

MATCHUP: FROM RESEARCH OF THE PARTNER-SEARCH PROBLEM TO A MOBILE
APPLICATION FOR THE BALLROOM DANCE COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Ballroom dancing is a partner-dependent sport practiced by thousands of dancers in Ukraine and hundreds of thousands globally, yet finding a compatible dance partner remains a persistent, structurally unsolved problem. This thesis investigates the scale and nature of the partner-search problem within the Ukrainian ballroom dance community and proposes a mobile application – MatchUp – as a research-validated solution.

The research combined secondary analysis of existing platforms and market data with primary methods including seven semi-structured interviews, a survey across key user segments, and field observation at a national ballroom competition in Kyiv. Findings confirmed that 85% of dancers have actively searched for a partner, with most searches lasting over a month and 42% of respondents having considered quitting the sport as a result. No existing solution – Facebook groups, Instagram posts, outdated websites, or coach networks – offers structured filtering, verified profiles, or centralized supply.

In response, MatchUp was designed as a mobile-first matchmaking platform built around the criteria dancers actually use to evaluate compatibility. The MVP includes verified registration, media-rich profiles, advanced filtering, and a freemium subscription model – priced at \$5/month for the Ukrainian market and \$15/month for international users – directly informed by survey data and competitor benchmarking. The economic analysis confirms viability: break-even is reached at 18 paying subscribers, the Ukrainian market LTV:CAC reaches 3.5x in the base scenario, and the total addressable market scales to \$350M/year globally.

Beyond partner search, the research surfaced broader unmet needs – events listing, costume marketplace, and community features – positioning MatchUp as a future central platform for the entire ballroom dance community.

Keywords: ballroom dancing, partner search, mobile application, matchmaking, product development, freemium model, Ukraine

INTRODUCTION

Ballroom dancing is a paired sport practiced by both children and adults, amateurs and professionals. Although dancers can train solo, progress, competitions, and skill development depend on having a compatible partner. In Ukraine, the ballroom dance community is active, supported by the All-Ukrainian DanceSport and Breaking Federation, with hundreds of studios and thousands of participants in local and international competitions yearly. Despite this activity, finding a compatible partner remains a significant challenge. Dancers must match on: age, height, skills level, goals(professional/amateur), dance club affiliation, location etc.

Currently dancers rely on unstructured, inefficient methods for partner searching: Facebook, Instagram, coach networks, word-of-mouth referrals, outdated apps and websites. These solutions lack structured filtering, verification, and media-rich profiles, leading to prolonged search periods, high volumes of irrelevant and unsuitable candidates, significant manual effort in screening and communication. This problem affects the entire ecosystem: professional dancers lose form, amateur dancers lack motivation, parents experience stress and uncertainty, trainers struggle with continuity, and clubs face constant partner turnover.

To address this gap, this project proposes a mobile-first matchmaking app for ballroom dancers, designed to centralize partner search, apply structured filters, showcase verified profiles with photos and videos, and support faster, more reliable matching – bringing modern digital solutions to a clearly underserved, but globally active dance community.

CHAPTER 1. ANALYTICAL SECTION

1.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Research objectives:

- What is the scale of Ukraine's ballroom dance community/market?
- Who are the key players and what solutions already exist in finding a dance partner?
- What is the current partner search process: channels used, duration/frequency, pain points, impact on training/competitions/motivation?
- Who experiences the biggest problem with finding a partner in terms of gender, skill level?
- Does the market lack a modern solution for easy and quick partner search?
- What features would have the highest value in a digital partner-matching solution?

Data Sources

- Secondary:
 - Google searches on Ukrainian dance industry;
 - World DanceSport Federation(WDSF) data;
 - All-Ukrainian DanceSport and Breaking Federation(AUDSF) data;
 - existing solutions in the market;
 - social media analysis (#lookingfordancepartner, Instagram/Facebook/TikTok posts).

- Primary:
 - qualitative interviews with dancers, trainers, parents;
 - quantitative online survey of Ukrainian dance community;
 - Field observation by visiting ballroom clubs and FREEDOOM to People competition in Kyiv.

Secondary research flow

Secondary research began with systematic Google searches on the ballroom dance industry both in Ukraine and internationally. The focus was placed on the scale of the community, including the number of active dance clubs, frequency of competitions, participation trends, and recent developments. Key search queries included “ballroom dance partner search,” “development of ballroom dance sport in Ukraine,” “ballroom dance industry trends 2024-2025,” and similar terms. From there, the focus shifted to existing platforms: every dedicated partner-search website or app that could be found was looked at in terms of how active it was, what filters it offered, and how easy it was to actually use. Social media was a separate layer of research. Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok were scanned for hashtags like #lookingfordancepartner and #ballroomdance – not to count posts, but to understand how people actually behave when they are searching: what they write, what they struggle with, and how others respond. Finally, the official bodies – World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) and the All-Ukrainian DanceSport and Breaking Federation (AUDSF) – were examined for any data on club numbers, registered athletes, and competition activity. All findings were cross-referenced across multiple websites, reports, and social media trends.

1.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The goal of the qualitative research is to gain in-depth understanding of the current partner-search process in ballroom dancing, explore emotional, logistical, and social challenges, validate assumptions from secondary research, and identify key pain points and unmet needs to inform the design and features of the MatchUp app. Qualitative interviews provide rich narratives and unexpected insights into real-world behaviors and needs.

Semi-structured interview questions were designed to explore partner-search behavior and decision criteria(see Appendix A).

Target participants:

- competitive dancers;
- amateur dancers;
- parents of junior dancer;
- trainers.

It is important to examine both male and female dancers, as partner-search dynamics may differ by gender.

Recruitment channels:

- Leveraging existing personal contacts in the dance community (ongoing relationships from past dancing experience).
- Visit ballroom dance club – DSC (DSC Dance Studio)

- Visit FREEDOOM to People competition in Kyiv on February 7, 2026. (Freedom to People)

Sample size:

- 4 interviews with professional dancers (3 male and 1 female);
- 1 interview with amateur female dancer;
- 1 interview with a parent of junior dancer;
- 1 interview with a trainer.

Limitations:

- Sample primarily Kyiv-based due to researcher location and connections.
- Small number of interviews – focus on depth and different sides of the ecosystem, not statistical representativeness.

By approaching the problem from multiple angles – dancers' personal experiences, as professionals, as amateurs, parents' protective and managerial role, and trainers' perspective on student development and retention – the research will provide richer, more contextual insights. These will help to build user personas, prepare the quantitative survey, and define core MVP features for the MatchUp app to create a more effective partner-matching solution.

1.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The goal of the quantitative research is to measure the scale and frequency of the partner-search problem in ballroom dancing and validate assumptions identified during qualitative research (see Table 1.1). The results will help to validate the severity of the problem, identify key user segments, and

prioritize features for the future product. Data were collected using a structured online survey questionnaire (see Appendix B).

Target participants:

- competitive dancers (juniors, youth, adults);
- amateur dancers;
- parents of junior dancers;
- trainers.

Recruitment channels:

- Contact participants from Facebook and Instagram dance groups;
- personal networks in dance community;
- Ukrainian dance clubs (offline visiting with flyers in Kyiv and direct outreach via Instagram DMs in other cities) (see Appendix C).

Sample size:

- target: 100 responses;
- minimum acceptable: 30 responses.

Limitations:

- most responses could be from dancers in Kyiv;
- self-selection bias (more active dancers more likely to respond);
- overrepresentation of parents of junior dancers;
- dancers may quit the sport not only because of problems with partners.

Table 1.1 Key Assumptions and Research Hypotheses

Hypothes	Related to	Possible ways to test later
Ballroom dancers in Ukraine face a partner-search problem.	Behavior	Survey, interviews
Ballroom dancers lack a centralized, easy-to-use solution for finding partners in the current market.	Market	Competitors research
Profiles with photo/video and key parameters significantly increase the probability of the match.	Behavior	Survey, interviews, prototype testing
Female dancers experience higher friction in partner search, compared to male.	Market, behaviour	Survey segmented by gender, analysis of the current solutions

Male dancers do not have problems with finding a partner at all.	Market, behaviour	Survey segmented by gender, analysis of the current solutions
Demand exists beyond Ukraine (Europe, USA)	Market	Abroad competitors research, market analysis

Source: Author's own work.

1.4 MARKET AND SYSTEM ANALYSIS

The ballroom dance community represents a large, active, and globally connected ecosystem. In Ukraine, there are **300+ active dance clubs**, according to the All-Ukrainian DanceSport and Breaking Federation (AUDSF). Each club may have between 20 and 200 dancers, which results in approximately **40,000 dancers** in Ukraine. The sport is highly active: according to the competition calendar on flymark.dance, 41 competitions were scheduled across Ukraine in April 2026 alone, with tournaments running year-round and intensifying during the peak season (October–March)(Freedom to People Dance Competition). This creates a broad and constantly renewing base of dancers who regularly face the need to find and replace partners.

Ukraine is not just an active dance market – it has real institutional depth. Since 2018, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (KNUKiM) has offered a dedicated Ballroom Choreography specialization, which means the sport has moved beyond hobby clubs into formal higher education.

Ukrainian dancers regularly place at the top of international competitions, and major national tournaments with thousands of couples every month (Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine; Tkachenko). This is not a community that occasionally shows up to dance – it is one that trains seriously, competes constantly, and has the infrastructure to support it.

On a global level, the World DanceSport Federation currently unites 99 national member federations – 13 in the Americas, 49 in Europe, 21 in Asia, 13 in Africa, and 2 in Oceania – of which 78 are recognized by their respective National Olympic Committees (“List”). This institutional reach confirms that ballroom dancing is an organized, globally governed sport, not a regional hobby.

Estimating the total number of active participants is difficult, as most recreational and junior dancers operate outside formal federation registration. Using available proxy indicators: the WDSF Instagram account has over 300,000 followers; dedicated international partner-search communities on Facebook total 65,000+ members; and major web directories account for approximately 60,000 registered users (see Section 1.5). These figures capture only the most digitally active segment of the community. Accounting for the broader base of club-level, recreational, and junior dancers – including Ukraine's estimated 40,000 participants alone – a conservative global estimate of **500,000+ active ballroom dancers** is reasonable, though the true figure is likely higher. This scale demonstrates that ballroom dancing is not a local or niche activity, but part of a large, international ecosystem facing shared structural challenges – including the recurring difficulty of finding a compatible partner.

Overall, while participation and demand are high both locally and globally, the market remains highly fragmented and under-digitalized, revealing a clear opportunity for a modern, structured, and scalable partner matchmaking solution.

Table 1.2 Current Solutions on the Ukrainian Market

Options	Ease of Use (UX)	Photo/ Video	Activity Level	Direct contact	Filters (Age/Height /Level)
Facebook Group (Search for Ballroom Dancing Partners)	Medium	Both	High	DM, comments	No
Instagram Group (DancePortal Ukraine)	Medium	Both	Medium	DM, comments	No
Sportcamp App	Easy	Photo only	Low	Yes	Yes
Instagram(Personal/Club) (Guzenko; DANCE LINE)	Medium	Both	Medium	DM, comments	No
Danceinfo web site	Hard (focus on news)	No	Medium	No (via phone or email)	Only gender
Dancesport web site	Hard	Photo only	Medium	No (via phone or email)	Yes

Znakomka web site	Hard	Photo only	Low (last posts over a year old)	Yes	Only location
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Source: Author's own work.

The comparison of existing platforms shows that the current ecosystem for finding ballroom dance partners is fragmented, outdated, and inefficient (see Table 1.2). However, these solutions share one key trait: they are all free to use. Social platforms such as Facebook Group with ~16 000 members and Instagram with ~7 000 members offer high engagement and allow users to post photos and videos, but they lack any structured filters such as age, height, or skill level (Search for Ballroom Dancing Partners; DancePortal Ukraine). Partner search relies entirely on hashtags or manual scrolling, and communication happens through comments or direct messages, making the process slow and unorganized.

