

SERIES FEATURE

LESSONS *on lessons*

STARTING A LESSON PROGRAM

with JULIE DANIEL

Starting or growing a lesson program can be very overwhelming. Along with your aspirations and goals, your mind is also filled with questions, concerns, and doubts. Having “walked in your boots,” I know what many of those exciting and worrisome thoughts might be. I know there are plenty of things I wish I would have known in the early days, but after much struggle, below are “my lessons” learned along the way to growing Apex to the successful lesson program it is today.

Not every barn is fit for a large program; however, using the following framework to start (or grow) a lesson program will serve you, your business, and most importantly, the horses and riders you teach along the way, and can be scaled to any size operation to grow our breed, by letting more people experience the beauty, love, and power of the Arabian horse and our community.



1. **Develop a Robust Business Plan:** Start by researching your market, crafting a solid budget, setting pricing strategies, and outlining growth objectives for sustained profitability.
2. **Diversify Revenue Streams:** Explore additional services such as horse leasing, camps, tournaments and academy shows to diversify income sources and engage clients beyond regular lessons.
3. **Streamline Operations:** Implement efficient systems for scheduling, horse care, and administrative tasks. Utilize technology to automate processes and optimize resource utilization.
4. **Mark Your Territory (build your brand):** Your brand is the soul of your business - it sets you apart, attracts your ideal clients, and represents your core values. To establish a strong brand presence, focus on more than just visuals. Create a digital persona that reflects your business ethos, mission, and unique offerings. Consistency is key - maintain harmonious visuals across all platforms. Define a color palette, select fonts that resonate with your brand and maintain a cohesive style in your content. Additionally, infuse your brand with a distinct voice and tone that aligns with your business personality.
5. **Deliver Exceptional Instruction:** Design a comprehensive lesson plan that is safe, engaging, and tailored to cater to riders of different skill levels. Employ passionate instructors with relevant expertise to ensure quality teaching.
6. **Prioritize Customer Satisfaction:** Foster strong relationships with clients by addressing their needs, promoting effective communication, and cultivating a welcoming environment for both riders and their equine companions.
7. **Ensure Equine Health:** Maintain the well-being of your horses through proper nutrition, regular veterinary care, and comfortable shelter. Healthy and happy horses enhance the quality of your program.



By following these key steps and incorporating effective business management practices, top notch instruction, exemplary customer service, and thorough equine care, you can lay a solid foundation for a successful horse-riding lesson program. Embrace these tactics to set yourself up for growth and long-term success in the equestrian industry.

Remember, in the world of horse riding, dedication, passion, and a commitment to excellence paves the way for a thriving program that resonates with riders and horse enthusiasts alike.

Julie Daniel is the founder of Daniel Training Center, Silver Stirrup Foundation, and Apex Riding Academy (est. 2015) in Scottsdale, AZ, where she along with her talented staff and 10 retired show horses give 75-85 lessons per week.

