



## CHATTER FROM THE CHIEF - Claudia Littlefair



This is a special issue of Alberta Chatter featuring articles about promotion and marketing from past newsletters, in chronological order from the most recent issue, #2017-4, to the first issue in 2012 (formerly *Convention Chatter*). Now, before the summer months, is the best time for clubs to discuss and plan their promotional campaigns for the fall dance season. The following articles may be of help for ideas and suggestions.

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## NO 'ONE-SHOT-WONDERS' IN ADVERTISING

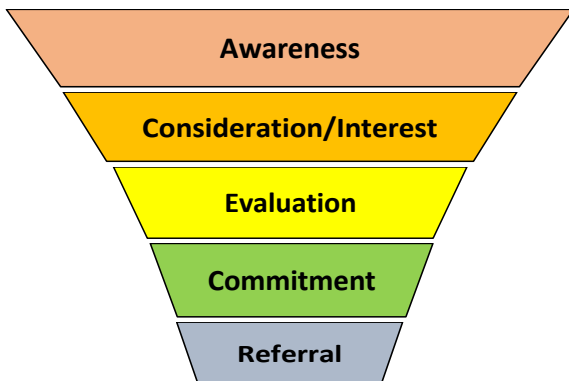
*Editor's Note: The following article is an excerpt from CALLERLAB's draft Square Dance Marketing Plan, put together by Mike Hogan. Mike lives in Omaha, Nebraska, and has been calling for over 40 years. He has a marketing background and happily shares his expertise to help build up our activity.*



The goal of a marketing campaign is frankly to sell something. For square dancing, our goal is to move individuals through the funnel until we receive the outcome of them joining our activity by learning to dance and then participating on a regular basis.

**Often, we attempt to recruit new dancers through various means and the result is disappointing.** A potential customer goes through several steps before purchasing a product as shown in the sales funnel below. A well thought out marketing plan should address all stages a customer goes through on their way to making a purchase.

**Dance groups sometimes execute a marketing tactic with high expectations and then give up when those expectations are not met.** For example, let's say your organization puts a float in the local Independence Day parade. You put a sign on the side of the float about square dance lessons beginning in two weeks. Your club member's expectations are that several people will show up to take lessons. When that doesn't happen, they determine that the parade was unsuccessful and should not be done in the future.



**The research from Starworks tells us that the community is unaware that the activity exists, is unaware of the benefits our activity offers, and has an outdated image of square dancing.** The float in the parade begins to address the AWARENESS phase of the buying cycle, but only that phase.

It takes multiple impressions on the consumer before they move to the CONSIDERATION/INTEREST stage. **Growing the awareness and understanding of our activity should be the first step in your marketing plan. It's vitally important.**

The sign on the side of the float announcing where and when a beginner class is starting, is a call to action message. It is asking the consumer to make a commitment. It is possible that someone viewing the parade has enough knowledge about square dancing to react to the sign and show up for lessons, but that is extremely unlikely.

**Now let's take this same consumer, let's call her Jane, through the sales/marketing funnel by reaching her in many ways.** Imagine this: Jane has now seen your parade float four times. She also saw a square dance exhibition at the ballpark. Twice now, Jane was handed a flyer that talked about square dancing. In each case, there was a message about beginner classes and a website where she could learn more. She now knows the activity exists, has heard the music, and witnessed dancers having fun. She knows that there is a club near her that offers lessons, and she knows there is a website she can go to for information. But, she's not convinced. Her church scheduled a social event that included square dancing, and so she attended. AND, she had fun! She decided to go to the website but didn't recall the name. So, she googled "square dancing in Springfield" and found the site. Then while on Facebook, she saw a post about beginner lessons starting. She also got an invite through Nextdoor.com to go to a square dance party to kick off the local club's lessons. She attended and had fun. At that time, she was invited to learn the dance by participating in the club's beginner class and she said ???

In this example, Jane witnessed five exhibitions, received two flyers and participated in a beginner event before going to a website to learn more. Then a Facebook post and a Nextdoor.com invite got her to sample the product again. Now, came the close! Someone she had danced with asked her for the commitment to learn the dance. And she said YES!

**The point here is that there are NO one shot-wonders. Moving your prospect from completely unaware of your product to a purchase takes an ongoing marketing strategy designed to engage them at every step through the sales funnel.**

## **\*New\* CALLERLAB RESOURCES**

CALLERLAB has created, and continue to create, a variety of resources available through the internet. If you haven't researched online for new ideas, information or material - now is a good time to start! Hundreds upon hundreds of hours, by a few dedicated volunteers, have produced these valuable resource tools for callers and dancers.

### **TEACHING RESOURCE [www.teaching.callerlab.org](http://www.teaching.callerlab.org)**

This resource contains information to assist a caller who is teaching new calls to dancers, or teaching new applications of a call to dancers. The HOME page links to Basic Part 1, Basic Part 2, and Mainstream. Each call is linked to seven pages of information:

1. **Define** links to the definition of the call with command examples, timing, styling and comments. Also some background information and a link to the Terminations website (calls demonstrated by animation).
2. **Standard** links to descriptions of the formation and arrangements considered to be Standard Applications of the call.
3. **Analyze** links to Call Analysis comments about hand usage, body flow, good preceding and following calls, and ending formations for standard applications and a few extended.
4. **Module** links to Equivalentents, Zeros, Get-Ins, and Get-Outs that use the call.
5. **Teach** links to Teaching Tips, more teaching suggestions and quick quotes (can be chanted to assist dancers through the call) and sample choreography for patter and singing calls.
6. **Other** links to Traditional Squares, Mixers, Sicilian Circles or Contra dances that use the call.
7. **Extend** links to choreography for workshops on Extended Applications.

