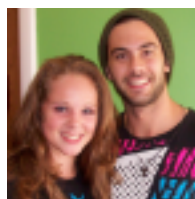


You're Invited

Host an event that attracts a crowd and bumps up your bottom line.

BY DEENA CAMPBELL

Retailers know that the best way to bring dancers into their store is to hold a can't-miss event. Whether it's a shoe fitting, themed sale day or celebrity meet and greet, you are sure to bring in the crowds—and the sales. *DRN* spoke to two dancers and a dance mom about the events they participated in and how they influenced their purchases.



Shawna Tyson with Kameron Bink from "SYTYCD"

Shawna Tyson, 16
D&K Studio of Dance
Hughesville, PA

Event: Freestyle Dancewear had a grand opening on August 23, 2008. It featured Kameron Bink from "So You Think You Can Dance."

Attendees had the opportunity to meet the reality show star, have their picture taken with him and get his autograph. Immediately after the in-store appearance, Bink taught a dance class at a nearby studio as part of the event.

Where: Freestyle Dancewear, Hughesville, PA

How did you find out about the event?

"Jo Steadman, teacher at the D&K Studio of Dance and owner of Freestyle Dancewear, advertised that she was bringing Kameron Bink to her store as part of the grand opening, and that we could sign up to meet him."

What did you like most about the event?

"I got to meet Kameron, get a picture with him and his autograph."

What made you decide to attend?

"I love Jo and I wanted to support her, and it was great to finally see the store open. I also love to

dance and I wanted to take Kameron's class."

Did attending the event influence your perception of the store hosting it?

"I thought Jo did very well at managing the store and the event. She showed us awesome clothing lines and new stuff for dance. She knew exactly what she was doing and she had a fun time doing it."

Did the event influence your decision to shop at the store?

"It was a grand opening, so I hadn't shopped there before. Now I shop there instead of going online because you can see the clothing and try it on. That's important to me when buying clothing; I like to know exactly what I'm getting."

Did the event introduce you to any new apparel lines or products?

"Jo introduced me to the colorful foot Undeez. They are amazing; I bought them because of the event. I also bought a Sugar and Bruno T-shirt there. I just like shopping, so attending events gives me an excuse to shop!"

What was the most interesting thing about the event?

"There was a magician to entertain the guests. He was a lot of fun."



Lisa Ritchie and her daughter Maddie

Lisa Ritchie, Wichita, KS

Events: Fifth Anniversary May Day Sale Event, which the store holds annually to celebrate its anniversary, and Bloch Rep Focus Group where participants had the chance to try on Bloch and Mirella shoes.

Where: Attitude's Dancewear, Etc., Wichita, KS

Why did you attend these events?


"My daughter has danced all her life, so I've always shopped there. The Annual May Day Sale Event is a time of celebration—the store has been a success and is well-liked in the dance community."

How did these events change your perception of the store hosting them?

"When the Bloch rep was there, it was a lot of fun because she really seemed interested in what the dancers, teachers and moms had to say. I enjoyed that time with her, and it was fun to watch the students and teachers from different studios interact and tell war stories."

Did these events make you more likely to purchase products?

"I shop there constantly for my daughter's needs. It truly is one of the cutest, coziest, quaintest stores you'll ever go into. I've been in several other dance retail shops, and they may have the same merchandise, but it's not the same dance atmosphere!"

"Shawna Beth Rea, the storeowner, and the people she is blessed to have working with her are truly creative geniuses in the decor and displays they generate. Best of all, they know what they're doing when fitting shoes, which is imperative." 

Deena Campbell is a freelance writer in New York City.



Caylin Lo, 17
Young People's Creative Dance Theater
Weston, CT

Event: The Dancer's Shop held a pointe shoe fitting to give dancers the opportunity to try on various types of pointe shoes and receive tips from professional fitters.

Where: The Dancer's Shop, New Haven, CT

Why did you attend this event?

"My dance teacher thought it would be great for me and other dancers from the studio to get new shoes. For some dancers it was their first time.

"She chose The Dancer's Shop because the owner, Tom, is very helpful. He provides lots of tips on how to hold yourself and put on the shoe properly."

Did the event influence your decision to shop at the store?

"I will go back. I'm very comfortable there, and they know what they are doing."

Did the event introduce you to any new apparel lines or products?

"I stayed with the same basic Bloch shoe; it's the best for my feet. But, I will say that some dancers tried on different styles that they hadn't been exposed to before. It was a learning experience."

Did the event make you more likely to purchase products?

"I've been dancing on Bloch shoes for several years. However, I am open to trying other types."

What other in-store events have you attended?

"I have attended other pointe shoe events, two of which have been at The Dancer's Shop, and I love them. I look forward to seeing everyone, and the employees are nice and helpful. It's just a fun experience, especially since trying on dance shoes is a big step for dancers."

Increase Sales with Celebrities

Retail owners give us the scoop on how getting celebrities to attend events reaps huge payoffs.

Patty Miller
Bloom Dance and Active Wear
Huntsville, AL

"When I attended the *Dance Retailer News* Expo in Las Vegas, I met Courtney Galiano, from "SYTYCD," and we instantly became friends. I asked her, 'Would you mind coming to my store for an event?' and she agreed.

"The event turned out to be a big deal, with 150 to 200 people in attendance, and a 75 percent increase in sales for the day—so it definitely paid for itself.

"Sure, we had flyers and we promoted everywhere, but she truly made the event. She's cute, personable and a great spokesperson. I believe that's what made people want to buy items. I give her lots and lots of credit for the event's success."

Laynie Terban
On Your Toes Dancewear
Peabody, MA

"My most successful event was my 20th anniversary celebration featuring Brian Friedman, who took photos with guests and signed autographs. Brian was a friend of ours and he drew in 400 to 500 customers. People came in from everywhere; it was amazing! That was four years ago, and I really don't know how to top it."

Jo Steadman
Freestyle Dancewear
Hughesville, PA

"I've had various events: Teacher Appreciation Days, Black Friday Sales, etc., but nothing was more rewarding than having Kameron Bink attend my grand opening. I advertised in local newspapers and he turned out to be a huge hit! I made \$1,000 more at my Kameron Bink event than at any other promotion or festivity.

"That was over a year ago, and to this day, shoppers are still talking about it. Customers are always looking for the next best thing so it's nice to provide them with what they want."