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## Efficiency and Effectiveness of Marketing Communication Tools on the Dance Schools Market Based on the Example of the Elita Dance Center in Kraków

**Abstract:** in recent years sport and physical activities in any form, including dance, are becoming more and more popular. As a result, there are many dance schools on the market. To stay on the market and acquire customers, dance schools use a variety of marketing communication tools. The aim of this article is to analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing communication instruments applied by one of Kraków dance schools – the Elita Dance Center. The methods implemented in this paper included case study, quantitative analysis of the data and interview. The data used in this article include the data on the activities of the dance school Elita Dance Center, as well as the results of research conducted by interview among the customers of this school. The Elita Dance Center is an efficient company. With each season it acquires more and more customers. However, the activities of marketing communication are not very productive. Promotion costs are increasing faster than the number of clients and income from the dance classes.

**Keywords:** dance; efficiency; effectiveness, marketing communication

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## Introduction

In the last decade, the demand for all services and products related to healthy living has increased. Sport and physical activity in every form, including through dance, have become popular. This trend is due to the promotion of health and physical activity in the media. Dance schools, as one of the facilities offering a package of sports activities, try to exploit this trend. As a result, there is a lot of competition between them.

To stay on the market and attract customers dance schools use a variety of marketing communication tools.

This article reports the findings of the case study regarding the Elita Dance Center, one of Kraków dance schools. The aim is to identify the situation of this particular school relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of its marketing communication instruments. The findings of the study do not necessarily reflect the position of all these types of companies, but may provide guidance and inspiration for other dance schools.

The article uses the following research methods: case study, quantitative data analysis and interview. The statistical information on the activities of the Elita Dance Center was obtained from its owners while own research by the interview method was conducted among the clients of this school.

## Business communication marketing tools

Marketing involves activities aimed at getting to know the needs of particular groups of customers and optimising the company's offer to the clients' expectations (Domański, Kowalski, 2000: 7; Niestrój, 2012: 20). Marketing covers many aspects, distinguished by the object and instruments of marketing activities. One of the essential elements of marketing activities is marketing communication, also described as promotion or marketing promotion. Marketing communication involves a set of activities and means by which a company communicates with the market and shapes relationships with its surroundings (Sznajder, 2002: 215). Promotional activities are primarily intended to attract potential and current customers to purchase products and services, thereby increasing the company's share of the market.

The marketing communication tools that create the promotion-mix system include advertising, personal sales, sales promotion and public relations (Wiktor, 2012). In addition to the marketing communication tools as mentioned earlier, Sznajder (2002) also indicates direct marketing and sponsorship.

Advertising is the most common form of marketing communication. It is an "im-personal, paid and mass-marketed form of market information aimed at presenting and supporting a particular buyer's offering" (Wiktor, 2012: 206). An important marketing communication tool is personal sales, also known as personal promotion or acquisition. Individual sales involve searching for customers, providing them with information and handling them during direct two-way communication (Blythe, 2002: 261). Sales promotion, referred to as an additional or complementary promotion, is a series of instruments aimed at generating substantial, additional, extraordinary and usually short-term incentives to increase the attractiveness of the offered goods and increase the buyer's willingness to buy (Wiktor, 2012: 215). Another element of promotion-mix is public relations. It is "a planned and permanent activity aimed at establishing and maintaining a good reputation and mutual understanding between the company and its surroundings, i.e. customers, employees, shareholders, trade unions, suppliers, politicians and the public" (Blythe, 2002: 139). Public relations activities are designed to shape a positive image of a company and prevent the dissemination of negative opinions on it. Direct marketing involves activities tailored to the needs of individual clients and building relationships with them. It is defined as "the process of identifying individual buyers, defining their needs and preferences, motivating them to buy and maintain relationships with them by

satisfying their individual needs” (Trojanowski, 2010: 32). Sponsorship means “an enterprise’s efforts to raise or build the value of its brand in the consumer’s consciousness through financing or co-financing of individual existing, most often sporting events. Within these developments, the sponsor has the right to place the logo of their product, the name of the company or the brand on all advertising surfaces at the sponsored person/institution” (Domański, Kowalski, 2000: 268–269).