### **KNOWLEDGE BASE RESOURCE [www.knowledge.callerlab.org](http://www.knowledge.callerlab.org)**

This resource is for **Modern Western Square Dance leaders, dancers and callers**. The knowledgebase is divided into six categories:

1. **Promoting Square Dancing** - contains articles pertaining to the promotion of the square dance activity in general, as opposed to promotion of a specific event or club.
2. **Developing Dancers** - contains articles pertaining to the recruiting, training, and retention of dancers. This includes information such as how to start and operate clubs, how to hold specific square dance events, lesson plans, teaching methods, social activities, etc.
3. **Developing Callers** - contains articles pertaining to the education and professional development of callers.
4. **CALLERLAB Conventions** - contains articles with information drawn from CALLERLAB conventions. Each convention presents 40 or more hours of education, much of which has been recorded and/or has handout documents associated with it. Since there are now hundreds of session recordings available, index articles have been placed in this category to make specific material easier to find.
5. **Winning Ways Stories** - collects stories shared by callers and dancers who have tried something out and are willing to share their experience for the benefit of others. When a story contains an especially outstanding idea, we highlight it separately as an "idea" article, but reading the complete story gives you the context in which the idea was tried.
6. **Articles By Type.**

### **DANCE RESOURCE [www.dances.callerlab.org](http://www.dances.callerlab.org)**

This resource contains dances for use at **Beginner Party Dances and Community Dances**.

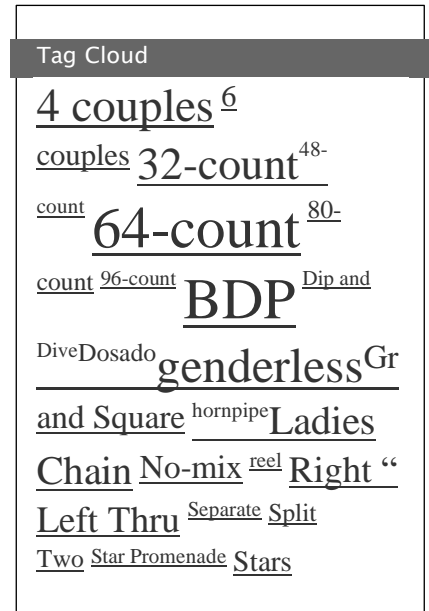
#### **DANCE TYPES**

- **Circle Dances:** all begin in one large circle. They include No Partner Dances, Sitting Dances, Couple Dances, and Mixers.
- **Contras** generally begin in two long facing lines with partner pairs arranged in various ways. This collection includes Proper Lines, Proper Duple Lines, Improper Duple Lines, Triples, Triplets, and Becket Lines. There are also contras that begin in other formations such as the Sicilian Circle and Mescolanza formations.

- **Lines, Trios and Groups** includes dances that begin in loose lines of solo dancers and dances that begin with groups of 3 or more dancers arranged in various ways.
- **Square Dances** all begin in groups of eight dancers arranged in a square. This collection includes Traditional Square Dance figures of various types, Quadrilles, Singing Call figures, and Miscellaneous Ideas related to Square Dancing.

**SEARCHING FOR A DANCE:**

1. **Dance Categories** sort the dances by type, such as Solo dances or all Sicilian Circle Contras. Clicking on an option will result in a list of dances including a brief description. Clicking on the dance name will take you to the full dance description, and many include an option to download a cue sheet, or copy and paste.
2. **Tag Cloud** sorts the dances by their tags. Note the word size indicates the number of dances –the bigger the type, the more dances in that category.
3. **Dance Resource Table of Contents** is a “sortable” table of the dances with columns for Dance Name, Choreographer, Dance Type, and Difficulty.



**CD (Community Dance) JOURNAL LINKS.** There is a link to a “sortable” table, which lists all the dances by dance type as well as the major articles in all issues of the *CD Journal* (or previously *CDP Journal*). Clicking on the issue date will link to a .pdf download from the CALLERLAB website.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS.** Work is underway on a collection of supporting documents designed to help a caller learn how to present these dances, and how to present Beginner Dance Parties and Community Dances.

## A LESSON IN MARKETING - Producing An Effective Print Ad

*In the previous Alberta Chatter issue, a newspaper ad was featured in the article titled “B.C.’s Westsyde Squares Increase by 29 Dancers in One Year!” The newsletter was posted on the CSRDS Pinterest Board titled “Newsletters”, and Cornwall’s club publicity director inquired if she could use the “poster”. Contact was made with Brian Elmer, Chairperson of SQUAREUP B.C. (a marketing initiative of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation). Below are excerpts from Brian’s email response, containing a lot of practical marketing tips that could be of benefit to all of us in our promotion efforts.*

I received an inquiry from you about accessing an advertisement for square dancing that originated in West Kelowna, BC, in the Okanagan Valley. My apologies for this delayed response but it has taken some research to identify the photo source because the ad was created several years back.

The ad has never been a poster but is actually a “display ad” set up by a local commercial newspaper as part of a paid campaign exceeding \$1,000 in value. It was never furnished without the local lesson information, so we don't have a version where that section is blank and could be used by other clubs.

The photograph of a younger couple in a dance pose and looking at the camera is a professional copywritten photo owned by iStock. That's an online international micro stock photography provider based in Calgary. They furnish some photos online royalty free but the best ones tend to be at a cost. They sell their photos on a "credit" system and the one of the dancing couple costs 3 credits or \$36 CAN. See it online at: <http://www.istockphoto.com/.../happy-couple-enjoying-a-dance->. There are many other similar photos for sale by iStock, including older and younger demographics. I can send you my list if it interests you.

