

Being professional and surviving in the dance industry

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“Being professional requires preparation, ethical standards and performance excellence”
(Tom Reilly)

The following is a checklist of the skills and knowledge that DANZ believes professional dancers in New Zealand need to have.

Use this checklist to test your areas of strength and weakness, and to identify where you need to grow. DANZ can help you to do this through its mentoring programme, where expert advisors can support you to develop.

You might like to consider writing a career development plan for yourself. Professional development and mentoring services are provided for DANZ members (membership is tax deductible); if you wish to discuss this contact DANZ.

Financial and business management

- Develop basic business management skills and get advice

Biz Services: www.business.govt.nz

Government website, which brings together free resources, tools and information to help people manage their business

New Zealand Institute for Chartered Accountants: www.nzica.com

Find a local chartered accountant; you may need an accountant for tax advice and end of year returns

- Contact Inland Revenue Department for tax advice

Inland Revenue Department: www.ird.govt.nz

In addition to tax advice the department has an interactive tool for people starting out in business, with advice on tax, GST record keeping and employing staff

- Contact ACC for advice on levies

Accident Compensation Corporation: www.acc.co.nz

- Ensure you understand licensing compliance (i.e. getting permission to use other people's creative work, including music, poetry/text, film footage etc.)

DANZ has produced a resource on copyright compliance:

[http://www.danz.org.nz/Downloads/Music for dance and copyright.pdf](http://www.danz.org.nz/Downloads/Music%20for%20dance%20and%20copyright.pdf)

The Australasian Performing Rights Association: www.apra.co.nz

For information on licence fees for public performance

PPNZ Music Licensing Ltd: www.ppnz.co.nz

Employment Knowledge:

- New Zealand labour laws, including employment agreements

Department of Labour – Employment Relations: www.dol.ers.govt.nz

Includes information on:

employment agreements and collective bargaining

problem solving and good faith

pay and union matters

Law access: www.lawaccess.lsa.govt.nz

Information fact sheets on New Zealand law including employment agreements and minimum working conditions

NZ Legislation Online: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/>

Free copies of all New Zealand legislation (including the Employment Relations Act 2000)

DANZ resource: Guide to minimum rights for employees and contract workers

www.danz.org.nz/resources_career.php

- The role of a union

Actors Equity New Zealand: www.actorsequity.org.nz

Industry and professional organisation representing performers

Together: www.together.org.nz

Formed by the Council of Trade Unions, membership is available to all workers who are not in a unionised workplace, including contractors

- Contract content and negotiation

DANZ Contract Checklist for Dancers and DANZ Code of Professional Conduct for Dancers: www.danz.org.nz/resources_career.php

Include information on recommended guidelines for contracts

Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (Australia): www.alliance.org.au

For examples of Australian performance awards and collective agreements

Make use of agencies

There are a number of agents for performing artists, for example:

The Human Agency: www.thehumanagency.co.nz

Karen Kay Management: www.actors.co.nz

StarNow: www.starnow.co.nz

Generating business:

Identify opportunities for self-promotion and networking

Websites for listings and self-promotion, for example:

The Big Idea, www.thebigidea.co.nz (which also has a wealth of business and professional advice in its GROW Professional Resources section)

Arts Online, www.artsonline.tki.org.nz includes Dancenet – email mailing list for networking and CAFÉ (Community Artists for Education) – lists artists' profiles

South Island Dance Network: www.southislanddancenetwork.org.nz

Toi Maori Aotearoa: www.maoriart.org.nz

Business cards for promotion. Search the internet for free business card design services

Strategies for publicising and marketing your work

Training opportunities on how to market your work are provided by Creative New Zealand, DANZ and other organisations

NZ Dance News Information Service

Provides daily information online diary listings to the New Zealand dance industry, by email. Send listings to raewyn@nzdancenews.co.nz

List your performance/event on the DANZ Diary:

<http://www.danz.org.nz/Listings/diaryentry.php>

Free listing sites for publicising your work, for example: www.eventfinder.co.nz ; www.wotzon.com ; www.bethere.co.nz

News websites to send your press release to, for example: www.scoop.co.nz ; www.stuff.co.nz ; www.voxy.co.nz

PANNZ – Performing Arts Network of New Zealand

Provides support for the professional performing arts sector including an annual arts market; develop your pitching/selling skills to sell your event to festivals/venues:
www.pannz.org.nz

Opportunities for funding

Creative New Zealand: www.creativenz.govt.nz

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage has an interactive cultural funding guide:
www.mch.govt.nz/funding-guide/

DANZ has a full list of funding organisations, including government grants, community trusts and funders: www.danz.org.nz/funding.php

Training Opportunities and Career Development:

Arts training

Creative New Zealand and other arts organisations/projects run a range of specialist seminars, workshops and forums

Tertiary training

DANZ web site has a list of all tertiary and full time dance courses:
www.danz.org.nz/tertiary_courses.php

DANZ training opportunities

See the DANZ workshop programme for professional development opportunities:
www.danz.org.nz/workshops.php

DANZ can provide mentoring for DANZ members, as well as advice on placements and internships

Local City Council's run workshops e.g. business development, event management, promotion and funding