Traditional websites such as Danceinfo.com, Dancesport.net, and Znakomka.in.ua provide more formal listings but suffer from outdated design, low activity levels, lack of media support, and limited or nonexistent filtering options. Many require users to reach out via email or phone, which further reduces convenience.

An analysis of post authorship in the largest Ukrainian Facebook group for partner search and on Dancesport.net shows that approximately 40% of announcements are posted by male dancers or their representatives (parents or trainers), with 60% coming from the female side (Search for Ballroom Dancing Partners; Dancesport). While the imbalance is clear, the male share is large enough to confirm that partner search is an active problem for both genders – not exclusively for girls.

A notable signal is the appearance of the Sportcamp app (launched at the end of 2025). As a new product entering the space, it suggests that the market recognizes the partner-search pain. Sportcamp provides better UX and filtering compared to social media, but its current activity level is still low – typical for a new platform – highlighting both the opportunity and the need for a more widely adopted, dance-first matching solution. In addition, this new app focuses on many types of sport at the same time, while MatchUp will target only dancers and follow a focused go-to-market strategy.

In addition to online channels, a large share of partner search happens offline through clubs and coach networks. Some dancers simply continue training in a club and wait until a new suitable dancer joins, which can take months and depends entirely on chance and local club turnover. Coaches also play a major matchmaking role: they often search for partners through their personal network, reaching out to coaches from other clubs and arranging introductions. To extend this search, coaches may also publish posts on Instagram or Facebook on behalf of their dancers, which further confirms that even “offline” partner search still relies on informal, manual communication rather than a structured system.

Overall, the analysis of the ballroom dance market in Ukraine and abroad reveals a large, active, and constantly renewing community facing a persistent structural challenge – finding a compatible dance partner. No current solution combines high activity, proper filtering, verification, and ease of use, highlighting a clear market gap for a centralized, user-friendly matching app.

1.5 SOLUTIONS ABROAD

Internationally, similar solutions for finding ballroom dance partners already exist, confirming a clear and recurring global demand for such services.

Dancers actively use large Facebook communities as their primary search channel. The most visible Dance Partner Search Latin & Ballroom include ~ 42,000+ members, a second active group with the same name has approximately 12,000 members, and DancePartnerSearch ~8,500+ members (Dance Partner Search Latin & Ballroom_1; Dance Partner Search Latin & Ballroom_2). These are only the groups identified through a basic search – the actual number of such communities across different languages, regions, and dance styles is likely significantly higher.

More structured alternatives also exist, DancePartner web site operates as the largest dedicated worldwide directory, with over 59,000 registered dancers and a paid subscription model starting at \$49 for three months (DancePartner.com). DanceNetwork app offers a more modern, free platform with filters by country, age, height, level, and dance style. On the mobile side, several apps – including Dance With Me, DanceApp24, Danceflavors, and DanceBuddy – connect dancers across various styles.

The existence of these solutions and communities abroad demonstrates that the challenge of finding a compatible dance partner is not limited to Ukraine, but represents a recurring need within the global ballroom dance ecosystem. This confirms a sustainable international demand for convenient, specialized digital solutions in this niche.

1.6 GLOBAL TREND ON THE MARKET

Trend: The rise of niche matchmaking and hobby-based connection apps. The broader app market shows a clear trend toward specialized, interest-based matching platforms. Dating apps like Tinder and Bumble demonstrated that digital matchmaking works at scale; the next wave has moved into niche communities – apps for finding sports partners (PlayYourCourt for tennis, Strava for running

groups), hobby communities (Meetup, Bumble BFF), and activity-based connections. This shift reflects a growing user expectation: people want to find others who share a specific context, skill level, and goal – not just a general interest.

In the sports world specifically, partner-dependent disciplines – tennis, rowing, climbing, martial arts – have seen dedicated matching tools emerge to solve the same structural problem that ballroom dance faces: you cannot practice or compete alone, and finding a compatible partner through general social media is inefficient and unreliable.

Despite this trend, ballroom dance remains underserved. Existing solutions are either informal (Facebook groups, Instagram posts) or outdated web directories that predate the smartphone era and have not been redesigned for mobile. No dedicated, modern, mobile-first platform exists that combines structured filtering, media-rich profiles, and a community layer tailored specifically to competitive ballroom dancers.

This represents both a market gap and a timing opportunity: user behavior is already shifting toward structured digital tools, the infrastructure exists to build them, and the demand – as confirmed by primary research – is clearly there.

1.7 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of key stakeholder groups: competitive and amateur dancers (male and female), a parent of a junior dancer, and a studio administrator (see Table 1.3). Interviews were held in Ukrainian, both in person and online.

Table 1.3 Interview Participants Overview

#	Participant	Role	Age	Experience	Location	Pain Points
1	Tymofii	Competitive dancer (male)	19 yrs old	16 yrs	Kyiv	Frequent partner loss due to skill/height mismatch; 2–3 month searches with many irrelevant meetings; information provided before trials often inaccurate
2	Nazar	Competitive dancer (male)	19 yrs old	12 yrs	Bucha / Irpin	Hard to find partners outside own club; low motivation during partnerless periods; limited awareness of search tools
3	Mother (anon.)	Parent of junior dancer (female)	12 yrs old	7 yrs	Mykolaiv	No male partners available locally in Mykolaiv; search managed entirely by coach; stressed the pressure of not missing competition seasons
4	Alina	Professional dancer (female)	22 yrs old	14 yrs	Kyiv	6-month searches; partners misrepresent skill level; the war has drastically reduced the

						competitive partner pool; nearly quit the sport
5	Danya	Professional dancer (male)	25 yrs old	17 yrs	Kyiv	Repeated partner loss(6 times); had even tryouts abroad; female dancers now may financially subsidize male partners to secure a pair
6	Vlada	Amateur dancer (female)	21 yrs old	2 yrs	Dnipro	Few adult amateur men in Dnipro; no relevant filters on social media; don't know where to search
7	Father (anon.)	Parent & dance club administrator	–	Daughter is a coach and finalist Blackpool 2019	Kyiv	Existing platforms require manual scrolling, no filters; trainers lack incentive to help; parents need simple, trusted tools

Source: Author's own work (see Appendix D).

Interview Findings:

- Frequent and structurally inevitable partner changes

All interviewees reported multiple partner changes. Alina changed partners 7 times over 13 years and completed approximately 14 tryouts. Tymofii had 6 partners from age 3, while Nazar had 5

partners over 12 years. The main triggers included height mismatch due to growth (especially among juniors), Latin/Standard program differences, health issues/injuries, diverging skill levels, motivational gaps, and war-related relocation.

- Long and inefficient search process

Searches frequently lasted from several weeks to more than 3 months. Tymofii described a 2–3 month search period with near-daily tryouts. Alina mentioned searches that lasted over 3 months, during which she nearly quit the sport twice. Vlada shared that she doesn't even know where to start the research for amateur partners.

- Amateur Dancers Face a Discovery Problem

Amateur and hobby dancers face a fundamentally different barrier: they do not know where to begin at all. Vlada captured this directly: "I don't even know where to start searching for an amateur partner" (see Appendix D). Unlike competitive dancers embedded in club networks, hobby dancers have no federation affiliation and lack access to the informal matchmaking infrastructure that coaches provide.

- Dominant channels – network-driven and trainer-mediated

Partner search relied almost entirely on Instagram/Facebook posts, personal trainer networks, and word-of-mouth. Dedicated websites (e.g., Dancesport.net) were either unknown or dismissed as outdated.

- Some trainers have a structural conflict of interest

Trainers are one of the most commonly used matchmaking channels, yet their motivation to help varies significantly. Interview 7 revealed a structural reason: trainers earn the same competition

fees from soloists as from pairs, so some have no financial incentive to invest time in partner search (see Appendix D). However, this is not universal, most interviewees described coaches who genuinely invested in finding partners for their students.

- Poor information quality before tryouts

This was the most frequently mentioned pain point. Interviewees reported exaggerated skill levels, misrepresented willingness to change clubs, and unclear program preferences. Tymofii stated: "The information they shared before we met was not always truthful" (see Appendix D). As a result, many tryouts ended in disappointment. Alina emphasized that photos and videos are essential for pre-screening.

- Gender dynamics

Female dancers face higher competition due to male scarcity. However, male dancers also encounter difficulties. Tymofii spent 2–3 months searching for a partner, and Danya reported 5–6 tryouts, including attempts with partners from abroad.

- Parents as primary decision-makers

For juniors, parents actively lead the search. The mother from Mykolaiv described the process as slow and unclear, while the studio administrator stressed the need for a simple parent-friendly interface.

- High emotional and motivational cost

Prolonged searches cause significant stress. Alina nearly quit dancing twice due to unsuccessful searches. The mother from Mykolaiv spoke about constant pressure to avoid missing competition seasons. Several interviewees linked long searches with reduced motivation and dropout risk.

- Other features for the app

Beyond partner matching, several interviewees independently raised additional unmet needs. A costume resale marketplace was mentioned by the mother from Mykolaiv, Nazar, and the studio administrator – costumes are expensive and rarely worn more than twice per competition cycle. The studio administrator also flagged competition live streaming for family members unable to attend in person, and both parents and dancers expressed a need for a centralized calendar of seminars and training camps. All three suggestions came up spontaneously, indicating an interest in creating a broader platform for the community that would go beyond the core function of finding partners.

To sum up, the interviews make one thing clear: finding a dance partner in Ukraine is not an occasional inconvenience – it is a recurring, nervous process that almost every dancer faces in their career. Search channels are few and informal, the information available before a tryout is often wrong, and the emotional cost of failed or broken partnerships is real. The findings point directly to what MatchUp needs to do: centralize the search, make profiles verifiable and media-rich, and filter by the criteria that actually matter.

1.8 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The online survey was distributed through multiple channels to reach a broad cross-section of the Ukrainian ballroom dance community. Distribution methods included:

- DMs to users in Facebook and Instagram ballroom dance groups;
- Personal networks within the dance community;

- Direct offline outreach – visiting ballroom dance clubs in Kyiv and distributing printed flyers with a QR code linking to the survey (see Appendix C).

The survey received 59 valid responses (see Appendix E). Respondents represented all key stakeholder groups(see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Survey Respondent Distribution by Role.

Role	Count	%
Professional dancer	20	34%
Parent of junior dancer	19	32%
Amateur (hobby) dancer	14	24%
Trainer	5	8%
Other	1	2%

Source: Results of author's own questionnaire(see Appendix E).

Demographics

- Gender:
 - Female – 41 (69%),
 - Male – 18 (31%)

- Age groups:
 - 9–18 years – 26 (44%),
 - 19–30 years – 23 (39%),
 - Under 8 – 6 (10%),
 - 31+ – 4 (7%)

Table 1.5 Key Statistics on Partner Search

Metric	Result	Insight
Have searched for a partner	85% of respondents	Partner search is extremely common
Average difficulty rating (1–5 scale)	4.1	Process is perceived as very difficult
Search duration	1-2 month (30%) > 3 months (41%)	Very long process for many
Changed partner 5+ times	27%	High turnover throughout career
Would use a filtering app to speed up search	66% “Yes, this would accelerate the search” + 20% “Maybe”	Strong demand for MatchUp

Find a built-in costume marketplace useful	88% “Yes”	Validates post-MVP feature
Willing to pay for subscription	46% named a price (most popular: 199 UAH/month – 27 respondents; 399 UAH/month – 9)	Supports freemium model pricing

Source: Results of author’s own questionnaire(see Appendix E).

Other Findings from Quantitative Research:

- Search channels

Respondents primarily use the same channels identified in qualitative research and secondary analysis: Facebook groups, Instagram, trainers, club networks, and websites (Danceinfo, Dancesport.net).