The B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation acquired the rights to use the photo as part of the graphics involved in making

a pull-up promotional screen years ago. The "Dance Dance Dance" wording in the background was created by the designer of the screen, Papyrus Printing in Prince George, BC. When the newspaper ad was created for a member club of the B.C. Federation, the two graphics were again combined by the newspaper's graphics & layout department and married with the text for the advertisement. You could purchase the photo from iStock under the "Society" and have a print shop recreate the ad leaving a blank space for the local club information. I'll attach the "Dance" wording in PDF-format which is actually only the upper part of the white background behind the dancers. The print shop has to blend it.

Note that this ad involved a lot of thought and skillful understanding of "market segmentation:"The heading promises "a great dance experience" and offers a "free session".

- The start time of the instruction is 6 pm which is much more reasonable for working people who don't want recreational activities that run late into the evening (some employees today begin work at 6 am).
- The photo depicts a couple to which the target Baby Boomer demographic, now aged 53 to 71, relates (the Boomers see themselves as up to 20 years younger than they really are). Real people looking like they're enjoying themselves beats out any graphic or artistic rendering. Learn more about demographics from the Callerlab research of years ago. Refer to: <http://www.squaredance.bc.ca/jim-hensley-marketing-seminar>.
- The "Today's Square Dancing" heading moves away from more tired words to imply a current activity.
- The bulleted points stress fun, fitness, socialization, ease of learning and singles being welcome along with casual attire. The club placing the advertising is privileged to have a young instructor (aged 25).
- The instructional period shown of 12 sessions is inspired by the condensed "West Coast Square Dance Program" developed in British Columbia back in 2012. 25 to 30 two-hour sessions to learn the Mainstream program doesn't sell anymore. Refer to: <http://www.westcoastsquaredance.com/index.html>. Callerlab has since developed the Condensed Teaching Method Program of 12 sessions.
- There's a "call-to-action" encouraging interested readers to phone or e-mail to say that they want to join the fun.
- The closing portion of the ad brings reader's attention to the 10-minute promotional video produced for the B.C. Federation called "Dancing Keeps You Young" ([www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca](http://www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca)) and the web page title for the host club is promotional ([www.WestsideDanceFun.info](http://www.WestsideDanceFun.info)) to send readers to an easy-to-remember club web page that's tailored to new dancer prospects
- Also, there was a desire to create a media synergy by having the photo and titling on the pull-up screen be similar to that used in the newspaper advertising.
- Further to media synergy, under the B.C. Federation's SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative, we've been running paid advertising on Facebook that utilizes the same dancing couple photo but largely as a mid-shot, picturing them from the waist up. The "landing page" to which interested persons are sent if the ad interests them is: [www.SquareDanceFun.info](http://www.SquareDanceFun.info)

Discover a great dance experience.

**FREE SESSION**  
WED., SEPT 9 • 6pm

Introduction to...  
**Today's Square Dancing**  
with modern music

- Fun, laughter, fitness
- Great social activity
- Easy as walking
- Lively, young instructor
- Singles welcome
- Casual attire

**Westbank United Church Hall • 3672 Brown Rd.**  
**FREE PARKING!**  
12 exciting sessions follow every Wednesday by registration

Call to say "I'm joining the fun!"

Ron & Jerry 250-769-5546 • [ron\\_mcmullen@telus.net](mailto:ron_mcmullen@telus.net)  
Lynda 250-763-0084 • [lyndabj@shaw.ca](mailto:lyndabj@shaw.ca)

Video: [www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca](http://www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca)  
[www.WestsideDanceFun.info](http://www.WestsideDanceFun.info)  
Hosted by: The Westsyde Squares



## **\*New\* CANADIAN SOCIETY PINTEREST ACCOUNT**

**- by Claudia Littlefair**

**“Just try it – you’ll love it!”** Have you ever said these words to family or friends in an effort to convince them to come dancing? We know it would be “good” for them – opening a door to some great fun, friends and so much more. Often it feels like we’re preaching to the “unconverted” and getting nowhere fast.

That’s exactly how I feel about the Pinterest Account that Rachelle Cournoyer developed on behalf of CSRDS (Canadian Square & Round Dance Society). We both want dancers of all kinds to try it out! See what it’s like. Experience firsthand the information that’s been gathered for you. All you have to do is “click” and you’ll find a one-stop shop for all kinds of useful, practical information about our dance activity!

**There are 30 “boards” to choose from, with numerous items (“pins”) in each board.** Need ideas for a newspaper article? Check out the board “Press – Square Dancing”. No need to write your article from scratch. Read a few of the 71 items posted. Borrow wording that appeals to you, or use the article and simply add your club’s location and details.

Learn about our dance’s history by reading through some of the 122 items in the “History of Square Dance” board. Watch some of the videos illustrating old time dance, costumes, and pictures. Browse through the “International Square Dance” and “Provincial Associations” boards to see what other regions and areas are doing. Square & Round Dancing have an international presence.

Visit the “Themed Square Dance Events” for new ideas and suggestions for your club’s theme dances. Wondering how to make a circle skirt? a crinoline? a dance floor? write a press release? make a movie trailer? get started on Facebook? or Twitter? or how to square dance? Visit the “How To’s” board. There are boards for Clogging, Contra, Round Dancing, and Promotion of our activities. There’s an extensive board on “Dance Research” looking at the benefits of our dance.

Best of all, these boards keep growing! New information is constantly being added, and new boards created when necessary, providing up-to-date information.