Organisational conditions change due to social and economic change, technical progress and the development of new communication techniques. Variations in the business environment require adapting to new circumstances and seeking new ways to gain a competitive position on the market. A breakthrough in marketing communication was the use of the Internet. The global computer network creates new opportunities for communicating with the market. The Internet allows the collection, presentation and transmission of unlimited data and information. Therefore, it is a principal medium used for marketing communication. In the global network, all communication marketing instruments can be used in traditional communications, in addition to personal sales, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and sponsorship.

## Dance school market

Dance was known to people in all epochs. Also, it now plays an important role and has many different functions. It is a form of recreation; it can be a kind of entertainment for viewers; it also has a therapeutic function. Dance in Poland is becoming more and more popular. Participation in dance classes is an attractive way to spend free time. People dance for fun, to improve their physical condition and keep fit. Dance classes are attended by children and young people but also by a growing number of adults. Dancing is considered a pleasant form of physical activity.

Cinema and television are conducive to the popularisation of dance. There are a lot of film productions in the form of musicals in which dance takes up a lot of space. Its popularity has also been boosted by numerous television programs promoting dance. There are programs where participants compete in dance competitions, such as *Dancing with the Stars*; *You Can Dance*; *Got to Dance* and *Got Talent*.

TV programs, movies and musicals have increased the interest in dance and its teaching in recent years. Therefore, the supply of dance services in the market is growing. In Poland, there are many different types of dance schools. Dance classes are run by public and private companies. In Poland, dance and music-and-movement classes directed at children and young people, conducted by public entities, take place primarily in cultural centres, community clubs and youth palaces, as well as in schools, mainly primary and junior high.

There are also many private dance schools on the market. They operate on the principle of business enterprises, most often as individuals establishing such activity. In Polish law, there are no restrictions for people who want to open a dance school. No special permissions or permits are required for such activities. Dance schools operate by an entry in the business register.

The popularisation of healthy living in recent years in Poland has led to increase in the market demand for various sports and leisure activities. According to a survey of the Central Statistical Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny – GUS), in 2012, 45.9% of Poles

declared that they participated in sports or recreation activities, including 43.3% of women and 48.8% of men. It is higher than in the study conducted four years earlier. In 2008, people who participated in sports and leisure activities accounted for 37.5%, including 35.3% of women and 40.0% of men (*Uczestnictwo Polaków...*, 2009, 2013).

Among the various sports and leisure activities, the most popular are cycling and swimming (Table 1). In 2012, among those declaring sports activity, 12.3% reported that they participated in dance classes. In 2008, participation in dance classes was confirmed by 7.0%. It means that the popularity of dance and market demand for dance schools is increasing. The interest in dance is greater among women than men. In 2008, 9.9% of the women who declared participation in sports or leisure activities indicated dancing, and in 2012 an even greater proportion – 16.5%. Among men, only 4.2% reported involvement in dance classes, but four years later a little more – 7.9%.

Table 1. Participation of Poles in sports or recreational activities by type of classes

Type of activity	Total		Women		Men	
	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012
	%					
Cycling	54.8	66.0	55.5	67.2	54.1	64.8
Swimming	37.2	39.9	35.6	37.8	38.7	42.1
Playing football	23.2	20.2	3.9	4.4	42.0	36.7
Playing volleyball	14.5	13.8	14.0	13.3	15.0	14.3
Dancing	7.0	12.3	9.9	16.5	4.2	7.9
Jogging & Nordic walking	n.a.*	12.0	n.a.	15.8	n.a.	8.1
General physical activity and physical fitness improvement	n.a.	11.6	n.a.	13.2	n.a.	10.0
Aerobic, fitness, yoga, gymnastics	9.4	11.6	15.9	19.5	3.1	3.4
Skating, skateboarding, roller skating	8.2	10.6	9.7	12.2	6.7	9.0
Playing tennis	3.0	9.3	2.1	9.4	3.9	9.2
Ice skating	n.a.	8.0	n.a.	9.3	n.a.	6.7
Playing basketball	8.2	8.0	5.5	5.7	10.9	10.3
Fishing	4.8	7.4	1.4	1.7	8.2	13.3
Skiing, snowboarding	7.6	7.2	6.1	5.6	9.1	8.8
Strength sports and bodybuilding	6.7	5.5	2.9	1.7	10.4	9.4

\*n.a. – not available

Source: *Uczestnictwo Polaków...* (2009, 2013).