- Negative impacts of prolonged search

The partner search problem is critical to address, as prolonged searches significantly contribute to dancers quitting the sport. According to the survey, 42% of respondents reported thoughts of quitting or dropping out due to difficulties in finding a partner, while 46% experienced a notable reduction in motivation.

- Gender differences in friction

Female respondents rated the process 4.4/5 on average, while male respondents rated it 3.7/5. This confirms that while male scarcity exists, males still face significant friction.

Overall, the survey data supports the findings identified through qualitative research. The vast majority of respondents (85%) had searched for a partner, most spending over a month doing so – and a significant share longer than three months. Difficulty ratings were high(4.1/5) across all participants. The consequences reached beyond the search itself: many respondents had considered quitting the sport entirely, and nearly half reported a drop in motivation during unpartnered periods. Demand for a structured digital solution was equally clear – most said a dedicated filtering app would accelerate their search, and a substantial share were willing to pay for it, a meaningful signal from a community that currently relies entirely on free, informal channels(see Table 1.5).

1.9 FIELD OBSERVATION

Field observation was conducted at the Freedom to People ballroom dance competition in Kyiv on February 7, 2026 (see Appendix F). The event brought together dancers, parents, coaches, and club representatives from across Ukraine, providing direct access to a broad cross-section of the target audience in a natural setting.

During the competition, several participants were approached for brief informal conversations about their partner-search experience – specifically, which channels they use, how long searches

typically take, and whether they are aware of any dedicated tools or platforms. One full semi-structured interview was also conducted on-site.

The observation confirmed patterns identified in the interviews and survey: participants relied primarily on coach networks and social media, none mentioned a dedicated platform unprompted, and the topic of partner search generated immediate recognition and engagement across all age groups and roles. Parents of junior dancers were particularly vocal about the difficulty of the process. The competition environment also illustrated the problem – between rounds, several coaches and parents were visibly exchanging contacts and discussing potential pairings, underscoring how much of the matching process still happens informally, in person, at events like this one.

The competition program provided additional structural evidence of the gender imbalance. The existence of Solo categories – in which girls compete without a partner – and ProAm categories – in which female dancers compete paired with a professional coach rather than a peer – reflects an institutionalized response to chronic male scarcity. These are not niche formats, their presence in a mainstream competition indicates that the shortage of male partners is significant enough to have reshaped how the sport is organized and judged.

1.10 USER AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The MatchUp app serves four key stakeholder groups, each with distinct goals and pain points. As shown in Table 1.6, these pain points are interconnected – the inability to find partners efficiently affects all stakeholders simultaneously, which validates the need for a unified matching platform like MatchUp.

Table 1.6 Key Stakeholders, Goals, and Pain Points.

Roles	Goal	Pain Points
Dancers(Pro and Amateurs)	Find a suitable partners	Manual search, poor filters, outdated tools, long process, emotional stress, motivation loss
Trainer	Help students pair up	Time-consuming manual search, student turnover/dropout risk, emotional burden from frustrated dancers/parents, drop in competitive progress
Parents	Find a partner for a kid	No trusted apps, high emotional pressure, repeated manual efforts (posts/DMs), fear of child's career pauses or quitting
Dance clubs	Retain dancers	Partner turnover, training interruptions, loss of students/motivation, retention

		challenges, unbalanced groups
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Source: Summary from interviews conducted by the author (see Appendix D).

1.11 USER PERSONAS

User personas were synthesized based on the qualitative research findings (semi-structured interviews and field observation). The goal was to summarize key user segments, capture their motivations and constraints, and translate insights into product requirements. Each persona includes typical partner-search behavior, main goals, pain points, and emotional context.

Persona 1: Parent of a junior dancer

A parent who actively manages partner search to keep the child's training stable and avoid breaks before competitions. Uses coach networks and social media posts, but struggles with lots of irrelevant messages, manual screening, and high pressure to “not miss the moment (see Appendix G).

Persona 2: An adult female amateur

An amateur dancer who wants a consistent partner for training and enjoyment, without drama or long gaps. Often searches via Facebook/Instagram and web-cites, but gets low-quality matches and has to repeat the same manual communication and screening (see Appendix G).

Persona 3: A professional youth female dancer

A competitive youth-level dancer who needs a stable partner to keep progressing and reach finals. She searches mostly via coaches/clubs and Instagram, but matching is slow because the key mismatches are discovered too late, creating high pressure to avoid losing seasons (see Appendix G).

Persona 4: A professional youth male dancer

A competitive dancer who wants to replace a partner quickly to stay on track with results. Even with lower friction due to male scarcity, he still relies on coach networks, tryouts, and social media, and faces uncertainty from repeated trials, unclear fit, and limited transparency before meeting (see Appendix G).

1.12 SYSTEM AND PROCESS MAPS

System Map

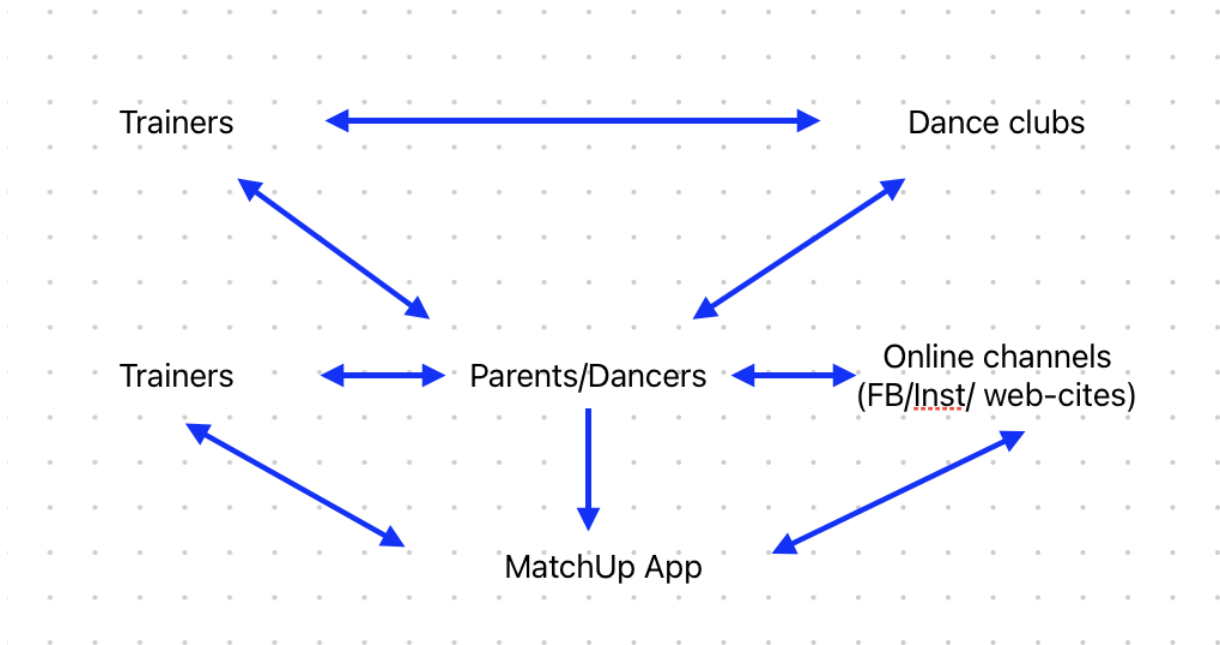


Fig. 1.1 System Map; Source: Author's own work.

The system consists of five key elements: dancers/parents, trainers, dance clubs, online channels (Facebook/Instagram/websites), and the MatchUp app (see Fig.1.1). In this ecosystem, parents are treated as part of the “dancers” group, since they often manage partner search, communication, and decision-making for junior athletes. Trainers and dance clubs influence dancers’ decisions through coaching, training routines, competition preparation, and informal partner recommendations, but trainers are not assumed to be direct users of the app.

Today, a significant part of partner search happens through online channels, where dancers, parents, and coaches post announcements and look for candidates manually via scrolling, comments, and direct messages. The MatchUp app sits at the center of the proposed solution by providing a centralized and structured alternative: dancers/parents can create profiles, use filters, and communicate with potential partners more efficiently. At the same time, MatchUp can reduce dependence on fragmented social media search by consolidating information in one place and making matching faster and more transparent.

Process Map

The partner search journey is long, multi-step, and emotionally demanding. Dancers typically enter the process with urgency, driven by competition deadlines or partner dropout. The search itself involves checking announcements across websites and social media. Because none of these channels provide comprehensive filters, dancers spend significant time evaluating irrelevant results. Contacting potential partners often becomes repetitive and frustrating, with many conversations leading nowhere due to mismatched criteria or slow responses. Trial sessions introduce additional coordination challenges and emotional stress, especially for young dancers. The process frequently lasts several months. This prolonged journey increases burnout and contributes to dancers quitting the sport entirely (see Appendix H).

1.13 KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

The research revealed several critical insights drawn from a combination of primary and secondary data sources, including qualitative interviews, an online survey of the Ukrainian dance community, field observations at ballroom clubs and competitions, social media analysis, and data from the World DanceSport Federation and All-Ukrainian DanceSport and Breaking Federation. The findings consistently pointed to a significant gap in the current partner-search process and strong unmet demand for a dedicated digital solution.

- Partner search is a frequent and recurring challenge for dancers of all levels and ages, often lasting from several weeks to more than three months.
- The current process relies heavily on fragmented, inefficient channels – primarily Instagram, Facebook, and trainer networks.
- Lack of structured information and visual content before tryouts results in a high number of unproductive meetings and significant emotional drain.
- Although female dancers face higher competition due to male scarcity, male dancers also experience substantial matching difficulties.
- Parents of junior dancers act as primary decision-makers and require simple, trustworthy tools.
- Prolonged partner search is a major contributor to reduced motivation and dropout from the sport.
- There is strong demand for a specialized mobile app that offers verified profiles, rich media, and advanced filtering.

- Respondents showed high interest in additional features such as a costume marketplace.

These findings confirm a clear market gap and strong product-market fit for the proposed MatchUp application.

All hypotheses were tested during the research, with the validation results presented in Table 1.7. All, except one, hypothesis were confirmed, collectively supporting the case for developing the MatchUp application.

Table 1.7 Research Hypotheses: Validation Summary.

Hypothesis	Status	Evidence
Ballroom dancers in Ukraine face a partner-search problem.	Confirmed	85% of survey respondents reported having searched for a partner; average difficulty rated 4.1/5; all 7 respondents confirmed the existence of this problem based on their own experience.
Ballroom dancers lack a centralized, easy-to-use solution for finding partners in the current market.	Confirmed	No dedicated mobile platform exists in Ukraine; existing channels (Facebook groups, Instagram, coach networks, old

		websites) are unstructured; 86% of respondents said a filtering app would help.
Profiles with photo/video and key parameters significantly increase the probability of the match.	Confirmed	All interviewed dancers stated that photo/video content would reduce irrelevant tryouts; Tymofii and Alina explicitly described mismatches caused by inaccurate text-only descriptions.
Female dancers experience higher friction in partner search, compared to male.	Confirmed	Female respondents rated difficulty 4.4/5 vs. 3.7/5 for males; structural male scarcity confirmed by interviews and Facebook group analysis (60% of posts from female side).
Male dancers do not have problems with finding a partner at all.	Rejected	~ 40% of posts in Facebook group and Dancesport.net are from male dancers seeking a partner; male interviewees

		(Tymofii, Nazar, Danya) reported multi-month searches and repeated unsuccessful tryouts
Demand exists beyond Ukraine (Europe, USA)	Confirmed	Existence of large international Facebook communities (62,000+ combined members), a paid platform with 59,000+ registered users (DancePartner.com)

Source: Author's own work.

CHAPTER 2. SOLUTION DIRECTION

The research points to a clear and specific gap: ballroom dancers in Ukraine need a dedicated, mobile-first platform for partner search that replaces the current fragmented mix of Instagram posts, Facebook groups, old web-sites and coach networks with a structured, media-rich, and filterable experience. Additionally, because of the war many dancers changed their location and face problems with finding partners in a new place – their previous coach networks no longer reach them, making a centralized digital platform not just convenient but necessary.