**How it works:** A pin is usually a picture that links to a page on the web. These pins are grouped into boards, so the effect is like a bulletin board with pictures on it. You would need to become a member of Pinterest in order to see the CSRDS page. Membership is easy: go to [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) and set up an account. This is free. Once you have your account in Pinterest, link to the CSRDS board: <https://www.pinterest.com/canadiansquare/>. Now you’re in and ready to go. For example, if you see an image you’d like to use on a poster, click on it, click “copy image” and “paste” it on your poster.

## **MARKETING ON-LINE**

**- by Claudia Littlefair**

At a 2014 CALLERLAB seminar on Marketing On-line, Mike Hogan, a well-known caller and professional marketer, presented the following comparison on how shoppers think.

*THE OLD: Dinosaur: “I’m just not into it. I don’t look at websites. I don’t text. I’m on a website, but I just don’t believe anyone would look there to find me, or to find out about what I do.”*

*THE NEW “Shoppers today want to explore and think about how products can improve their lives. They do reconnaissance to gain the insights they need. They find incredible detail online, from every possible source. They browse, dig explore, dream and master, and then they’re ready to buy with confidence. And what they learn, they share with others.” – Dina Howell, CEO, Saatchi & Saatchi X.*

### **TOM - TODAY’S SHOPPER**

Our youngest son, Tom, is 32 years old. Last year, I enlisted his help to buy a hunting coat for Dave. They hunt together, so Tom knew exactly the kind of coat his dad would like. Later that day I received an email from him with a link to the perfect coat at a retail outlet. All he needed was my okay to pick it up. Tom is a typical example of today’s shopper, who

pre-shops on-line, often at several website locations, finds out everything possible about the product including if the right size is in stock, and reads reviews by other purchasers, prior to buying it. I, on the other hand, still enjoy the old way of shopping. I like to go to the actual store, buy the product, and find out what it's like, after buying it.

### **“SURVEY SAYS...”**

A research study called “Zero Moment of Truth” by Google/Shopper Sciences, U.S., April 2011, states that

- “The internet has changed altogether the way consumers are interacting with products and services.
- 84% of US customers are researching online before actually buying the product. (*This number has most likely increased since then.*)
- The length of the shopper’s purchase journey varies but even within a spontaneous category like restaurants, we see thoughtful behavior of several hours to several days leading up to a decision.
- Searching online is at the same level or eclipsing friends and family as a source used in the purchase process, which is a first.
- Among the group who use online social and mobile sources, they rank the mobile information as highly influential in shaping their ultimate purchase decisions.”

### **EVERYBODY DOES IT**

*Definition of Google: Search for information about (someone or something) on the Internet using the search engine Google.*

Last fall a young couple phoned Dave to find out about square dancing. They got his number off a sign, and on their way over to the dance, they googled square dance on their cell phone and viewed some you-tube clips. They already knew what to expect before they ever got to the door. Googling is a common occurrence – everybody does it. It’s a fast, efficient way to get answers and information.

The questions that our clubs today need to answer are:

1. If someone googled your club, would they find it? Are you on-line?
2. If you are on-line, is your website or facebook page appealing to a non-dancer?
3. Is your information accurate and up-to-date?

### **DARE TO COMPARE**

**Google other types of dance websites for ideas (eg. adult dance classes, latin dance, social dance websites).** Shop and compare! How are they set up? What catches your eye? What draws you in? What wording could you make use of? Does your home page speak to a potential dancer, or do they have to work to find out the information they’re looking for? Is your website “cell phone friendly”? The information on a desk top computer doesn’t transfer over the same to a mobile device. Websites are the most commonly used source of information. They must be:

- Informative – answer the questions the consumer has come there to ask.
- Kept current – outdated information kills credibility.
- Engaging – good mix of written content and photo/video content.

To create an on-line presence, many clubs opt to produce a facebook page in place of a website. The same criteria that apply to websites apply to facebook. When posting, remember that this is more than a club photo album or journal. This is a promotional tool that has the power to bring - or not to bring - new members into our activity.

## **THE OFF-SEASON**

Does your club take a vacation during May to August? Or do you capitalize on this time by creating a presence in your community? Open dance nights are not new, but consider holding one or more Summertime Dance Parties. Advertise in area churches, businesses, community clubs/associations, and ask members to bring family and friends. Keep the dances easy and fun, serve ice cream with sundae toppings, and invite your guests back for the next Dance Party. Most of all make it FUN!



## **FAVORITE WEBSITE PICKS FOR PROMOTIONAL IDEAS**

**- by Claudia Littlefair**

Three of my recent “favorite” website picks for a variety of promotional ideas are:

- **BC Square & Round Dance Federation** ([www.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.squaredance.bc.ca)) . Click on “Promotional Tools” – also offers downloadable material including editable posters and a promotional video.
- **CALLERLAB Knowledge Base** ([www.callerlabknowledge.org](http://www.callerlabknowledge.org)) - contains a wealth of promotional information, ideas, success stories and examples of material.
- **Ontario Square & Round Dance Federation** ([www.squaredance.on.ca](http://www.squaredance.on.ca)) – Click on “About” then “Club Promotion Ideas” – in addition to ideas and examples, it includes the 22-page “Henzel Plan” for creating a recruiting database.

**One of the more common tasks for promotion is writing up a news article.** I’m always searching for some interesting wording to explain our activity. Below are two explanations that offer some good “pickings”.

**SOURCE: Home page of Denver Area Square & Round Dance** ([www.coloradosquaredance.com](http://www.coloradosquaredance.com)).

The DAS&RDC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of delighting MIND, BODY & SOUL through Square and Round Dancing in the metro Denver area as well as the surrounding Front Range region. Square & Round Dancing is the fun way to keep MIND & BODY the best they can be. Learning the calls/cues keeps your brain stimulated. Dancing keeps your body moving, and the social interactions keeps your SOUL satisfied.

