

## How is Leading a Zumba Class Like Leading an Organization?

As I am about to celebrate my 15-year anniversary of leading Zumba Fitness classes, it occurred to me that there are several similarities between leading a Zumba class and leading an organization. I know what you're thinking – that's an odd comparison. How could leading a fitness class compare to leading a whole organization?

First, Zumba is dance fitness, choreographed to Latin and world music: Salsa, Reggaeton, Bollywood, and more.

As you can imagine, the primary job of a Zumba Fitness instructor is to make sure the participants are not only engaging in physical activity, but also having fun and staying motivated.

A smart instructor does not simply stand in front of the room and lead movements. They actually move about the room giving participants attention and motivation by dancing and laughing with them. This fun factor is one of the keys to engagement.

Imagine leaders and managers who often engage with their teams with positive reinforcement? Employees would feel more satisfied.

Moreover, workers want to feel connected to the higher purpose of the company, and engaging with the leadership can contribute to that need.

The next phase of leading a Zumba class is *cueing*.

This is how the students know when and where to move. Cueing requires a talent for true multi-tasking. The instructor is thinking about the music and the current set of steps, while simultaneously preparing to cue the next move.

For leaders, cueing is equally important. When and how should cueing happen? When planning a major change, how much advance warning do you supply? And how well do you engage and prepare the teams for the change? Do you simply dictate that a change is coming or do you engage the teams to contribute to the requirements?

Finally, managers are planning for future projects. Simultaneously they're tracking current projects, ensuring workers have all the necessary resources. They're helping them navigate their career. Most importantly, they are spending enough time with each team member individually and as a group. They are instilling fun into the workday by going for occasional walks or lunches or a fun outing. And they're listening to and recognizing employees for their hard work in the way they wish to be recognized.

In all of these ways leading an organization is similar to leading a Zumba Fitness class. A leader has to be aware of all parts of their organization simultaneously. They obviously have to have their eye on the bottom line before and during the current quarter. They have to ensure that their product or service is satisfying their customers. They have to make sure employees are happy and healthy and productive. And they have to stay connected to managers to make sure they are giving the best to their teams.