Most people involved in dance, i.e. 22.4%, are in the age group of 20–29. Also, a relatively large number of dancers are in the 30–39 age group (16.9%) and the 15–19 age group (13.1%). It does not mean, however, that people aged 20–29 are the best customers of dance schools, as most of them dance occasionally. Probably they do not use the services of dance schools and any organised classes at all. The highest proportion of people systematically going to dance classes is found in the group of the youngest children aged

5–9 and in the group of children aged 10–14. Most of them take part in dance classes once or twice a week. On this basis, it can be stated that children up to the age of 14 represent the most significant part of the customers for dance schools.

In Kraków there are 72 dance schools operated by private companies. They have an extensive offer of dance classes. The most popular are ballroom dancing, available in 43 schools. Some schools, in addition to dance courses, also train dance pairs that participate in various dance tournaments. Teaching jazz dance is also popular and is offered by 19 schools. Many schools run hip-hop classes (19 schools), and teaching Latin dances has become fashionable in recent years. Salsa can be practised in 21 schools, while Bachata in 7 institutions. Also, schools offer lessons from classical ballet (15) and modern dance (10). Among the wide offer, there are many other styles of dance, including tango, swing, dancehall, popping, Kizomba, rock & roll and even folk dance, court dances and belly dancing.

The largest number of dance schools is located in the centre of Kraków. There are 26 schools in the Old Town (District I). Many schools are also located in District IV Prądnik Biały (7 schools), District V Krowodrza (7 schools) and District II Grzegorzki (5 schools). In some areas, there is no dance school at all, i.e. in the District XIV Czyżyny and in the District XVII Wzgórza Krzesławickie.

### Characteristics of the Elita Dance Center in Kraków

The Elita Dance Center was founded in 2009. It is located in the District X Swoszowice in Kraków. The company acts as the only dance school in this district of Kraków.

The school offers classes for children, teenagers and adults with a variety of dance techniques such as ballroom dancing, hip-hop, jazz, ballet, modern dance and popping. At present, there are more than 200 permanent dancers and more than 200 students. Their numbers are still growing. The dance school is characterised by the fact that apart from conducting dance courses, it also holds classes for ballroom dancing competition couples, as well as activities for dance formations. Dance formations are offered to people who are interested in dancing in a professional dance group which, in addition to the training, takes part in performances, various competitions, artistic reviews as well as Polish, European and World Championships. In addition to the dance school Elita Dance Center, classes to such dance formations are only run in three other schools in Kraków: Funky Free Dance School, Iskra Dance Studio and Wena Dance School. Also, the company offers individual dance lessons. It also organises occasional training, such as the first wedding dance for newlyweds.

The Elita Dance Center is also the organiser of the two-day International Dance Competition Cracow Open Dance Championships. Every year it attracts thousands of dancers from all over the world who compete at the WDFS Cracow Open Dance Competition in the ballroom dance category, and Salt City Dance Festival in modern dance. The school is also the organiser of dance and sports camps which take place twice a year, in winter and summer. They are both outing camps set up in Hucisko and permanent camp set in the school. The Elita Dance Center, in addition to classes in the club, also cooperates with primary schools and kindergartens, training children and youth in extracurricular activities with various dance techniques.

The Elita Dance Center uses a variety of marketing communication tools. First and foremost, they advertise by running a website. It provides various information on types of classes, dates, prices, dance instructors and events. The school also communicates with its clients through Facebook. Moreover, the company prints brochures that are distributed on a variety of occasions, such as in schools, parent meetings in schools, shows and other events. Brochures and posters are displayed in the school itself and around Kraków and in places where various events are organised. The company also offers direct sale. It provides information to parents of students at school meetings and encourages them to enrol their children in dance classes. The clients get information about their offer, e.g. organised dance camps.

The dance school also uses sales promotion tools, such as free first class participation. For the best students, the school offers the first month of classes in the next school year for free. For those who participate in more than one course, the price of the second one is reduced by 50%. Besides, the school organises demonstration lessons which are free of charge. They take place on the campus, but also in primary and junior high schools. There are also dance shows by pairs and dance groups, for example during various school celebrations where dancers attend or at specially organised shows. Customers receive occasional gadgets. The company also uses internal promotions, directed at own employees and dance instructors. It holds meetings and team integration trips and offers occasional small gifts.