Core concept: MatchUp is a mobile matchmaking app built specifically for the ballroom dance community. Unlike general social platforms or outdated dance websites, it is designed around the actual decision criteria dancers use when evaluating a potential partner – and structured to eliminate the wasted tryouts that make the current process so costly.

The problem it solves, directly: The research identified three compounding failures in the current system: no structured filtering, no reliable information before a first meeting, and no centralized place where active searchers are gathered. MatchUp addresses all three.

Key product principles, grounded in research findings:

- High-signal profiles.

Every profile captures the parameters that actually determine compatibility: age, height, skill level, competition category, Latin/Standard program focus, club affiliation, willingness to relocate or

change clubs. These are the fields that interviewees described checking manually – and frequently finding misrepresented – before wasted tryouts.

- Media as default.

Photo and video are not optional extras but required profile elements. Interviewees consistently identified visual content as the most reliable pre-screening tool: body proportion, movement quality, and overall fit can be assessed before any in-person meeting.

- Built for parents and dancers equally.

For junior dancers, the primary user is often the parent, not the child. The interface must be simple enough for a parent with no prior experience of dance platforms – with phone-based registration and straightforward search, not requiring trainer intermediation.

- Dance-first, not sport-agnostic.

Unlike Sportcamp, which covers multiple sports and dilutes supply and demand across categories, MatchUp focuses exclusively on ballroom dancing. This allows MatchUp to reach critical mass within one community faster, making matches more likely from day one.

- Verified registration for safety.

Registration requires a phone number and face verification linked to a real identity. Verified accounts reduce the risk of anonymous or fake profiles contacting young dancers and their parents. For junior accounts, registration is tied to a parent's phone number, ensuring that an adult is always the account holder and primary point of contact.

- Scope: MVP vs. future modules

The core product is the partner-matching engine (see app design in Appendix J). Research also surfaced strong unprompted demand for adjacent features – a costume marketplace, competition live streams, and an events calendar. These are not included in the MVP but are planned as subsequent product phases, each with defined timing, revenue streams, and unit economics (see Section 3.2). Rather than a single-purpose tool, MatchUp is designed from the start as a foundation for a central digital platform for the entire ballroom dance community – expanding from partner search into events, marketplace, community feed, and live streaming as the user base and retention are validated.

CHAPTER 3. BUSINESS MODEL AND ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION

3.1. BUSINESS MODEL

MatchUp follows a freemium model designed to reduce onboarding friction and then monetize users once they see value.

- Free tier:
 - See profiles(but limited number), be visible for others
 - Basic filters (city)
- Paid tier:
 - Access to all profiles
 - Advanced filters (age/height/level, program Latin/Standard, club constraints, etc.)
 - Ability to message partners / start conversations (core value gate)

The primary goal at launch is profile density. The app only delivers value when there are enough active profiles for users to find relevant matches – so the first objective is getting dancers to create profiles, not to monetize. Free access to browsing and basic city filtering serves this goal: it gives every dancer a reason to sign up and be visible, building the user base that makes the product useful for everyone.

Once a user is in the app and can see that relevant partners exist nearby, the freemium logic activates. Advanced filters – age, height, skill level, Latin/Standard focus, club-transfer willingness – significantly narrow the candidate pool and remove irrelevant results, which is precisely what makes

the current search so slow and frustrating. Direct messaging removes the last barrier, users will be able to contact the relevant partner and see messages from others. Both are part of the paid tier, not because they are extras, but because they are the tools that actually accelerate the search. Users who are serious about finding a partner quickly have a clear reason to pay.

Unlike many subscription apps where engagement drops between use cases, partner search in ballroom dancing is a demand that reappears throughout a dancer's entire career. Partner changes are triggered by growth, relocation, skill divergence, or injury – none of which follow a predictable schedule. This means a dancer who does not need the app today may urgently need it in a month, making retention and re-engagement structurally easier than in most consumer products.

To support retention between active search periods, MatchUp introduces a passive engagement mechanic. Free users receive a push notification stating, for example, "5 dancers viewed your profile this week" – but the identities and profile photos of those viewers remain blurred. This deliberate information gap creates a low-stakes but persistent incentive to subscribe: even a user who has already found a partner may feel curious enough to check who has been viewing them, and that curiosity alone can trigger a subscription. This mechanic is particularly relevant for amateur dancers, who – unlike competitive professionals – often have no fixed partnership and may be open to finding a better match at any point. For this segment, the subscription is not tied to a specific search cycle but functions more as ongoing access to opportunity. Importantly, this mechanic does not require the user to be actively searching – it works passively in the background, keeping the app relevant between search cycles and shortening the re-engagement window when a new partner search begins.

3.2. UNIT ECONOMICS

Pricing

MatchUp operates on a freemium subscription model with multiple revenue streams introduced progressively across phases. All USD figures use the NBU official exchange rate of 44.1591 UAH/USD as of 19.05.2026 (National Bank of Ukraine). App Store revenue share for small businesses is 15%, so MatchUp retains 85% of all in-app subscription and boost transactions (Apple Inc.).

The monthly subscription is set at 199 UAH/month (\$5) gross, which is 169 UAH/month (\$4) net after App Store fee. This price is directly informed by survey data: 199 UAH was the most frequently cited willingness-to-pay response (27 out of 59 respondents, ~46%).

Additional revenue streams are introduced as the product scales:

- International subscription (Phase 4+): \$15/month (\$13 net) – market rate for niche vertical apps in Poland, Germany, and the USA. Priced directly in USD, it generates approximately 3× higher net revenue per user compared to the Ukrainian tier. It is benchmarked against DancePartner.com – the closest international competitor – which charges \$49 for three months (~\$16/month), making MatchUp more accessible while offering a superior mobile-first experience.
- Featured Boost (Phase 5+): 49 UAH (\$1.11 gross) – a paid uplift mechanic available on both the Marketplace and the Events module. Sellers boost costume listings; coaches and organizers boost event announcements. Revenue scales with platform activity rather than subscriber count.

- Event listing fee (Phase 3+): 500 UAH (\$11.32) per event – a flat fee approximately equal to the average price of one participant spot in a seminar or competition. An organizer recoups the fee with their first registration.
- Native advertising (Phase 3+): 2,000 UAH/month (\$45.29) per advertiser at the beginning – clubs, dancewear shops, and competition organizers. The price will rise as the number of users increase. The audience is niche and high-intent, which commands a premium over general social platforms.

Fixed Costs

The product has very low fixed costs at the early stage (see Table 3.1). Design and development are handled by the founding team at no monetary cost, significantly reducing operational burn. As the product scales, paid roles are introduced in sequence: Creative Marketing Manager and Designer from Phase 3 (\$900/month each), Developer #2 from Phase 4 (\$1,500/month), and support from Phase 5 (\$600/month). This staged hiring ensures costs grow only when revenue justifies them.

Table 3.1 Monthly Operating Costs at Early Stage.

Name	Description	Price
Design	Handled by co-founder	Free
Development	Handled by co-founder	Free
Hosting(Hetzner)	Backend infrastructure	\$20/month
Domain(matchup.today)	-	\$3/year(~\$0.25/month)
Placement on AppStore(Apple Inc.)	App distribution	\$99/year(~\$8.25/month)
Cloudfare	CDN and security	Free
Claude AI, Figma	Content creation and social media	\$20/month
Artlist(Nano Banana, Kling,	AI Video generation for social	\$20/month

ChatGPT, VEO)	media	
Total:		\$68.5/month (~3,025 UAH/month)

Source: Author's own calculations based on official pricing of listed services, as of May 2026.

CAC (Customer Acquisition Cost)

CAC is calculated separately for the Ukrainian market (first 12 months) and the international expansion phase, as the data sources and acquisition approaches differ between the two (see Appendix K).

Ukraine (first 12 months) – CAC calculated from modelled spend. Formula: $CAC = (\text{marketing spend} + \text{acquisition-related salaries}) \div \text{new users acquired}$. Fixed tech costs are excluded as they exist regardless of acquisition activity. This is an approximate estimation based on projected spend and expected user growth, validated against the 12-month financial model (see Appendix K, "12-Month Projection Ukraine" sheet).

The primary acquisition channel for the first year is organic and partnership-based. Pre-launch (weeks 4–6), MatchUp launches exclusively through free channels: outreach in Ukrainian dance Facebook groups and Instagram communities, direct partnerships with clubs and coaches, word-of-mouth – $CAC \approx 0$. MatchUp will collaborate with coaches, offering them a dedicated profile and visibility in the app in exchange for promoting the platform to their students. Dance clubs will be onboarded with their dancers featured on the in-app map, giving clubs a reason to actively recommend the app to their members. This barter model – app visibility in exchange for organic promotion – keeps acquisition costs significantly below paid channel benchmarks while reaching a highly targeted audience of active dancers. In parallel, MatchUp will actively maintain Instagram, TikTok, and

Facebook pages – regular content covering competition results, training tips, and platform updates builds organic reach and brand recognition.

From Phase 2, two paid channels are introduced: SEO optimization targeting queries such as "dance partner Kyiv" (estimated 20–40 new users/month)(see Appendix I); and competition sponsorship – presence at selected ballroom competitions with QR codes and flyers (~\$200/event, expected reach: 200-500 dancers per event, conversion rate ~5-10% → 10–50 new users per competition). From Phase 3, Meta Ads are introduced gradually, starting at \$500/month and growing as retention is validated.

Total acquisition spend across 12 months: \$24,900, consisting of:

- Competition sponsorship: \$2,200
- SEO: \$1,400
- Meta Ads: \$10,500 (Phase 3+, growing from \$500 to \$3,000/month)
- Marketer salary: \$5,400 (Phase 3+)
- Designer salary: \$5,400 (Phase 3+, responsible for ad creatives, landing page, and App Store visuals)

Total users acquired: 6,500. Blended CAC: ~\$3.83/user.

International market (Phase 4+) – benchmarked from industry data. Unlike the Ukrainian market where CAC is derived from modelled spend, the international market CAC is benchmarked against industry data. The benchmark for Entertainment B2C customer acquisition (Bailyn) is \$82 for organic(SEO, community, social media) channels and \$106 for paid (Meta Ads), with a blended average of \$94. The blended average of \$94 is used as the working estimate, as MatchUp plans a mixed acquisition strategy for international markets.

LTV (Life Time Value)

LTV is also calculated separately for the Ukrainian market and the international expansion phase, as the nature of user engagement differs significantly between the two.

For the Ukrainian market, LTV is driven by repeat partner search cycles across a dancer's career. Formula: $LTV = \text{gross subscription } (\$4.51) \times \text{lifetime}$ (see Table 3.2). Interview data confirms dancers change partners 5–7 times on average, meaning a single user returns to the platform multiple times.

Table 3.2 LTV:CAC Scenarios Ukraine.

Scenario	Lifetime	LTV(gross)	CAC	LTV:CAC
Conservative	1 month	\$5	\$3.83	1.2x
Base	3 months	\$14	\$3.83	3.5x
Optimistic	5 months	\$23	\$3.83	5.9x

Source: Author's own calculations. Full unit economics model with monthly breakdown provided in Appendix K.

For the Ukrainian market, LTV:CAC ratios are healthy across base and optimistic scenarios. Using CAC of \$3.83 conservative scenario yields 1.2x; base scenario 3.5x; optimistic 5.9x. The industry benchmark for a healthy subscription business is $\geq 3x$ – MatchUp meets or exceeds this in the base and optimistic scenarios because of mostly organic acquisition.

