

# Enabling the Vision of the New Zealand School of Dance

## THE CHALLENGE:

“We had a blue-sky wishlist which we needed to convert to clear steps that both the management team and the Board could agree on.”

*Garry Trinder, Director of NZ School of Dance*

Established nearly 50 years ago, the New Zealand School of Dance (“NZSD”) is one of Australasia’s leading dance training institutions, preparing students for careers in classical ballet and contemporary dance. It has around eighty gifted students from New Zealand, throughout Asia-Pacific and further afield, with 75% of these students gaining performance contracts within six months of graduating. With an impressive faculty of teaching staff, choreographers, and international guest tutors, the School produces highly talented dancers with a practical two or three-year qualification.

The School is directed by Garry Trinder alongside a management team of teaching, support and administrative staff. Garry knew that to achieve the School’s vision of producing exceptional classical and contemporary dancers, they would need more space - the second and third year students are currently sharing studio space for lessons which is not the optimal way to develop their skills. MSH had been working with Te Whaea Services (“TWS”), the company which manages the building for NZSD and Toi Whakaari, the New Zealand Drama School.



From this work, MSH already understood the constraints relating to space and funding. Garry wanted to communicate the issues to the Board so that they had confidence in Garry and his leadership team taking ownership. Having been part of the TWS work, Garry knew that what MSH could provide was a robust process that would produce a logical strategy which both the Board and the leadership team could agree on. “We needed a focused and clear method for how to get from where we are today to where we want to be in the future. To achieve this, we needed to get everyone in the organisation on the same path, with buy-in at every level,” explains Garry.

To enable Garry and his team to achieve this, MSH applied their four step strategy process:

## Step 1. Unify the Direction

To set a clear direction, MSH facilitated a workshop with the School’s management team to work out and agree the three elements which would need to combine to enable the achievement of the School’s vision—understanding what they were striving to be best in the world at, what gets them out of bed in the morning and what the key measure of success as a business would be. “The preparedness of the MSH team meant the workshop was really productive and added significant value,” says Garry.

## Step 2. Map the Strategy

Once the elements of driving the vision were understood, the ownership measures, customer offering and processes to get there could be mapped. A key outcome was the ability to clearly articulate to the Board the importance of investing in more studio space to increase the quality of students, rather than just the number of students. The strategy map allowed Garry to illustrate how this intrinsically related to the School’s vision, and the steps required to get there.

## THE OUTCOME:

“The management team have gained confidence, adaptability and momentum by having a well-defined strategy. Consequently, their conversations with the Board have become significantly more focused and robust.”

*Mary Lewis, NZ School of Dance Board Member*

## Step 3. Align Resources to Results

With the one-page strategy map, the Board had an unambiguous roadmap for realising the School’s vision, and had confidence that Garry and the management team were prioritising results in key areas.

Deploying the MSHOnline reporting tool then gave the management team a cohesive approach and a clear reference point for moving the strategy from the theoretical to the practical. “Everyone is on the same path and the reporting is arranged to give the appropriate levels of detail for the management team and the Board,” says Garry. “It also provides a structured forum to hear from all the different departments in an outcome focused manner.”

## Step 4. Embed the Strategy

Establishing a Strategy Management Office within the School’s leadership team has empowered them to take ownership of the strategy, while still allowing a comprehensive relationship with the MSH team.

Garry summarises, “The benefit of using MSH goes beyond just their methodology—they are accessible and articulate, and know when to step in and when to be hands-off. They’ve provided us with both the tools and the confidence to communicate successfully with the Board.”

For more information visit [www.mshconsulting.co.nz](http://www.mshconsulting.co.nz)