The Elita Dance Center also carries out public relations activities. Dance class participants take part in various competitions and dance contests, which contribute to building the company's image on the market. Moreover, they participate in different types of TV dance programs. The company itself is the organiser of dance tournaments. The most important and famous of them is the Cracow Open Dance Championships, which has been organised for several years. Twice a year, the school also hosts out-of-class dance camps for children.

From the beginning of the company's activity, the number of pupils in the school system was increasing systematically. In the first year (school year 2009/2010) there were 255 students, and during the academic year 2014/2015 their number grew to 712. With the increasing number of customers, the school's income increased. The income connected with the organised dance classes by the Elita Dance Center was calculated according to the payments made by customers for different types of courses. In the first year of operation of the company (school year 2009/2010) the revenues amounted to PLN 215,440. In subsequent years the income increased, and in the school year 2014/2015 they amounted to PLN 685,040.

The company incurred some costs associated with marketing communication activities. Not all spending can be specified in detail, e.g. related to the time spent by the owners to prepare different events. The costs associated with promotion included expenses related to running the school website and Facebook profile, the cost of printing leaflets, posters and banners, the cost of gadgets distributed to customers, expenses related to organising tournaments, and salaries for teachers performing demonstration lessons. These costs were relatively small at the start of operation. In the first year, they were PLN 3,000. Since the school year 2012/2013, these costs increased significantly. The school began to use promotional instruments more intensively. Organisational costs increased particularly since the company began its operations on a larger scale and undertook

the organisation of annual international tournaments. In the school year 2014/2015, promotion costs amounted to PLN 29,150.

### Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing communication instruments used by the Elita Dance Center

The assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing communication tools of the Elita Dance Center was based on the data obtained from the school owners. The effective action is considered the one that leads to the intended goal. The efficiency of promotion is determined by the degree of achievement of the intended goals. The main effect of marketing activities is the ability to create cash flows (Kłeczek, 2012: 10). When evaluating the efficiency of marketing communications activities, the costs incurred to achieve the goal are not taken into account.

Efficiency was assessed by the increase in the number of students in each year. Its assessment was based on the measure of the Efficiency of Promotional Activities (EPA), which defines the relationship between the realised and set goals (Datko, 2008).

$$EPA = \frac{\text{achieved goal of promotional activities}}{\text{set goal of promotional activities}}$$

The school's goal was to systematically increase the number of customers by 20% each year. Therefore, the actual increase in the number of pupils in the school (the purpose of promotion activities) was calculated for the efficiency test and compared to the set goal (Table 2). In general, it can be said that the company's activities were efficient because the increase in the number of clients was greater than 20% and the EPA ratio was higher than 1. The exception was one school year 2011/2012, in which the school failed to achieve the target. However, it was only the second season of the school activity. In subsequent years the efficiency was already greater.

Table 2. Increase in the number of students of the Elita Dance Center (real and set)

School year	Number of students	Increase in the number of students compared to the previous year			Value of the EPA indicator
		Real		Set	
		Numer of students	Increase (%)	Increase (%)	
2010/2011	340	85	33.3	20.0	1.7
2011/2012	346	6	1.8	20.0	0.1
2012/2013	462	116	33.5	20.0	1.7
2013/2014	576	114	24.7	20.0	1.2
2014/2015	712	136	23.6	20.0	1.2

Source: own work

The effectiveness of marketing communication can be defined as the relation between the achieved effects and the effort it incurs. Promotional activities can be directed in two directions: minimising the expenditures or maximising effects (Czubała et al., 2006: 253).

In assessing effectiveness, unlike is evaluating efficiency, the costs incurred are taken into consideration. The effectiveness of marketing communication activities was assessed in two ways. The first was the use of the marketing Key Performance Indicator KPI (Datko, 2008):

$$KPI = \frac{\text{effects of promotional activities}}{\text{expenditures on promotional activities}}$$

According to this model, the effects of promotional activities, i.e. Income from dance education and the expenses on the promotional activities, i.e. costs incurred for such activities, were compared (Table 3). In the first years, the KPI index was high, but then it began to decline. That means that the effectiveness of the company was decreasing. Increasingly, the costs of promotional activities did not translate into effectiveness. It can also be seen that the costs of promotion increased more than the company's revenues.

