



Junxion worked with the senior management team as well as distinguished alumni to create a *new strategic plan* for this performing arts academy

Case Study: Urdang Academy

Founded in 1970, *Urdang Academy* was established as a response to the lack of diversity in ballet. The academy is now one of the UK's leading performing arts schools with a deserved reputation for its inclusive approach and its

high-quality training for a career in musical theatre and dance. With two buildings ten minutes apart in central London, the academy has a distinctively urban feel that differentiates it from its peers in the highly competitive field of performing arts schools.



The Junxion team were easy to work with and *helped us see ourselves more clearly*. Thanks to their support, we now have a new strategic plan that has got us all really excited about Urdang's future."

Solange Urdang, *Managing Director*,
Urdang Academy

Urdang sought Junxion's help in creating a new strategic plan and vision that would keep them ahead.

The Business Challenge

Urdang sought Junxion's help in creating a new strategic plan and vision that would take the academy to the next level. The academy has always had an inclusive ethos of 'everyone individual' and a reputation for accepting students with a talent regardless of looks or background. Having expanded into musical theatre and dance, and established an innovative 'track' system for students to explore their talent to the full, the academy had earned an 'Outstanding' assessment from Ofsted. Offering both diplomas and degree courses with a new university partner, the question the Board challenged the senior managers with was: 'where is *Urdang* going next?'

With a forthcoming investment in new marketing collateral, this process also needed to consider the brand touchstones and value proposition.

How We Helped

Working directly to the managing director and with the involvement of the Board and the whole senior leadership team, Junxion facilitated a three-month process leading to a new strategic plan. To ensure the academy was not just 'talking to itself', we also engaged academy alumni and industry associates.

Through desk research and interviews, we uncovered perspectives and opinions that helped the senior leadership team reflect on its management approaches and establish how they wanted to move forward.

Collecting about 25 staff and associates together for an intense workshop, we drew on design thinking practices to help the group think creatively about possible future steps before helping them to select the most interesting routes ahead. The process threw up some unexpected directions as well as confirming the potential of some ideas that had not previously been pursued.

We brought all the inputs together into six priority areas covering academic, outreach and financial areas of work. The final plan was approved and is now being used to guide annual business planning as well as quarterly work programmes and new staff induction.



Measures of Success

At time of writing, the new plan is only just being rolled out so any concrete achievements are still to come. However, the senior management team commented on how helpful they found the process and that it was the 'shot in the arm' they needed to think bigger. Similarly, the workshop enthused and inspired the wider group of staff and associates who are all very excited about the steps ahead.

We will have the opportunity to see how the project unfolds in the next few months as Junxion's Adam Garfunkel continues to provide strategic counsel to the managing director, assisting her in rolling out the plan.