Square Dancing requires no fancy footwork, provides movement motivation and the social interactions create a basis for lifelong friendships. Casual dress and comfortable foot wear is all that is needed.

Round Dancing is similar to ballroom dancing except that the couples are taught/prompted through the moves by a Round Dance Cued just as Square Dancing is taught/ prompted by a Square Dance Caller. Singles, couples and families are encouraged to become involved in our activity. We truly hope you will come out to one of our many events to experience for yourself the fun and friendships that many of your neighbors already enjoy.”

**SOURCE: Ontario Square & Round Dance Federation** ([www.squaredance.on.ca](http://www.squaredance.on.ca)) – click on “Blog” and look for “The Evolution of Modern Square Dancing”.

“When most people hear the term “square dancing”, they immediately think back to their memories of school dance programs, where they tried to interpret what to do upon the commands of “do-si-do” and “allemande left.” For many, to be excited about square dancing meant you had to be a fan of old-time country music and dress up in traditional dresses and duds.

But square dancing has evolved quite a bit since the days of the hoedown, coming out of the honky tonks and into the mainstream. Modern square dancing has been around for a long time, evolving from various types of dancing in the United Kingdom and continental Europe as well as North America. Modern and traditional square dancing are similar in that both involve groups of eight, all interpreting and responding to the calls.

What sets modern square dancing apart is that participants focus on mastering the individual steps, each of which are given names, rather than an entire dance. The Caller strings these steps together, with the dancers reacting to the calls. Part of the fun is not knowing what steps will be called next. No two dances are ever the same.

Not only does this evolution of square dancing make it much more exciting, it also makes it easier for the beginner to jump in and get involved.

Even the clothes people wear no longer fits the style long associated with square dancing. While some people enjoy donning those traditional-style clothes, all a participant really needs are comfortable shoes and clothing.

Not a fan of country music? Modern square dancing can employ any type of music, from classic rock, easy listening and classical, as long as it is up-tempo.”



## **RECRUITMENT**

**- by Caller Tim Marriner, South Carolina**

*Editor's Note: Tim started calling in 1973 and made the decision to call full-time in 1987. In addition to calling at his home club in Bluffton, South Carolina, his calling career took him all over the world. Tim passed away in August, 2016. His article on "Recruitment" discusses the importance of sharing the tasks of advertising and recruiting with all of the club members, and gives some practical ideas for advertising on a small budget.*



**One of the most important necessities of our activity today is the need to find perspective new dancers.** Unfortunately, many current dancers have grown weary looking for new people for various reasons. Existing dancers often have hounded their neighbours and friends several times to the point of being a nuisance. There are also dancers that would prefer not to have to "angel" anyone else again, possibly due to burn out. Some members might not really want to lower their proficiency or may wish to move ahead to other forms or programs of dance, not really interested in recruitment of new dancers. **If a club determines they need to host new dancer sessions, the entire club needs to understand their responsibilities to support the effort 100%. Recruitment should not be left in just the hands of the caller or the club officers.**

**First of all, recruitment should be happening all the time, not just two months prior to a starting date for new dancers.** Anyone thinking a flyer can be posted and folks will come, will be greatly disappointed. There are many different things each member can do to advertise a new dancer session. The trick is finding what they feel the most comfortable doing.

**At the very least, every club member should have access to current club business cards with information regarding the new dancer session on the back.** This card should be updated regularly to allow for alternative start dates. Any time a member hands someone money, this card should be provided. These cards should be displayed at every dance for visitors to take or for dancers to pick up for distribution year round.

**Informational post cards are also effective.** They can be posted on various bulletin boards at grocery stores, schools, churches, and businesses that will allow advertising. They can also be used as a reminder mailed to anyone providing their address for further information.

**Full size paper brochures can also be developed and printed to be placed in newspaper slots or mail boxes where allowed, or handed out door to door.** Some grocery stores allow these to be stuffed in bags. Just ask! The trick is to have eye catching logos, with just the right amount of details or web site reference to get someone to read the information.

If a club has a budget, other items of promotion could be distributed such as pens, pencils, note pads, wooden nickels, or any other useful items that folks would enjoy. A web address, email, or phone number should be present for someone to contact for more information. With today's internet age, other social media outlets should be investigated as a means to promote a new dancer session. At a loss for words that best describes the activity, then point dancers to the You2CanDance.com web site for more information. Other recruitment material is available online at CALLERLAB.Org, Arts-Dance.com, LiveLivelySquare Dance.com, and USDA.org.

**Remember, promotional materials are only effective if they are placed in the hands of non dancers.**

Billboards, yard signs, radio spots, television ads, can be effective if used in a timely manner but can be pricey. Newspapers often will list new dancer information, interview a group, or cover a special event for free. Timing for all of this is important to support a new dancer session.

Demonstrations, open house dance events are also effective ways to help promote a new dancer session. Still, face to face reference is the best form of recruitment. Friends bringing in friends is the most effective method of recruitment. New dancers are energetic and eager to help. Usually they have access to non dancers others have not approached. Strike while the iron is hot, not a year down the road.

No matter what a club does to recruit, it is very important to follow up on the effectiveness of any promotional methods. Without measuring the results, no improvements can be made. This will provide great insight for future promotions. Track how a prospective dancer heard of the new dancer session. Have them provide this information along with an address, phone number, and email address. While they are providing information, find out a little bit more about them, such as interests, hobbies, and jobs. This can assist with networking them with current dancers of similar backgrounds and interest. This helps with retention. It will also provide a reference of skills for future help.

