVIEW LINK

Google gives every business a direct link that opens the review form pre-filled. Find it by signing in to your Google Business Profile, clicking "Ask for reviews", and copying the short link. Use that link, and only that link, everywhere.

WHERE TO PUT THE LINK

- In every end-of-term email you send
- Pinned to the top of your parent WhatsApp groups
- As a QR code printed at the studio reception
- On the thank-you page after a trial is booked
- In your email signature, all year
- On the back of every receipt or invoice that goes out

CHEAP UPGRADE

A laminated A5 sign at reception with a QR code, the words "loved it? two minutes here", and a thank-you. Costs three pounds. Brings in 10 reviews a term once parents get used to it.

PART THREE

Responding Well

How you reply to a review is its own form of marketing. Future parents read your replies as carefully as the reviews themselves. Get this right and you turn every review, even the awkward ones, into a quiet sales pitch.

Responding to good reviews.

Most studios reply to good reviews with "thank you so much!" and move on. That is a wasted opportunity. A good reply is a tiny advert for future parents reading.

THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT REPLY

01 Use the child's name

Or at least a specific detail. "So lovely to read this, Eva has been a joy to teach this term." Future parents notice you actually know your students.

02 Echo what they said, briefly

If they mentioned how shy their daughter was when she started, mention how proud you were watching her solo at the show. You are showing other parents that you see their child.

03 Slip in a useful detail

Mention next term, the summer school, the new beginners class. Subtle, never sales-y. "We can't wait to see her start her Grade 1 in September."

04 Sign off with warmth, not formality

First name only. No "Kind regards, the management team". This is a relationship, not a complaints line.

REPLY TIMING

- Aim for under 48 hours. Inside a week if your week is chaotic.
- Block 15 minutes every Friday morning to clear the backlog.
- Never let a positive review sit unanswered for a month. It looks like you have stopped caring.

Responding to a one-star.

Every studio gets one eventually. The good news: how you respond matters far more than the review itself. Future parents almost always read past it if your reply is calm, specific, and adult.

BEFORE YOU WRITE A WORD

01 Walk away for an hour

Not optional. The first draft written in heat is always the wrong one. Make a cup of tea, do something else, come back.

02 Read it three times

Strip out the emotion. What are they actually saying? Is there a kernel of truth, even buried? If there is, you must address it.

03 Check if it is a real customer

Sometimes it isn't. If you have no record of the name, that goes in your response. Politely. "We have searched our records and cannot find a [Name] enrolled. Could you reach out so we can understand what happened?"

04 Decide what you will fix

Even if 95 percent of the review is unfair, find the 5 percent that has truth in it. Reply naming the fix you are making. That alone restores trust with future readers.

THE REPLY FORMULA

USE THIS STRUCTURE

Thank them for the feedback (yes, really). Acknowledge what they have raised. State what you are doing in response. Offer to talk offline. Keep it to four sentences. Never argue the facts in public, never name children, never use sarcasm.

Future parents are reading. They are not deciding whether you are perfect. They are deciding whether you are the kind of school that handles a problem well.

Reputation recovery after a complaint.

One one-star drops your average by 0.1 to 0.3 points. The recovery plan is to outpace it with new, genuine reviews. Not to spiral.

THE 30-DAY RECOVERY PLAN

01 Day 1 to 3: respond, calmly

Public reply within 48 hours. Offer offline conversation. Move on emotionally.

02 Day 4 to 14: ask your most loyal

Pick the five families who have been with you longest. Email them personally. They will write real reviews, which is exactly what dilutes the bad one.

03 Day 15 to 30: keep the rhythm

Run the end-of-term ask early. Aim for 8 to 12 new reviews in the month. Volume drowns the outlier.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not respond emotionally. Being right loudly will cost you future parents.
- Do not get friends or family to leave fake reviews. Google detects this.
- Do not threaten legal action publicly. It does more damage than the review.
- Do not appeal unless the review genuinely breaks the rules.

PERSPECTIVE

A 5.0 from 12 reviews looks staged. A 4.8 from 80 reviews, including two awkward ones with calm replies, looks honest. The second school enrolls more children.

PART FOUR

Putting Reviews to Work

Once you have them, use them. On the website, in social, in email, in person. The goal is that no parent ever decides without one of your reviews influencing the choice.

Using reviews on your website.

A review tucked away on a "testimonials" page nobody clicks is a wasted asset. Reviews work hardest when they appear next to the decisions parents are making.

WHERE TO PLACE REVIEWS

- **Homepage.** One strong quote above the fold. Three more lower down.
- **Trial booking page.** Two reviews specifically about the trial experience.
- **Pricing page.** A quote that addresses value. "Worth every penny."
- **Class pages.** A review from a parent whose child takes that class.
- **About page.** A review that mentions the teacher or owner by name.
- **FAQ page.** Quotes that pre-answer the worries (shy children, busy parents).
- **Footer.** Star rating and review count, on every page.
- **Thank-you page.** A review confirming "you made a good choice".

WHAT MAKES A REVIEW WORK ON A PAGE

- **A real name.** "Sarah, mum to Eva (7)" beats "S. — Parent" by a country mile.
- **A specific detail.** Generic praise is forgettable. "They got her bouncing on stage at her first show" is unforgettable.
- **The star rating visible.** If they left five stars, show five stars.
- **A link to the source.** A small "see all reviews on Google" link reassures anyone sceptical.

TIP

Ask Google for permission, then screenshot your strongest reviews and turn them into branded graphics. They work on the website, on social, in printed leaflets. One review can do six jobs.

Using reviews in social and email.

Beyond the website, your reviews can carry your social feed for months and warm up every email you send. Use them like a stock cupboard.

ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK

01 The branded quote post

Pull a review onto a square graphic in your brand colours. One per week is plenty. Pair with a photo of the studio so it does not feel like a wall of words.

02 The video voice-over

Read a review out loud over footage of the class it mentions. 15 seconds. Vertical. The least cringey form of social proof there is.

03 The carousel of three

Three reviews, three slides, one CTA. Run once a term. Always performs.

IN EMAIL

- End every trial-confirmation email with a one-line review from another parent
- Drop a review into your enrolment-period emails to nudge fence-sitters
- Use a review in your re-engagement email to lapsed families. "Other parents are saying..."
- Sign off your monthly newsletter with one new review. Habit. Compounding.

FROM THE STUDIO FLOOR

If you do nothing else in your social feed for a quarter, post one review graphic a week and one studio photo a week. That is eight posts a month, zero stress, and quietly excellent social proof for every parent who finds your page.

Your review-ask templates.

Write your own versions of the three asks below. Save them in your drafts. Use them next term.

EMAIL SUBJECT LINE

EMAIL BODY (KEEP IT WARM AND SHORT)

WHATSAPP MESSAGE TO PARENT GROUP

IN-PERSON LINE YOU WILL ACTUALLY SAY OUT LOUD

YOUR DIRECT GOOGLE REVIEW LINK

Monthly reputation tracker.

Five minutes the last day of every month. Note the numbers, name your wins, plan the next ask. Stick this page somewhere you'll see it.

Month 1 BASELINE	Reviews this month / total / average <hr/> <hr/>
Month 2 HABIT	Reviews this month / total / average <hr/> <hr/>
Month 3 REVIEW	Reviews this month / total / average <hr/> <hr/>

THE ONE ASK I WILL MAKE NEXT MONTH



Want your reviews working harder on your website?

Vector Web Design builds beautiful, hard-working websites exclusively for dance schools. We turn Google reviews into homepage social proof, trial-page reassurance, and class-page credibility, automatically.

[Book a free 30-minute consultation](#)

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