For the international market, LTV is calculated using the standard subscription formula: $LTV = \text{gross subscription} \div \text{monthly churn}$. With a \$15/month subscription and an expected user lifetime of 6–12 months, monthly churn ranges from 8% to 17% (see Table 3.3). At the base scenario of 9 months:

churn = $1 \div 9 = 11\%$, LTV = $\$15 \div 0.11 = \sim\135 . International users stay longer because the platform serves ongoing needs beyond partner search – community feed, marketplace, live streams of competitions, events keep users engaged between search cycles.

Table 3.3 LTV:CAC Scenarios International.

Scenario	Lifetime	Monthly Churn	LTV(gross)	CAC(benchmark)	LTV:CAC
Conservative	6 months	17%	\$90	\$94	0.96x
Base	9 months	11%	\$135	\$94	1.44x
Optimistic	12 months	8%	\$180	\$94	1.91x

Source: Author's own calculations. Full unit economics model with monthly breakdown provided in Appendix K.

For the international market (Phase 4+), all LTV:CAC ratios are below the 3x industry benchmark. These results indicate that international expansion, under current pricing and acquisition cost assumptions, does not yet meet the threshold for a financially sustainable growth loop. This is not a blocker for launch, but signals that the international unit economics require deliberate improvement before scaling paid acquisition. Two strategic directions are identified:

Direction 1 – Reduce CAC: The benchmark CAC of \$94 reflects broad B2C entertainment market averages. MatchUp's target is to bring international CAC closer to \$45 through:

- active management of Instagram and Facebook pages;
- partnering with coaches as brand ambassadors who bring their students organically;
- and leveraging diaspora dance communities where word-of-mouth spreads efficiently.

Community-led growth is significantly cheaper than traditional SMM+SEO for a niche vertical.

Direction 2 – Increase LTV:

- Increase subscription price: current pricing is benchmarked against web platforms. A mobile app with full functionality – community feed, marketplace, events, and partner search – justifies a higher price point of \$25–30/month. As the platform matures and retention grows, users are willing to pay more for a product that keeps them engaged in the sport long-term.
- Zero-CAC revenue streams: since subscription revenue already covers CAC, all additional streams – event listings, marketplace, boosts, live streams – contribute directly to margin improvement without increasing acquisition costs.
- Extend user lifetime: building a strong community where users share achievements, follow results, and stay connected to the dance world keeps them subscribed beyond active search periods. Cooperating with strong dance clubs and trainers to list events gives users a reason to open the app year-round – targeting an average lifetime of 1.5 years for mature international users.

Revenue Projection

Figure below illustrates monthly revenue growth from launch through Month 12 under the base scenario (see Fig. 3.1) . Revenue follows a deliberate layered monetization strategy: it grows by adding new streams on top of an expanding user base rather than requiring a new audience at each step. In Months 1–5 (Phase 2), the only revenue source is the Ukrainian subscription at \$3.83/month net – producing a modest but immediately profitable run-rate. From Month 6, events and native advertising activate, causing a visible step-change in the curve. ARPU grows from \$3.83 in Month 1 to \$4.25 in Month 11, reflecting the development of the app.

Revenue vs. Month

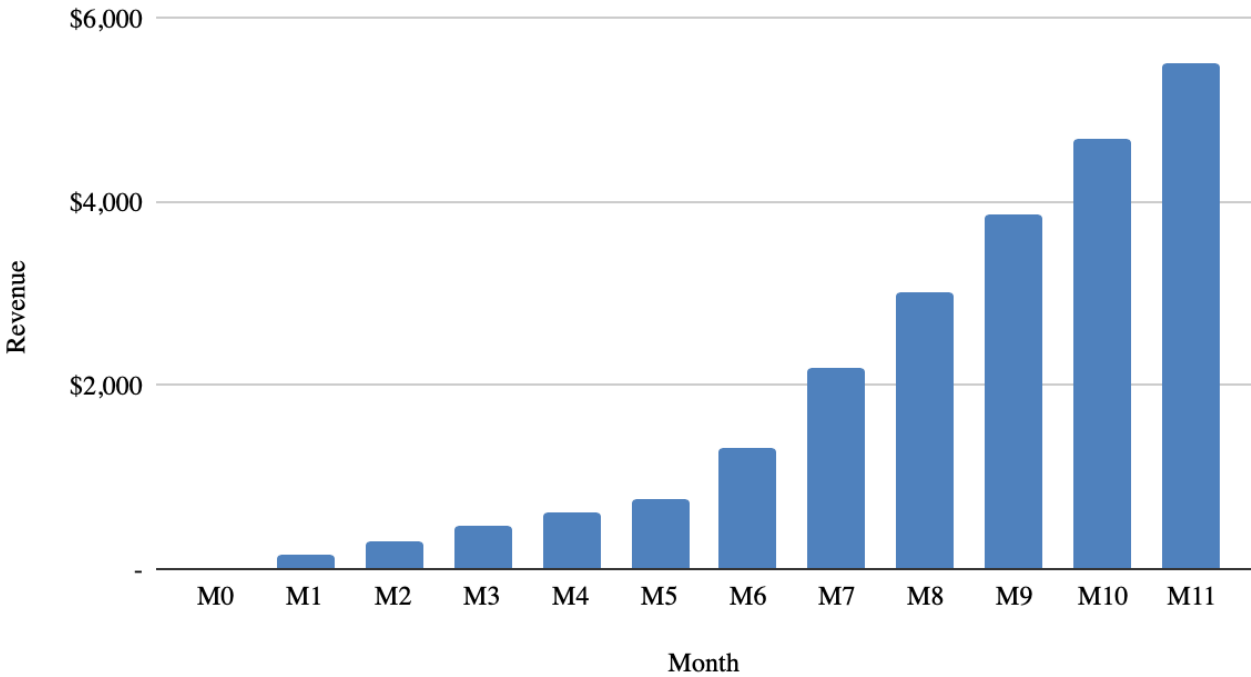


Fig. 3.1 Monthly Revenue Growth (Base Scenario, USD); Source: Author's own calculations (see Appendix K).

Beyond Month 12, revenue growth is expected to accelerate significantly. New features – marketplace, community feed, live streams – extend the platform's utility beyond partner search, transforming MatchUp from a transactional tool used episodically into a year-round engagement platform, increasing both retention and lifetime value per user. As the user base grows, native advertising revenue scales proportionally – a larger and more engaged audience commands higher rates from clubs, dancewear brands, and competition organizers advertising within the app. The full 12-month model with all 3 scenarios and monthly breakdown is provided in Appendix K.

Break-Even Analysis

With fixed costs of \$68.50/month and net subscription revenue of \$3.83 per paying user, the break-even threshold is 18 paying subscribers ($\$68.50 \div \$3.83 = 17.9 \rightarrow 18$). Subscription activates from Month 1 after the pre-launch milestone of 100 early adopters is reached. At a conservative 20% free-to-paid conversion rate – below the 46% WTP signal from the survey – 100 early adopters generate approximately 20 paying subscribers in Month 1, sufficient to cover fixed costs immediately.

CHAPTER 4. MARKET POTENTIAL AND GROWTH LOGIC

This section evaluates MatchUp's scalability by defining the addressable market (TAM), the realistic serviceable market (SAM), an initial achievable share (SOM), and the main constraints to adoption. The goal is structured reasoning, not precise forecasting.

4.1. TAM, SAM, SOM

MatchUp's addressable market is structured across four distinct user segments, each corresponding to a specific product phase. The total market size is calculated bottom-up for each segment separately.

TAM (Total Addressable Market)

The core segment is active competitive ballroom dancers. According to WDSF and current solutions on the market, there are approximately 500,000 active registered dancers globally across 99 member federations (see 1.4. MARKET AND SYSTEM ANALYSIS).

Beyond dancers, the platform's addressable audience expands with each product phase. Ukraine has 300+ registered dance clubs (AUDSF), with an estimated 900–1,500 active coaches (assuming 3–5 coaches per club). Globally, WDSF's 99 member federations represent tens of thousands of clubs and coaches – a segment monetized through event listings, native advertising, and map visibility.

Competition organizers represent a third segment: according to flymark.dance, 41 competitions were scheduled in Ukraine in April 2026 alone, with tournaments running year-round. Globally, thousands of WDSF-registered competitions take place annually, generating revenue through listing fees and ticket commissions. Finally, each active competitive dancer typically has 2–3 family members or supporters who follow their progress but cannot always attend competitions in person – a potential streaming audience of 1,000,000–1,500,000 people globally, monetized through live stream access. Combining all four segments, the total addressable audience reaches **2,000,000+ users globally**(see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Market Segments & Monetization Overview

Segment	Ukraine	Global	Monetization
Dancers	~40,000 incl. diaspora	~500,000	Subscription(\$5/mo UA; \$15/mo abroad)
Coaches & clubs	300+ clubs / ~900–1,500 coaches (AUDSF)	Tens of thousands	Subscription+ Ads + Listing fees
Competition organizers	400+ competitions/year (flymark.dance)	Thousands/year	Listing fee
Families & supporters	~80,000–120,000	~1,000,000–1,500,000	Stream access(Phase 7)

Source: Author’s own research.

SAM (Serviceable Addressable Market)

The serviceable addressable market focuses on the core segment with the most direct and recurring need for MatchUp: active ballroom dancers worldwide who are actively searching for a partner. According to WDSF data, there are approximately 500,000 active registered dancers globally across 99 member federations. Because ballroom categories, levels, and matching parameters are internationally consistent through WDSF, the product requires minimal adaptation across markets.

SAM is estimated at **500,000 active dancers globally** – the subset of the ballroom ecosystem with the most urgent, recurring need the platform is built to solve.

SOM (Serviceable Obtainable Market)

The serviceable obtainable market consists of Ukrainian ballroom dancers based in Ukraine and Ukrainian diaspora abroad – treated as a single audience sharing the same language, culture, and partner-search problem. Ukraine has 300+ registered dance clubs (AUDSF data), with an estimated 900-1,500 active coaches (assuming 3-5 per club). According to the competition calendar on flymark.dance, 41 competitions were scheduled in Ukraine in April 2026 alone, with tournaments running year-round – over 400 competitions per year in total. The SOM is estimated at 40,000+ users, including dancers, coaches, clubs, and organizers reachable through direct outreach within the first 2-3 years of operation.

A bottom-up estimate of the immediately addressable core is built from observed monthly search activity across existing partner-search channels in Ukraine. The Dancesport website – one of the few dedicated local tools – has recorded 65,000+ partner search requests over 19 years, translating to approximately 300 searches per month. The largest Ukrainian Facebook group for ballroom partner search had 16,000 members by early 2026, with posts estimated at 200 searches per month ("Looking for Ballroom Dance Partners"). Instagram and Facebook posts outside this group contribute approximately 200 more, other websites around 100, and offline searches through trainer networks and word-of-mouth – identified as one of the most frequently used channels in both the survey and interviews – an estimated 200 per month.

In total, these channels account for approximately 1,000 search instances per month. Since dancers commonly use multiple channels simultaneously – a finding consistent with survey data showing an average of 2.3 channels used per search – and assuming a 30–40% overlap, the estimated

number of unique active searchers in Ukraine at any given month is approximately 600–700 dancers. This figure captures only high-intent users visible across known channels; the true number is likely higher, as a significant share of searches happen through private messages and word-of-mouth that leave no public trace. These 600–700 monthly active searchers represent MatchUp's immediately addressable core at launch – users with an urgent, specific need and no adequate tool to meet it.

TAM, SAM, SOM in USD

The market size in dollar terms is calculated using gross subscription prices – the standard convention for TAM/SAM/SOM analysis. Two pricing tiers apply: \$5/month for the Ukrainian market (199 UAH at current FX rate) and \$15/month for international users (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 TAM, SAM, SOM Revenue Potentials(USD)

	Users	Annual Gross Revenue	Calculations
SOM	40K	~\$2.5M/year	$40,000 \times (\$5/\text{month} \times 12)$
SAM	500K	~\$90M/year	$500,000 \times (\$15/\text{month} \times 12)$
TAM	2M	~\$350M/year	$150,000 \times (\$5/\text{month} \times 12) + 1\,850,000 \times (\$15/\text{month} \times 12)$

Source: Author's own calculations.