**It is important for each member to have a duty and a goal when it comes to recruitment.** Provide several different means of recruitment tools members can choose to help. Measure the results and reward those that excel! The club must all pull together for the same goals. Anyone with other selfish motives will not provide any useful help. Get them on board with some other chore to assist. **With everyone's help, only then can a club collectively achieve growth through new dancers.**

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE'S SUCCESS STORY - by President Doreen Guilloux**

**The ROCKY WHIRLWAYS SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE CLUB - an exciting, positive and growing group of dancers.**

Being President of the Rocky Whirlways Square and Round Dance Club is so much fun, and so exciting. The executive we have right now is full of wonderful ideas, enthusiasm and commitment to making the Rocky Whirlways Square and Round Dance Club the very best club possible. Our executive meets and talks often to keep up with the many facets of the club. The bottom line is to keep positive, keep dancing exciting, keep the club growing and keep the dancers coming. Our club saw a huge surge in membership this year, 20 new people joined. Our publicity people consulted with Claudia who has gathered a portfolio of great ideas and worked hard to make sure the advertising was inviting and that it showed that our club is where people want to be.

We are lucky to have a Casino that can support the type of club we have. We are unique – no other club has mainstream square dancing with a rotation of excellent callers, full year square dance lessons with their own caller, and a round dance group that meets regularly with a special caller. Right now, our round dance group is as big as our square dance group!

Other dancers love coming to our club because we are warm, friendly and welcoming and our dances are always fun. This doesn't happen by accident. It takes a wonderful group of people, a lot of planning and a lot of organizing. But it's all worth it. We have the opportunity to be an innovative and leading group for the dancing community and we're proud of that.

This year we have added bus tours with the idea of supporting other clubs and providing a convenient and fun way of getting to other club dances. Not only has this been great for us but the clubs we visit are excited to see such a large group of people walk into their halls. Thankfully, we have two drivers who can share the driving and others who are thinking of getting qualified as well. Our secretary works hard to coordinate buses, drivers and passengers.

We have a rotation of callers at our club. This gives our dancers the best exposure to calling possible. Callers come from all over the province and feel at home at our club and enjoy being here. In fact, we have callers who contact us asking if they can be put on the roster. They are supportive of what we are trying to do and helpful with ideas. We have one person in charge of contracting the callers and setting up our dance schedules and other person contacts the callers each week before they come to let them know what dances we've been working on and what things they, and we, can do to make the next dance a good one. We also arrange for billets for callers who need to stay overnight.

We have one caller who teaches our lessons each week and our Vice-President is in constant communication with him and the dancers to make sure our lessons are the best they can be and that the wishes of the club are adhered to. As

the year progressed and the new dancers were exposed to more calls, they joined the mainstream dances every night for at least one tip. They also join the mainstream dancers every night at announcement time and for our friendship circle at the end of the night.

Our Treasurer has taken on a big job and does it so well. She pays the bills including all the callers, does the banking, deals with AGLA, with the casino money and keeps the executive informed about financial matters.

Our secretary helps to keep me organized and keeps track of all the ideas and work lists that the executive comes up with. It's not just a simple job of taking minutes.

We have many people volunteering to open the hall, put on coffee and greet the callers and next year this process will be made easier for the executive because two people have taken on the job to make sure all the dances have someone to be the host and put on the coffee. We also ask our members to take turns being hosts for special theme dances.



They come up with decorations, special foods, special dancing and other ideas to make the dances fun.

We recently asked for a round and a square dance representative to attend executive meetings. The idea is for them to be a liaison with club members and to take on some executive tasks.

Another big deal is our plan to open our dance year with a super caller and special dance with the Harvest Hoedown and end the dance year with a bang with our

Graduates Ball and special caller. We wanted to make sure there was something exciting at both ends of the year. Next year both these dances will be for the entire club, round and square dancers. We feel it's important to have events that tie the entire club together.

Another innovation this year is the promotion dances. These have been a huge success. We find that promoting the dance at this time of year (March & April) while our present dancers are still dancing and excited is better than waiting until the fall to promote and recruit. Our dancers take invitations and hand them out to friends and relatives inviting them to a special social event. We have social dancing, mixer dances and introduce them to square and round dancing. We make sure they are up on the floor most of the evening and are having a good time. Our decorations are elaborate, our caller excited and exciting and our club welcoming. We offer these guests a special deal to sign up for lessons for the following year. We already have enough dancers signed up to continue with lessons next year for both square and round dancing. A big part of this is this year's dancers are so enthused that they do the advertising for us, they are excited to bring their friends into the group. Your enthused dancers are your best advertising tool.

**But the most important part of any club is the members. Their commitment to the club through coming to every dance they can, volunteering to do all the many tasks, and being so friendly and welcoming to the guests makes our club a special community. The key to all of this is positive-ness. Get rid of the negativity in your club and work hard to get everyone involved in the club, that they feel ownership and that they want the club to succeed. Be open to new ideas. Allow people to wear what they feel comfortable in and welcome singles or couples or two ladies or two gentlemen. Make sure your club members interact with new people and are up dancing when lessons are being given to new dancers.**

Make your physical environment friendly as well. If you have a large dance floor and a small group of dancers, move the chairs in to form a smaller space so there is interaction between the dancers on the floor and those on the sidelines. Don't talk about what you can't achieve as a club, talk about what you can achieve. Make your posters interesting, modern and inviting.

Our club is a wonderful group of people who make us all want to keep on dancing and laughing and having fun. I'm so proud to be given the opportunity to be the President of the Rocky Whirlaways, Square and Round Dance Club.