Table 3. Revenues earned from dance classes and the costs of marketing communication by the Elita Dance Center

School year	Revenue (PLN)	Revenue growth (%)	Expenses (PLN)	Expense growth (%)	KPI index
2009/2010	215 440	x	3000	x	71.8
2010/2011	326 900	51.7	4050	35.0	80.7
2011/2012	354 540	8.5	4650	14.8	76.2
2012/2013	467 220	31.8	15 950	243.0	29.3
2013/2014	577 380	23.6	22 900	43.6	25.2
2014/2015	685 040	18.6	29 150	27.3	23.5

Source: own work

The second method of assessing effectiveness was the use of the cost per sale index (CPS) (Nestorowicz, 2007):

$$CPS = \frac{\text{costs of marketing activities}}{\text{number of clients acquired in the campaign}}$$

The model compares the costs of marketing communication activities and the number of school clients (Table 4). The CPS indicates the unit cost per customer. In each school year, the value of the CPS increased. It means that the unit cost per client was growing while the effectiveness of promotional activities was decreasing. Also, it can be seen that the cost increase was greater than the increase in the number of customers. Studies show that promotional activities of the Elita Dance Center were efficient, but their effectiveness decreased in subsequent years of the company operation.

Table 4. Costs of marketing communication and the number of customers gained by the Elita Dance Center

School year	Costs (PLN)	Costs growth (%)	Total number of customers	Customer growth (%)	CPS value
2010/2011	4050	35.0	340	33.3	11.9
2011/2012	4650	14.8	346	1.8	13.4
2012/2013	15,950	243.0	462	33.5	34.5

2013/2014	22,900	43.6	576	24.7	39.8
2014/2015	29,150	27.3	712	23.6	40.9

Source: own work

Another method used for the article was the interview. The interview tool was a self-developed questionnaire survey addressed to the customers of the Elita Dance Center, namely the people taking part in their dance classes. For younger children aged 5–8, parents were asked to complete the questionnaire on their behalf.

82 people participated in the study, mostly women. There were 75 of them, which constituted 91.5% of the respondents. The survey was attended by seven men or 8.5% of the interviewees. Among the respondents, there were participants of all ages. Most of them were 13–16 years old, namely 23 (28.0% of the respondents). The study also included 21 participants aged 9–12 years, 14 aged 5–8 years, 14 aged 17–20 years and 10 participants over 21 years old.

Although the Elita Dance Center is located in Kraków in the District X Swoszowice, it attracts students from different parts of the city, as well as from other towns located in the vicinity. More than half of the respondents (47 people, 57.3%) live in close neighbourhoods of Kraków and Swoszowice, on the south side, such as Golkowice, Mogilany, Konary, Gaj, Libertow, Włosoń, Rzeszotary and Wieliczka. Twenty people (24.4% of the respondents) live in Swoszowice alone. The remaining 15 people (18.3%) live in other districts of Kraków.

Respondents participate in different types of dance classes. Most of them (61 people, 74.4%) are members of tournament groups. Apart from them, 15 interviewees take part in dance courses and 6 in individual lessons.

The subjects were asked why they decided to enrol in a dance school to see what motivated them to dance. The most often cited reason was the desire to learn dance, followed by a wish to have enjoyable leisure activities and the desire to take part in competitions and dance tournaments. Such reasons give hope to the dance school that pupils will want to develop a bond to it for longer.

Then the respondents were asked why they chose the Elita Dance Center. The aim was to see whether the marketing communication tools the school used had an impact on the choice. The most frequently mentioned reason for choosing this dance school was its proximity to the client's place of residence. A frequent response was also that customers liked the demonstration lesson. Besides, it was important that the school was recommended by friends and acquaintances who themselves attended this school. Customers were also encouraged by the show prepared by dance class participants. On the other hand, very rarely it was claimed that the enrolment was supported by school leaflets or the offer of free lessons. No person was encouraged by the banner ads. On this basis, it can be concluded that the marketing communication tools used had a diverse impact on the acquisition of customers. The most important was the organisation of demonstration lessons that encouraged the enrolment to the Elita Dance Center, as well as the organisation of dance shows and dance camps. On the other hand, the promotion methods such as leaflets, banners and offers of free lessons proved to be ineffective.