The SOM of ~\$2.5M/year represents the revenue potential of the 40,000 Ukrainian dancers – the initial target audience and the market where the product is currently being validated. The SAM of ~\$90M/year captures 500,000 active dancers internationally, all priced at the \$15/month international tier. The TAM of ~\$350M/year represents the full 2,000,000-person ecosystem – including coaches, competition organizers, and families – split between the Ukrainian community (~150,000 at the UA price) and the rest of the world at the international rate.

4.2. INITIAL TARGET SEGMENT AND LONG-TERM EXPANSION

Initial segment – competitive ballroom dancers and their parents in Ukraine and Ukrainian diaspora abroad, with a focus on active competitors in major cities and established clubs. Diaspora dancers – primarily in Poland, Germany, and the USA – are included from the start because they share the same language, cultural context, and partner-search problem: relocation has separated them from their existing dance community, making the urgency even higher than for those still in Ukraine. This segment requires no product adaptation and is reached through the same community channels used for domestic acquisition. The repeat nature of this need – dancers change partners 5-7 times over a career on average – ensures structural re-engagement without additional acquisition cost.

A secondary segment is **amateur dancers** – recreational participants who train regularly but do not compete at a high level. Their search is less urgent but more continuous: amateurs often have no fixed partnership and may be open to finding a better match at any point. This segment contributes to steady subscription retention and responds particularly well to the passive engagement mechanic ("who viewed your profile"), which keeps the app relevant outside of active search periods.

Expansion within Ukraine follows a city-by-city rollout starting from Kyiv, repeating the club onboarding playbook in each new location only after minimum viable liquidity is achieved. From Phase 2, clubs that join appear on the in-app map – giving them visibility to nearby dancers in return for directing their students to the platform. From Phase 3, coaches and clubs post events for free and receive event promotion in return, turning every new club partnership into an organic acquisition channel without paid spend.

Long-term audience expansion follows the product roadmap. Phase 3 (Events + Advertising) brings in coaches, organizers, and spectators alongside active searchers – and introduces native advertising from dancewear shops and competition organizers. Phase 4 (International expansion) opens the platform to non-Ukrainian ballroom markets, with international subscribers priced at \$12/month – generating approximately 2.5× higher net revenue per user compared to the Ukrainian tier. Phase 5 (Marketplace) serves dancers at all stages – those buying their first costume and those selling during a career. Phase 6 (Community feed) keeps the broader dance community engaged year-round, not just during active search periods. Phase 7 (Gamification + Live Streams) opens the platform to an entirely different group: family members and supporters who follow competitive dancers remotely but have no intention of dancing themselves.

International expansion to non-Ukrainian markets is planned for Phase 4 – after Partner Search and Events are fully validated in Ukraine with stable retention and documented success stories. The diaspora network built from day one serves as the bridging community that reduces cold-start risk in new markets. Because ballroom categories and evaluation criteria are standardized internationally through WDSF, the matching logic requires minimal adaptation. This layered expansion progressively grows the addressable audience and revenue base, turning MatchUp from a niche partner-search tool into the central digital hub for the ballroom dance community.

4.3. CONSTRAINTS TO GROWTH AND ADOPTION

Key constraints include:

- Cold start / liquidity: matching apps require sufficient supply to create value quickly.

- Free substitutes: social media and coach networks are widely used and cost-free, so MatchUp must win on speed, structure, and transparency.
- Local segmentation: matching is highly city- and category-dependent, which requires focused implementation instead of broad national launches.

Overall, MatchUp's growth logic is to start narrow (ballroom-only), build density in Ukraine first, and then scale internationally once the product reliably delivers fast matching and high-quality contacts.

CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION AND LAUNCH

5.1. LAUNCH PHASES AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

Table 3.6 outlines the full product roadmap across seven phases – from pre-launch to international scale. Each phase introduces new features and revenue streams, triggered by measurable milestones rather than fixed calendar dates. Because matching apps depend on liquidity, MatchUp launches city-by-city and club-by-club to concentrate supply and demand before expanding.

Table 3.6 Product RoadMap Overview

Phase	Timing	Focus	Growth Mechanic	Key Milestone	Revenue
Pre-launch	up to 1 month	Landing page, club outreach, seed users	interview contacts; Ukrainian dance community groups	100 early adopter sign-ups	–
Phase 2	2-5 months	Partner Search only + on-map club discovery	Club onboarding; competition presence; diaspora Facebook/Instagram groups. Subscription unlocked.	500 users including 100 active subscribers	Subscription \$5/month
Phase 3	6-11 months	Events module – seminars, training camps, competitions + Advertising	Coaches & clubs post events for free → they promote the app to their dancers in return. Events drive new users into Partner Search organically. City-by-city expansion. Native ads from dancewear shops, clubs, organizers.	5+ coaches/clubs actively posting events; first ad placements; 5 000 users	Listing fee introduced later + native ads

Phase 4	12+ month	International expansion	International launch (Poland, Germany, USA non-Ukrainian market) once Partner Search and Events modules are fully validated in Ukraine. Meta paid acquisition (\$5,000/mo) introduced once retention is proven.	First non-Ukrainian paying users	Subscription \$15/month
Phase 5	12+ month	Marketplace	Costume & gear marketplace.	Marketplace listing live	Featured Boost + paid event listings
Phase 6	18+ months	Community feed – posts, results, news	Dancers share results, videos, news. Threads-style feed keeps users engaged between search cycles.	100+ community posts/month; DAU retention increase	Subscription (retained) + ads
Phase 7	24+ months	Gamification + Live Streams	Ratings, badges, success stories. Live streams from competitions for families. International scale.	First live stream; higher activity	Live Streams

Source: Author's own work.

Pre-launch (up to 1 Month)

- Prepare landing page with waitlist sign-up and App Store listing.
- Direct outreach to Kyiv dance clubs: offline visits and Instagram DMs to administrators.
- Recruit first 100 early adopters from clubs, interview contacts, and Ukrainian dance community groups.
- Prepare onboarding content: how to create a strong profile and use search filters.

Phase 2: Partner Search + On-Map Club Discovery (Months 2–5)

The MVP launches with Partner Search and on-map club discovery. Clubs that join appear on the in-app map, giving visibility to nearby dancers — in return, they direct their students to the platform.

- Launch in Kyiv with 5–10 clubs; reach Ukrainian diaspora (Poland, Germany, USA) through the same community channels – same product, same language, same need.
- Free access until milestone: 500 registered users including 100 active subscribers.
- Subscription activates at 199 UAH/month once milestone is reached; existing users receive 1 free month as early adopter bonus.
- SEO targeting 'dance partner Kyiv', 'ballroom dance partner Ukraine'; sponsor 1–2 competitions with QR codes and flyers.
- Track: profile completion rate, searches per session, message initiation rate, time to first contact, free-to-paid conversion (target $\geq 20\%$).

Phase 3: Events + Advertising (Months 6–11)

Events are introduced as the primary growth engine. Coaches and clubs post seminars, camps, and competitions for free – in return, they promote the app to their students, turning each participating coach into an organic acquisition channel. Native advertising is introduced simultaneously, monetizing the growing audience without requiring new users.

- Coaches and clubs post firstly events for free; the platform promotes their events to relevant users in the feed and notifies dancers based on location and level. Later, the listing will be paid.
- Club map expanded with event schedules – dancers discover training venues and upcoming events in one place.

- Subscribers can browse and register for events within the app, adding value to the subscription beyond partner search.
- Native advertising introduced: dancewear shops, clubs, and organizers place promoted content in the feed (2,000 UAH/advertiser/month, could be changed according to the number of users)
- City-by-city expansion: each new club gets map visibility in exchange for student onboarding
- Track: events posted per month, registrations per event, new sign-ups from event discovery, first ad placements.

Phase 4: International Expansion (Month 12+)

International expansion targets non-Ukrainian ballroom markets once Partner Search and Events are fully validated in Ukraine – with stable retention, proven match rates, and documented success stories. The diaspora network built from day one reduces cold-start risk in new markets.

- Primary targets: Poland, Germany, USA – active ballroom communities with confirmed organic interest from survey data.
- International subscription at \$15/month – approximately 3× higher net revenue per user vs. Ukraine tier (slightly lower than in DancePartner.com - \$16/month).
- Meta paid acquisition introduced at ~\$5,000/month – effective now that retention is proven and creatives can feature real success stories.
- Minimal product adaptation required: WDSF standards are internationally consistent.
- Track: first non-Ukrainian paying users, international CAC vs. ARPU, retention parity with Ukrainian cohorts.

Phase 5: Marketplace (Month 12+)

The costume and gear marketplace is introduced as an additional revenue stream layered on the existing user base, requiring no new acquisition.

- Free listings for costumes, shoes, and accessories; Featured Boost (49 UAH) as the paid uplift mechanic.
- Sellers pay to surface their listing in search results; avg 1–2 boosts per seller per listing cycle.
- Track: listing volume, boost conversion rate, repeat seller rate.

Phase 6: Community Feed (Months 18+)

Social features are introduced to retain users between active search periods and generate organic acquisition content.

- Threads-style feed: competition results, training videos, achievement posts, announcements.
- Success stories (couples found via MatchUp) featured as native content – the strongest trust signal for new sign-ups.
- Community activity keeps subscriptions active outside search cycles, reducing seasonal churn.
- Track: DAU/MAU ratio, posts per active user, retention vs. pre-community baseline.

Phase 7: Gamification + Live Streams (Months 24+)

Gamification and live streaming are introduced together – both require a large enough audience to be meaningful.

- Dancer ratings by level and competition results; activity badges for verified profiles, partnerships found, events attended.

- Live streams from competitions for families and supporters who cannot attend in person.
- Stream access monetized via pay-per-view or premium subscription tier.
- Track: badge unlock rate, stream viewer count, average watch time, premium tier conversion.

Each phase deepens engagement with the same ballroom dance community across an expanding set of needs – from finding a partner, to training and competing, to buying equipment, to staying connected. The platform does not require a new audience to grow; it grows by becoming more valuable to the audience it already has.

5.2. MARKETPLACE FEATURE ANALYSIS

The acquisition logic behind it is straightforward: someone opens the app to sell a costume, browses around, notices partner profiles, finds someone interesting, and suddenly has a real reason to buy a subscription. They came to sell a dress and ended up finding a dance partner. This brings in users who had no intention of searching for a partner – and gets them to convert through discovery. It is a cheaper and more natural growth path than running ads targeting people who already know they need a partner.

The marketplace has been identified as the most relevant post-MVP extension, and it is planned as the first additional feature after the core matching functionality is validated. It will enable users to sell, buy, and rent dance-related items such as training clothes, performance costumes, shoes, and accessories. Many dancers and parents of young dancers mentioned that the marketplace would be highly beneficial. In ballroom dancing, girls often change costumes for different competitions, and the

cost of a single dress may vary significantly – from around \$100 to \$7,000, depending on the design, materials, and decoration.

In practice, the market already exists, but it is fragmented across multiple informal channels. Some dancers simply post Instagram stories to resell items (similar to how partner search is often done), while others use general-purpose marketplaces such as OLX. There are also dedicated community spaces: for example, a Ukrainian Facebook group focused on ballroom dress sales has around **9,000 members**, and niche Instagram pages such as Starlight Dance Clothes with 6,000 users, publish regular dancewear listings and content (Ballroom Dance Dresses; Starlight Dance Clothes).

These solutions show that resale activity is high, but the process is still inconvenient: users have to manually scroll through posts to find something suitable, with no structured filters for size, height, category, price, city, condition, or rent vs buy. At the same time, Kyiv has a specialized ballroom shop – Angagement – that supports rental and resale, but it is essentially a single offline hub, which gives it strong market power (they can set the rules and pricing) and limits accessibility for dancers outside Kyiv or those who want broader choice and faster matching (Dance Boutique Angagement).