## **'WINNING WAYS' SUCCESS STORY**

*Editor's Note: The following story is one of the many "Winning Ways" submissions. This one is about a club that was failing and how they were able to turn things around. For more such stories, go to [www.knowledge.callerlab.org](http://www.knowledge.callerlab.org) under the Winning Ways Stories section.*

### **NEW JERSEY RUTGERS PROMENADERS, By Ken Robinson March 2, 2015**

#### **Here are a few things that I think helped turn the club around:**

1. We moved our dances from Thursday evening (which worked well when the club was still a college club) to Sunday afternoon. The original thought was that we would get families with young kids to come then. Initially, that didn't work; we got senior citizens who didn't want to drive at night.
2. The club always encouraged families with young kids to come to the dances, even if the kids didn't dance. There was always an adult to watch the kids; many of those kids are now dancing. We now say we are a "family friendly" club.
3. About six or seven years ago, a family of with home schooled kids showed up at one of our dances and asked when we were starting lessons. We hadn't planned on doing lessons that year, but we said "Today"; that was the start of the club's growth. The kids in that family got their friends to come and the momentum built from there. Then some of the teens got their parents to learn!
4. We hold our lessons before our regular dance. One hour of lessons and then there are class level tips during our regular dance. This way the class members feel like they are in the club from Day One. They also get used to coming to the dance on our regular dance day, not some other day/time. We don't quite get through the Mainstream program by the end of the dance season, but we graduate the class anyway and encourage them to get out and dance. Our retention rate has been very good over the last few years. I don't have exact figures, but I would guess that it's on the order of about 90%.
5. Although we are technically a "couples" club, we do not require people to be coupled up before getting into a square. There are almost always people who are willing to fill a spot in a square, and many of our regular dancers can dance either part.
6. Since almost everyone in the club has an e-mail address, communication is done via e-mail.
7. We dance the Mainstream program and welcome dancers who are coming back into the activity. We've had some members ask if we would dance any Plus tips at the dance and both Betsy and Dan have said "No Way"!
8. We are a fun club to dance with and we dance with our visitors! We moved to a nice facility with no steps, a good floor, and good lighting. It was more than double the cost of our old dance hall, but the increased attendance at our dances more than paid for the move

#### **Here are a few things we don't do:**

1. We don't require any specific dress code. While personally, I don't think this matters all that much, I've noticed that teens like to dress up and the new dancers love to buy square dance outfits.
2. We don't have committees and require members to be on them.
3. We don't require members to bring refreshments, but almost everyone does. We have one couple who has been refreshment chairs for years and they set up the punch bowl and some refreshments, but there's no sign-up sheets.
4. We don't push new dancers into leadership roles. For example, a few years ago a new graduate came up to me and asked what her job was for the following year. I told her that her job was to come to dances and have fun!
5. We don't discourage rowdiness in the squares. If the kids (and those of us who never grew up) want to horse around in a square (dancing as couples, nine pin, trading between squares), we let them.

## SELLING THE “WHY”

The following excerpts are from an article from the *Saskatchewan Business Magazine*, September 2015. The article, “Sell ‘Why’ Not ‘What’ – The Art of Marketing Benefits” is written by CEO Ryan Townend, co-founder of the Calgary advertising and marketing company, *William Joseph Communications*.

*“Imagine two advertisements selling the same four-slice toaster.*

*The first ad shows an attractive picture of the toaster, followed by the technical specs and purchasing information.*

*The second ad is an image of a brightly-lit kitchen table with a smiling family of four, each with their own slice of golden toast. The copy would read something like “No more fighting who gets the first slice. With our new four-slice toaster, your mornings will be peaceful once again.”*

*Although the first ad serves a purpose for those looking for specific information about the product, the second ad has broad emotional appeal to those in the market for a larger toaster to keep up with the family.*

*The second ad is an example of marketing the benefit of the product or service, not the features. To break it down: the features of the toaster (such as four slices, settings and technical specs) do not address any specific emotional appeal, such as the second ad’s call for calm mornings spent with your family.)*

*Emotional appeal is an important thing to focus on in advertising, as it uses psychological drivers to make the audience engage with your marketing. ...Selling the “WHY”, not the “What”, is another way to look at it.*

*Once you know what is important to your customers, you can better market the benefits of your product or service.”*

### Applying This Information to Dance Ads

Instead of simply advertising when our next classes are being held, we have an opportunity to tell non-dancers WHY they should join us. Do your homework! Take the time to research and define:

- The benefits of dancing (they are numerous).
- The needs of prospective dancers (also numerous).
- The WHY (the emotional appeal) between the benefits and needs.

For example, here’s a poster based on the following:

- Benefits – new friends, new skills, fun.
- Needs – companionship, new interest, activity.
- WHY – happiness, interaction, learning, value.

The picture conveys emotional appeal (happiness, interaction, having fun), and the words reinforce it.



This black and white picture features our activity, but it lacks emotional appeal. It doesn’t get a reaction out of the reader, or make them smile, or make the reader wonder what the ad is about.

**So, figure out what people are looking for, and use your ad to answer WHY they can find it at your dance club.**

WEDNESDAY 7:30 PM  
SEPTEMBER 21  
SEPTEMBER 28

# Dance & Dessert

TRY Something NEW!  
NO Experience  
NO Partner Needed

NO Charge!

Westmount School Gym  
220 Wheatland Trail, Strathmore  
403-934-5966  
StrathmoreSquareDance.com

hosted by Wheatland Whirlers Square Dance Club



## WHAT SELLS - FACTS OR BENEFITS?

Kim T. Gordon, a top U.S. marketing specialist, has numerous marketing articles available on her website, and much of what she talks about can be applied to our advertising. She states that *“it’s vital to create a benefit-oriented message that will capture the attention of your target audience and motivate them to take action”*.