As for the sources of information about the Elita Dance Center, the question of how the students learned about the existence of the school was most often answered that from the Internet, from friends and information posted on the premises of the school they

attend. On the other hand, the personal knowledge of the staff of the Elita Dance Center and the information provided to the parents of the children at the meetings of their schools was of the utmost importance. It means that in the case of providing information, a useful tool was the Internet advertising, posters, and brochures placed in various outlets.

Of those who participated in the survey, 54.9% of the respondents (45 people) stated this school was the first dance school they attended. By contrast, 37 people, or 45.1%, were the individuals who moved from other dance schools. Among the latter respondents, the most common reason for this move was that the school was recommended by their friends. The second reason was the proximity of the school to the place of residence. Then there were responses that people were encouraged by the dance shows they watched and the fact that their classmates also attended the school. The decision to transfer to the Elita Dance Center was completely unaffected by leaflets and banners, advertising on the Web and Facebook, and the offer of the first lesson or the first month of classes for free. It can be said that the decision to move from other dance schools to the Elita Dance Center was not affected by the marketing communication tools.

In the case of a company like a dance school, it is important not only to attract customers but above all to keep them for longer, through successive seasons of learning. Therefore one of the questions in the survey concerned whether the respondents intended to continue their studies at the Elita Dance Center. All respondents answered affirmatively. It can be interpreted positively, that the school had a chance to retain customers for a long time.

The last question was about what customers liked most in the Elita Dance Center. The respondents were most satisfied with their progress in dancing. The second most popular response was the opportunity to participate in tournaments and contests. Also, the participants often noted that they liked their classes, the fact they could attend dance camps and that they liked the teacher in charge of the course. On the other hand, marketing communications such as offering gadgets, organising picnics, sending information to customers and distributing advertising leaflets did not matter.

## Conclusions

Communication with the environment is one of the most important aspects of business operations. Marketing communication tools are used by various market players, including dance schools.

The case study in this article is the dance school Elita Dance Center, operating in Kraków. This company has been on the market for several years, with good results. Every season it attracts more and more customers. However, the effectiveness of marketing communications instruments used by the school is not very high. Expenditures spent on promotion are growing faster than the increase in the number of clients and income from dance classes.

The success of the Elita Dance Center in attracting and retaining customers owes mainly to the high level of dance education. It translates into student progress and their satisfaction with the services of this company. The students reported that they enjoyed their growth, were happy with their classes and liked their teachers. The strong side of the school was conducting dance formations. A large proportion of the students declared that it was important for them to participate in tournaments and dance competitions,

especially that apart from the Dance Center Elite, only three other dance schools in Kraków organise such classes.

Besides, the school has a favourable location. It is the only such facility in the District X Swoszowice, the southernmost district of Kraków. Thanks to this, it can attract customers not only from this part of Kraków but also nearby towns located on the south side of the city. It is important because a large proportion of the respondents stated that the principal motive for choosing a school was its proximity to the place of residence. It was also a good idea to organise dance classes outside the company's premises, in primary schools and cultural centres in the suburbs.

As far as marketing communication tools were concerned, demonstration lessons, dance shows, dance camps, and participation in dance competitions and tournaments proved to be the most effective. You can also say that the company earned its positive image with hard work. Many people used its services by the recommendation of their friends. On the other hand, what was unimportant for the acquisition and maintenance of customers was advertising in the form of leaflets and banners, as well as promotional offers in the form of free lessons. Online advertising, posters and brochures placed in various institutions were a good source of information about the school, but the choice clients made was influenced by other factors.

Perhaps the company should intensify its promotional activities. However, it must be borne in mind that the market for dance services is limited and customers are bound to the location of dance schools. Consequently, it could prove that more intensive promotion would not produce more results. The good strategy of the company to continue is to step towards the client, by organising dance activities closer to clients' place of residence, i.e. outside of the dance school's premises, at various other institutions: primary schools or cultural centres. The conclusions of the analysis of the case of the Elita Dance Center may guide the future for this company as well as other dance schools operating on the market.

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