A built-in marketplace inside the product would solve this problem by centralizing listings and adding structured filters (size, category, city, condition, price, and availability).

CHAPTER 6. PROTOTYPE TESTING.

6.1 PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATION FOR MVP

Before development began, a technical specification (TS) was prepared and handed to the developer, outlining the core features and logic of the MVP. The specification was refined iteratively during the development process based on practical constraints and emerging design decisions. This section documents the original product requirements as defined at the outset.

User Profile

Each registered user has a personal profile containing the following information:

- Full name
- Date of birth / age
- Height
- Gender
- Dance program (Standard / Latin / Both)
- Competition category (Kids, Juvenile 1, Juvenile 2, Junior 1, Junior 2, Youth, Adult)
- Dance club affiliation
- City and country
- Goal: Hobby / Professional

- Willingness to relocate (Yes / Discussable / No)
- Willingness to financially support a partner (Yes / Partially / No)
- Profile photo(s)
- Video (dance footage for pre-screening)
- Contact information (visible after match or subscription unlock)

Registration and Identity Verification

At registration, users are required to pass a face verification step – a photo is taken via the device camera and matched against the profile photo submitted during sign-up. This measure is designed to reduce fake or anonymous accounts, which is particularly important given that the platform is used by minors and their parents. For junior dancer accounts, registration is linked to a parent's phone number, ensuring an adult remains the primary account holder.

Partner Preference Setup

During onboarding, each user specifies their desired partner parameters. These preferences pre-populate the search filters and can be edited at any time. Parameters include:

- Looking for: Male / Female
- Age range
- Height range
- Goal: Hobby / Professional
- Program: Standard / Latin / Both
- Category
- Country and city
- Dance club (optional)

- Willingness to relocate
- Willingness to financially support a partner

Search and Filters

The main screen of the app displays potential partner profiles filtered according to the user's preferences. Users can adjust filters directly on the main screen at any time. The full filter set available during search as during registration step – Partner Preference Setup.

Map View

In addition to the list view, the app includes an interactive map that displays potential partners and their affiliated dance clubs geographically. Only profiles that match the currently applied filters are shown on the map, allowing the user to understand where compatible candidates are located relative to their own city or club.

This feature addresses a specific insight from the research: many dancers – particularly those displaced by the war or located outside major cities – struggle to gauge where potential partners are concentrated. The map provides spatial context that a list view alone cannot offer, and may also help parents of junior dancers identify nearby clubs with active potential partners.

6.2. TESTING OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS

The goal of prototype testing is to validate the core UX and product assumptions of the MatchUp app on a working build, identify usability barriers, and confirm that the interface meets the

needs of key user segments identified in the research phase (see Table 6.1). The app is planned to be tested before the pre-launch phase.

Testing objectives:

- Evaluate whether users can complete core flows independently (registration, profile creation, partner search, initiating contact);
- Assess whether the filtering system maps to the criteria dancers actually use in real partner search;
- Identify friction points in the onboarding and profile-creation flow;
- Measure perceived value of the freemium model – whether the free tier motivates registration and whether the paid tier feels worth the price;
- Collect qualitative feedback on missing features, confusing UI elements, and overall first impressions.

Table 6.1 Prototype Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Related Feature	Success Criteria
Users can complete registration and profile creation without external guidance	Onboarding flow	User completes the flow in under 5 minutes without asking for help
The filter system reflects the criteria dancers actually use to evaluate partners	Search & filters	Users apply filters naturally; no critical filter is mentioned as absent

Photo and video upload is perceived as easy and necessary	Profile creation	80%+ of testers upload at least one photo/video; rate it as "important" or "very important"
Users understand what MatchUp is and what it does within the first 30 seconds	Onboarding / landing screen	80%+ correctly describe the core function without prompting
Parents of junior dancers can navigate the app without prior experience	Full flow	Parent completes search task independently; rates interface as "easy" or "manageable"
The profile of a potential partner gives enough information to decide on a tryout	Profile view screen	Tester can make a decision confidently; identifies what info helped or was missing
Users feel the app is trustworthy enough to create a profile and share contact info	Registration + profile	No tester refuses to complete registration for safety/trust reasons

Source: Author's own development based on usability testing methodology.

6.3. TESTING METHODOLOGY

Format: moderated usability sessions conducted in person or via video call with screen sharing, using the working app build on a real device.

Participants: 1-5 users representing the core personas – including at least one competitive male dancer, one competitive female dancer, one parent of a junior dancer, and one amateur dancer.

Protocol: each session follows a structured task script. Testers are asked to think aloud while completing tasks; the moderator observes without guiding. After each task, brief follow-up questions are asked. At the end, a short satisfaction rating (1-5) and open feedback are collected.

Metrics collected per hypothesis:

- Task completion rate (%)
- Time on task
- Number of navigation errors or hesitations
- Post-task rating (1-5 Likert scale)
- Qualitative comments

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with a single, specific problem: ballroom dancers in Ukraine struggle to find compatible partners, and no adequate tool exists to help them. What started as a focused product idea grew into a research-driven process that uncovered not just the depth of one pain point, but the full scope of unmet needs across an entire ballroom community internationally that has been overlooked by the digital world.

The research confirmed, with both qualitative and quantitative evidence, that partner search in ballroom dancing is not an occasional inconvenience but a recurring, emotionally demanding challenge affecting dancers at every level and age. Seven semi-structured interviews, a survey, and field observation at the Freedom to People competition in Kyiv painted a consistent picture: 85% of dancers have actively searched for a partner, most spent over a month doing so, and 42% had considered quitting the sport entirely due to failed or prolonged searches. The current process relies almost entirely on Instagram, Facebook, and coach networks – channels that offer no structured filtering, no verified information, and no centralized supply. One of the most striking findings was the rejection of the assumption that male dancers face no difficulties – the problem, while bigger for women due to male scarcity, clearly affects both sides.

The market analysis extended the picture beyond Ukraine. Over 500,000 active ballroom dancers across 99 WDSF member federations face the same structural challenge globally, and existing solutions have never been properly served by a modern, mobile-first product. The war in Ukraine added further urgency: relocation has cut dancers off from the coach networks they previously relied on, making a centralized digital solution not just convenient but necessary.

In response, MatchUp was designed as a mobile matchmaking app built around the decision criteria dancers actually use – verified profiles, required photo and video content, advanced filtering, and a freemium model priced at \$5/month for the Ukrainian market and \$15/month for international users – directly informed by survey data and competitor benchmarking. Break-even requires just 18 paying subscribers, the Ukrainian market LTV:CAC reaches 3.5x in the base scenario, and the addressable market scales to \$350M/year globally. International unit economics signal the need for deliberate CAC reduction and LTV growth – a strategic priority addressed through community-led acquisition and platform expansion.

Perhaps the most important insight to emerge was that partner search is only the entry point into a much larger set of unmet community needs. Dancers, parents, and coaches independently raised the same additional problems: no centralized place for competitions and training camps, no structured costume marketplace, and no way for families to follow events remotely. None of these were prompted – they surfaced organically. This shaped MatchUp's long-term vision: not a single-purpose tool, but a central digital platform for the entire ballroom dance community, expanding from partner search into events, marketplace, community feed, and live streaming. The scope of the solution expanded because the scope of the problem demanded it.

In summary, this thesis demonstrates that a rigorous, research-first approach to product development can produce both a validated business case and a product grounded in real user needs. MatchUp is not built on assumption – it is built on evidence. And the community it serves, active, competitive, globally connected, and long underserved, is ready for exactly this kind of solution.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Interview Questions.

1. Warm-up / Background

For dancers:

- How long have you been dancing? In which categories?
- Have you danced competitively? At what level?
- How many partners have you had so far?
- Have you ever had to search for a new partner? How many times?

For parents:

- How long has your child been dancing?
- How involved are you in the partner search process?

For trainers:

- How many students do you currently train?
- How often do your students switch partners?

2. Trigger – Why the Search Started

- What usually triggers the need to search for a new partner?
- Can you walk me through a recent partner search from start to finish?
- Which steps in this process were the most time-consuming?
- For parents: Who usually initiates the search — you, the coach, or the child?

3. Search Process – What You Do

- Where do you usually look for a partner?
(Facebook, Instagram, websites, coaches' networks, word of mouth)
- Which channel do you start with and why?
- How many people do you usually contact during one search before the match?
- How long does an average search take?

4. Evaluation and Decision Making

- What criteria are most important when choosing a partner?(age, height, etc)
- What makes you immediately reject a potential match?

- How often do try-outs or test trainings happen?
- What usually goes wrong at this stage?

5. Emotional Experience

- How do you feel at the beginning of the search?
- What part of the process is the most stressful?
- How do you feel when communication stops or a match fails?
- How do you feel when a partner is finally found?
- For parents: What worries you the most during this process?

6. Outcome and Impact

- What happens to training while you are searching?
- Have you ever missed competitions because of partner issues?
- Did you ever consider quitting or taking a long break?
- For parents: How does this affect family schedule, finances, or motivation?

7. Reactions to the Concept

- Would a dedicated partner-matching app be useful for you? Why or why not?
- Which features would make it valuable? (filters, videos, chat, verification)
- What would make you trust such a platform?
- What could go wrong or worry you about using an app like this?

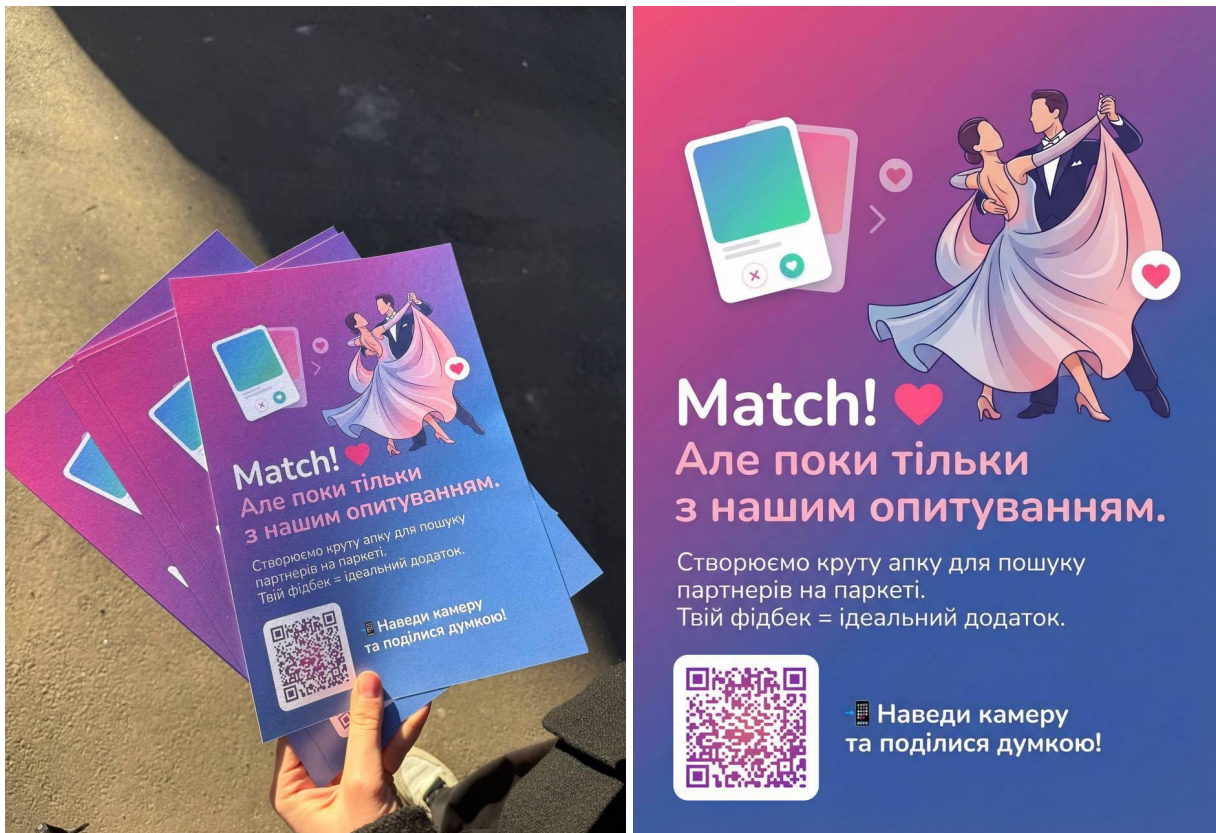
8. Closing Questions

- If you could change one thing about the partner search process today, what would it be?
- Is there anything else you wish existed to support dancers?
- Who else should I talk to in order to better understand this problem?

