

Teambuilding workshops for businesses – on the dance floor

By: [Jennifer Bissell](#) Posted date: March 14, 2013 In: [Employee Training](#), [Fairfield](#), [Featured](#), [Human Resources](#) | comment : [1](#)



Groups learn to overcome barriers on the dance floor. Photo courtesy of Arthur Murray Grande Ballroom.

Looking for better teamwork, more efficiency and higher profit margins?

For timid employees, nothing breaks the ice quite like group dance classes, says Christine Georgopulo, owner of The Arthur Murray Grande Ballroom of Greenwich.

The dance studio is partnering with RSL Consulting Group L.L.C., also based in Greenwich, to offer team-building workshops for businesses.

"We guide you out of your comfort zone," said Georgopulo. "Dancing is a great way to break down barriers. You're physically touching each other."

Since purchasing the Grande Ballroom about two years ago, Georgopulo has offered corporate team-building courses in addition to her regular private lessons and group classes. The studio is one of five in Connecticut to offer corporate dance classes in addition to two studios in Manhattan with similar offerings, Georgopulo said.

Corporate dance courses have become increasingly popular in London and Australia, Georgopulo said, adding that she's the first in the area to partner with a formal consulting group in an effort to expand the ballroom's corporate clientele.

The companies announced their partnership earlier this month, and plan to offer customized packages that will combine traditional classroom work with on-the-floor dance moves.

"People get bored with the same old team building exercises," she said. "When you incorporate dance into it, it brings in a totally different element."

RSL Consulting recently opened an office in Greenwich and also has a corporate presence in Philadelphia.

The firm provides leadership and management development consulting centered on organizational goals, strategy formulation and creating a corporate vision.

Representatives of RSL — short for Responsible Sustainable Leadership — could not be reached.

Georgopulo said corporate dance classes have become an increasingly important aspect of her business.

The standard course begins with a casual meet-and-greet routine of turn patterns and body motions. Then, unlikely couples are paired together based on recommendations of a company's human resources department, thereby breaking up cliques and forcing people who don't work well together to collaborate as a pair.

After several moves are taught, which involve lead-and-follow nonverbal communication, the teams are all judged in a competition.

"It gets into your soul and you learn about yourself," Georgopulo said. "All the things you learned in corporate consulting are now three dimensional. The impact is far greater."

Georgopulo said that leaders in dance, much like in life, need to be able to communicate their goals and give cues to their partners of what they're about to do. If there's no signal, the dance breaks down.

By teaching employees how to confidently communicate with each other and break down existing barriers, Georgopulo said businesses are likely to see a much more efficient workforce that has fewer errors and increased profits.

"When you empower the individual, you improve the team," she said.

Especially through her individual courses, Georgopulo said she's seen the lessons she teaches dramatically improve people's lives. One man who took the course gained so much confidence, she said, he completely revamped his upscale roofing company, selling off portions of the business and freeing up more time for himself.

"Everybody can dance," she said. "If you can walk without falling down, you can dance. It's all about getting into touch with your soul and letting it come out."