Go to your local council website for local workshop information, for example Wellington's 'Get Set Go' resource on community event management
www.wellington.govt.nz/services/eventplnsup/training/training.html

Continuing professional development

To maintain physical and technical stamina attend regular classes, for example Dancelab at Otago University (Dunedin):
www.physed.otago.ac.nz/dance/dancelab.html

Raising the Barre (Wellington): www.raisingthebarre.co.nz

IndepenDANCE (Auckland): www.independancenz.org/

To develop choreography attend workshop master classes when available, for example DANZ workshop programme and festival master classes

To develop teaching best practice see DANZ workshop programme;
New Zealand Association of Dance Teachers, for information on best practice:
www.nzadt.org.nz

To develop teaching skills contact dance syllabus organisations, for example:
New Zealand Federation of Dance Teachers: www.nzfdt.co.nz
Royal Academy of Dance: www.rad.org.nz
British Ballet Organisation: www.bbo.org.nz
International Dance Teachers Association: www.idta.co.nz
Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing: www.istd.org

Scholarships

There are a number of dance scholarships available, for a full list see the DANZ funding guide www.danz.org.nz/resources.php, for example:

Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance

www.carolineplummer.org.nz/tributes_fellow.htm

Eileen May Norris Dance Scholarship

www.publictrust.co.nz/grants-and-scholarships/how-do-i-find-one/grants/eileen-may-norris-dance-scholarship.htm

Career development resources on DANZ website

www.danz.org.nz/resources

Advice and information on a range of subjects including, production, funding, education, career, health and community dance

Career development beyond and within dance – resources on other websites

Career Transition for Dancers: <http://www.careertransition.org/About>

Dancers Career Development: <http://www.thedcd.org.uk/>

Ausdance: http://www.ausdance.org.au/professional_practice/dance-career-development/dance-career-development-articles.html

What the professionals say

DANZ asked a number of dance professionals, who have had sustained careers in the dance industry, to comment on their experiences, the choices they have made and how they have managed their careers.

1. *What do you think are the main skills needed to survive in the current dance industry?*

- Multi faceted skills – i.e. teaching, choreographing, performing, grant writing, creative problem solving
- An ongoing physical practice, such as yoga, and a desire to look after the body as an instrument
- Business skills and good time management
- Upskilling and trying different roles within the dance industry
- Talent, flexibility, perseverance, imagination, dedication and discipline
- Administration, teaching and organisational skills have been very valuable for me, organising a show is similar to organising any event and the skills are extremely transferable
- An ability to think outside the square to find solutions to creative and logistical puzzles

2. *How have you developed these skills?*

- Taking every opportunity and learning from it whether positive or negative
- Workshops, mentoring, learning on the job
- Consciously setting out to learn a set of skills
- Finding ways to make things happen and believing that you can make them happen
- Evaluating how things went to learn for the future

3. *How has your career changed over the years?*

- Diversified as the years have gone by in order to survive
- Moved from being a performer to teacher and choreographer; from being employed by a company to being self employed, to running own company
- Moved from wanting to just dance for others, to choreography, to the development of the industry, to different techniques and approaches to training the body
- My production skills are better these days and I have a clearer understanding of WHY I make work and how I want dance to connect with a sense of community

4. *What other income streams do you have to support your core role?*

- Teaching
- Choreographing
- Writing and reviewing
- Recording oral histories
- Teaching pilates and yoga
- Rehearsal director
- Mentor

5. *How do you generate new business?*

- Network and references from previous jobs – doing a good job on all jobs is paramount, making sure you look after people and work well with people is also a focus
- Creating excitement and energy around potential ideas generates the ability for those ideas to grow
- Self generated projects, which involves lots of grant writing and thinking
- Hustle, hustle and maintain a visible profile

6. *How do you manage your planning and finances?*

- Annual and career plan
- Do all day-to-day finances (GST, PAYE etc), with an accountant employed for end of year accounts
- Have an accountant and a business to put all my expenses and income through (as I am a contractor)

7. *What should the tertiary sector be doing to prepare students for a sustainable career in the dance industry?*

- Work placement, secondments and apprenticeships are vital
- How to write grants, teach and creative problem solve
- Understand how to network; communications and group management
- The definition of 'success' is too narrow, we need to celebrate other pathways
- People have always had to create their own opportunities in this country (and overseas), and this will continue to be the case, the tertiary sector needs to reinforce this by making students realize that they will largely be self employed contractors. To do this they need to be self motivated, have a good business sense and a creative approach to the art form

8. *What advice would you give to young people starting out in the industry?*

- Being a performer requires knowing more than just dancing. Update your skills where possible and grab opportunities to develop and grow along the way
- Be determined, be honest with yourself, get a mentor whose opinion you trust, don't be afraid to ask, learn how to write a grant, take every opportunity that comes your way and look after yourself
- Really know your skill, understand what your strengths are and be confident when approaching people
- Honour your creative impulses, view yourself as an athlete and if something frustrates you do something about it
- Have a passion for all dance, and work hard to make it happen for yourself

For more DANZ resources see DANZ website resources page,
www.danz.org.nz/resources.php

Thank you Creative New Zealand for supporting the development of professional resources.