Appendix B. Survey Questionnaire.

[docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSetMTtYj5BXOsg18kn7J32mEy8wGTtyBqiqizlJTEkQKuahtw/v
iewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSetMTtYj5BXOsg18kn7J32mEy8wGTtyBqiqizlJTEkQKuahtw/viewform)

Appendix C. Flyers with questionnaire for dance clubs.



Source: Personal photograph by Khrystyna Buryhina, 2026.

Appendix D. Interview Notes.

docs.google.com/document/d/1B1wEPLPmi3SCtrzVCyxNbSm9MXsB-eLKFgl-ekVmDYQ/.

Appendix E. Survey Results and Analytics.

docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nhMWkVLqIAyJdnTAjSiVqysi-wVjGFrFRkjq-QtxXB8/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix F. Freedom to People Competition.



Source: Personal photograph by Khrystyna Buryhina, 2026.

miro.com/app/board/uXjVGcebxEs=/?share_link_id=417006418636

Persona 1: Parent of a junior dancer



Source: [Instagram](#)

Name - Olena (mother)

Inst: liza_demchenko_dance

Kid's status – Professional ballroom dancer (Candidate Master of Sport)

Kid's experience: 6+ years in ballroom dancing

Goals

- Find a reliable, long-term partner for a kid
- Avoid pauses in training and competitions
- Protect child's emotional stability and career trajectory

Current Partner Search Behavior

- Repeated Instagram Stories with detailed criteria (age, height, category, city, club)
- Reposting by coaches, clubs, and parents' networks
- Direct messages from strangers → manual screening
- Long search periods (weeks to months)
- Multiple attempts for the same dancer over time

Pain Points

- No centralized place to search for partners
- High emotional pressure before competitions
- Many irrelevant messages and unsuitable candidates
- Constant need to repost and explain requirements
- Risk of losing form, ranking, and motivation

Emotional Experience

- Stress
- Responsibility
- Fear of "missing the right moment"

"She has everything to dance at a high level — except a partner."

Persona 2: An adult female amateur



Name – Anna (27 y.o.)

Status – Amateur ballroom dancer

Experience – 1–2 month in ballroom dancing

Source: [Facebook](#)

Goals:

- Train consistently with a partner
- Enjoy dancing hobby
- Participate in local showcases
- Dance with a partner who shares similar commitment and schedule

Current Partner Search Behavior

- Posting partner search messages in Facebook groups
- Publishing Instagram stories with brief criteria (height, level, city)
- Browsing comments and reacting to reposts
- Communicating via direct messages with potential partners
- Relying on coach recommendations and word-of-mouth

Pain Points

- No structured or centralized platform for partner search
- Limited visibility of suitable partners outside own network
- Mismatch in goals, availability, or motivation level
- High number of unresponsive or incompatible contacts
- Repetitive manual communication and screening

Emotional Experience

- Uncertainty about long-term progress
- Frustration from stalled development without a partner
- Gradual loss of motivation during extended search periods
- Pressure to “settle” for suboptimal matches

"Looking for a dance partner in professional or amateur Category."

Persona 3: A professional youth female dancer



Source: [Instagram](#)

Name – Alina (22 y.o.)
Status – Professional ballroom dancer
Experience – 13 years in ballroom dancing
Partner history – changed 7 partners

Goals:

- Build a stable, long-term partnership that supports real progress
- Compete consistently and reach finals in Ukraine (Latin focus)
- Train in a strong club with a strong coach and clear development plan
- Avoid losing seasons due to partner gaps or mismatches

Pain Points

- Mismatches discovered late (real level/class, goals, willingness to dance Latin/10 dances)
- Height/category constraints make the suitable pool very small
- Logistics block progress (club too far, unstable schedule)
- Emotional stress from long searches, conflicts, and repeated “trial” cycles

Current Partner Search Behavior

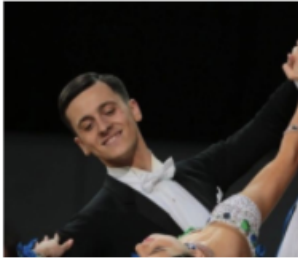
- Mostly searching through **coach networks and club connections** (word-of-mouth)
- Coaches post/search via **Instagram stories**; dancers also post themselves
- Tryouts arranged through clubs; sometimes coaches decide, sometimes dancers decide
- Occasionally used an older website with filters found via Google (rare now)

Emotional Experience

- Pressure and fear of “missing the right moment” (age/category timing)
- Anxiety after breaks (returning feels like starting from zero)
- Frustration from slow progress and repeated unsuccessful tryouts
- Motivation swings: moments of wanting to quit when no realistic options appear
- Relief and renewed confidence when the right partner happens

“If you lose time at this stage, it can change your whole trajectory — and finding the right match is harder than people think.”

Persona 4: A professional youth male dancer



Name – Oleksii (20 y.o.)

Status – Professional ballroom dancer

Experience – 8+ years in ballroom dancing

Source: [americandancer](https://www.americandancer.com/)

Goals:

- He just lost a partner and need to find a new one as quick as possible
- Progress to higher category with strong competitive results.
- Build a stable, long-term professional partnership

Current Partner Search Behavior

- Searching through coaches' and federation networks
- Direct outreach via Instagram and Facebook
- Trial trainings arranged through clubs or competitions
- Relying heavily on coach recommendations

Pain Points

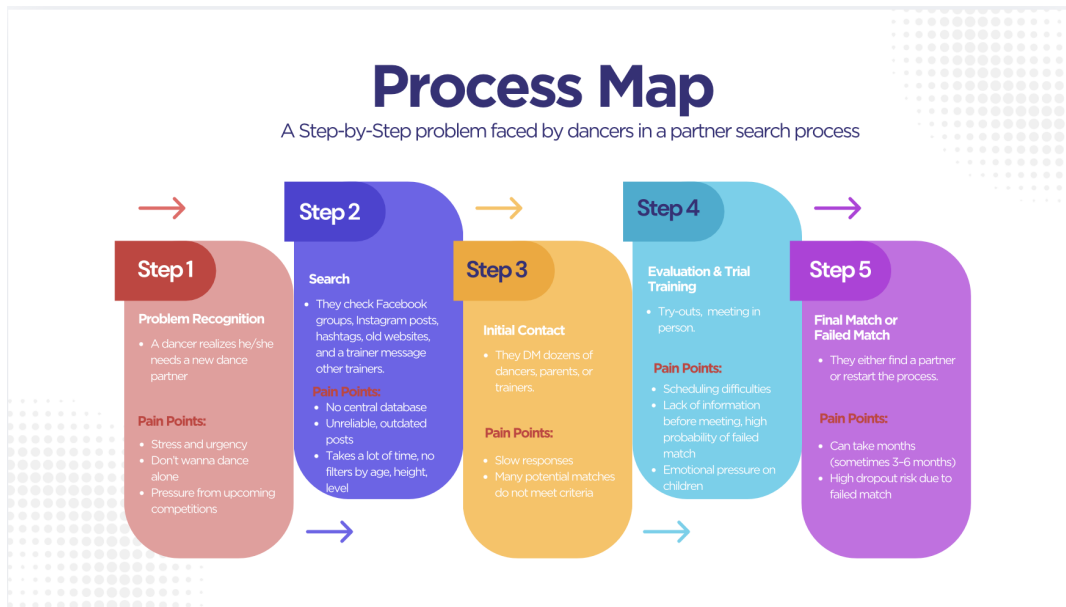
- Very narrow pool of suitable partners at Youth professional level
- Frequent unsuccessful trials because of misleading information and lack of photo/video in profiles
- High time investment
- Risk of losing form and ranking during search periods
- No centralized, transparent platform for professional matching
- Thoughts about quitting the sport

Emotional Experience

- Pressure to not miss the competitions
- Anxiety about stalled development
- Frustration from repeated unsuccessful trials
- High dependence on external decisions (coaches, clubs)

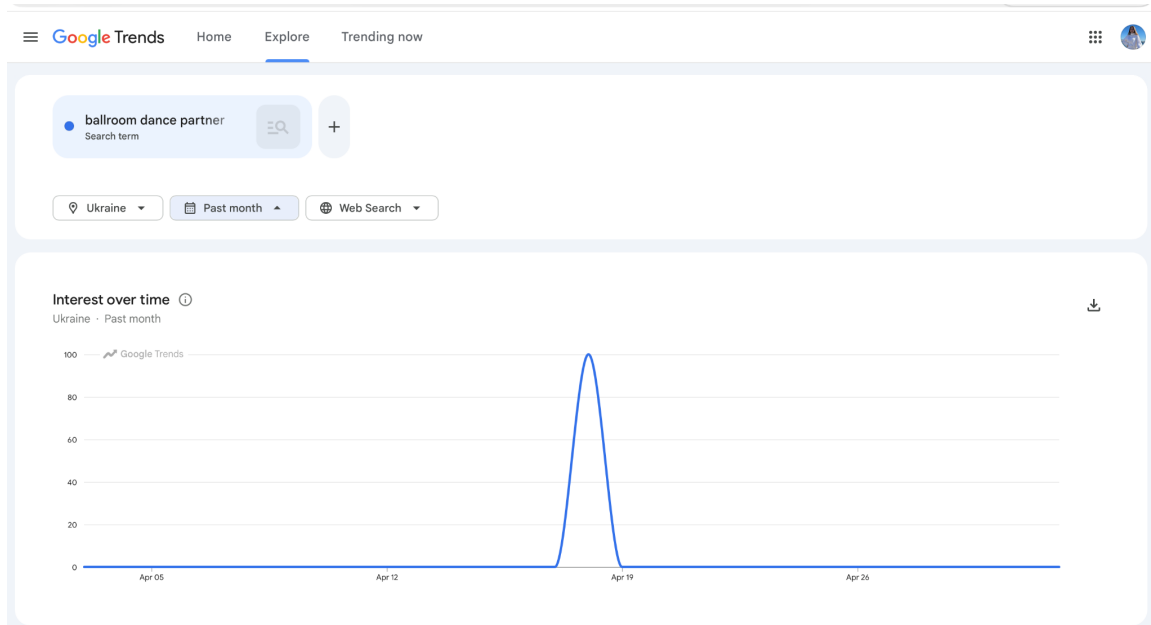
"At Youth level, every lost season affects the entire professional trajectory."

Appendix H. Process Map.



Created by Khrystyna Buryhina using Canva, 2026. canva.link/a6555iosohg3b3j

Appendix I. Google Trend on “ballroom dance partner” search in Ukraine in April.



Source: trends.google.com/explore?q=ballroom+dance+partner&geo=UA.

Appendix J. Figma App Design.

www.figma.com/design/p1RvJ7Yz3Aub2A4pVlBoSd/MatchUp-Design?node-id=0-1&t=FqVMsESAzVlxYaWC-1

Appendix K. Unit Economics

docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kiC1rKLUaQKIZa-nzgDAO0RZbyTwjmcIKswY_1X4Kj8/edit?usp=sharing