What does a ‘Benefit-Based Message’ look like?

- It is the heart and soul of what is offered.
- Sales increase when this message matches up with what the customer wants to buy.
- It is simple, direct and easy to remember.
- It talks about the benefits the buyer will enjoy.
- It’s specific to the buyer, replacing words like “We provide”, “Our”, “We”, “I” with “You’ll get”, “You”, “Yours”.
- It answers the buyer’s question “what’s in it for me?”

Is Your Square Dance Ad “Feature/Fact-Based” or “Benefit-Based”?

The following was written by caller Nasser Shukayr, in an article called “Selling the Benefits”.

“Square dance advertising is usually “Feature-based” or “Fact-based”. We advertise the FACT that square dancing is good exercise. Instead, we should sell the BENEFIT that people will look and feel good because of square dancing. We advertise the FACT that square dancing is a social activity. Instead we should sell the BENEFIT of lifetime friendships.

While our advertising needs to briefly explain the feature and advantage, the main selling point needs to be the BENEFIT! Can you imagine an ad with the benefit screaming out in huge 3-inch-tall letters?

Maybe it’ll work and maybe it won’t, but really just about ANYTHING is better than a flyer which announces “Classes Starting Soon”. Let’s start selling BENEFITS instead of FACTS!

In a sales course they teach you about FAB. F is Feature, A is Advantage, B is Benefit. In sales, F.A.B. is important but the main thing you SELL is BENEFIT. For example:

*Feature:* M&M’s hard outer shell keeps the chocolate inside from melting.

*Advantage:* The chocolate is less messy, and it stays intact in the shell.

*BENEFIT:* Melts in your mouth, not in your hand.

Note they’re selling the actual taste/texture of the actual melting chocolate. That’s the BENEFIT.

*Feature:* Alka-Seltzer dissolves quickly in water.

*Advantage:* It goes to work faster than other brands.

*BENEFIT:* Plop Plop, Fizz Fizz, Oh what quick relief it is.

Note they’re selling rapid relief. That’s the BENEFIT. They’re not selling how it works or why it works, just the fact that it works FAST and brings you relief. They’re selling the end result.

How Can Our Ads Sell “Fun, Fitness, Friends”?

Using this information, how can we create a Benefit-Based Message for “Fun, Fitness, Friends”? Here’s some examples:

- Where Friends have FUN getting fit!
- Where Friends, Fitness & FUN Happen!
- Three-Way Win: You Make Friends, Have FUN, and Feel Great!
- Reduce Your Stress - Laugh More - Connect with Friends.
- Enjoy Dancing Your Calories Away with New Found Friends!

### SIGNS SPEAK VOLUMES

One of our chief marketing problems is that the majority of people do not know we exist! They believe that square dancing happened sometime in the past. CALLERLAB, the international association of callers, coined the phrase: **“Nobody’s talking about it because nobody’s talking about it!”** Most of our advertising takes place during early fall for 4 to 6 weeks. That means there is next to nothing about our recreation for 85% of the year.

Merv & Sandy Meyers, caller/cuer couple from Kamloops, have used their vehicles as “portable billboards” for the past two years. They have two sets of magnetic car door signs, so they can put them on whichever vehicle they are driving. When they purchased their van in 2014, they made the decision to put on some permanent advertising. Wherever they travel, people “read” their vehicles.



This fall they took the signs one step further. They put up a large banner on the front of the Community Centre. They put up a double-sided sandwich board sign in front of the building.



Their home happened to come with a ready-made, large signboard in the corner of their lot. The previous owner had built it to advertise his business, and left it behind when Merv and Sandy purchased the home. It was perfect for putting up another banner, especially since it faces a major road.



The result? 28 people came to their free dance, and 19 joined up for lessons. Each attendee filled out a survey about what influenced them to attend (some ticked more than one answer):

- Community Calendar – 4
- Demo at “The Bay” – 3
- Newspaper Article – 8
- Banner on Home Lot – 1
- Friend Recommended – 12
- Banner at Community Centre – 2
- Own Web Search – 4
- Van Decals – 1

#### ABOUT THE MEYERS



Sandy & Merv Meyer, caller & cuer couple for ‘Thompson Valley Stars’ club in Kamloops and Chase, BC, are very passionate about square & round dancing, having traveled as far south as Spokane, west to Hawaii and north to Fairbanks, Alaska to dance, call & cue. Merv started square dancing in 1982 and has been calling & teaching square dancing for 17 years in the Thompson/Shuswap region. Sandy started square dancing in 1978, dancing until 1986 when she took a 22 year break, happily returning in 2008. Sandy loves cueing, and started this in 2009. She & Merv choreograph many of their own round dances. They are both enthusiastic about promoting square and round dancing and were presented the ‘SILLERY AWARD’ in 2014 by the BC Square & Round Dance Federation, ‘In Honour & Recognition of Outstanding Service to the Square Dance Community’.

## SUMMER DEMOS

*The following excerpts are from an article in the September 2014 issue of American Square Dance Magazine, called "CALLERLAB Viewpoints – Demonstrating our Dance". It was written by Mike Seastrom, Los Angeles, CA, who is an international caller and recording artist. Mike started dancing in 1960 and calling in 1963. He joined CALLERLAB in 1977 and over the years has served on various committees and in leadership roles, including Chairman of the Board. As a practicing dentist, calling is an avocation for Mike, and he says he is fortunate to have such a wonderful and understanding staff and family. His article gives some practical suggestions and ideas on how to make dance demos successful recruiting events.*



“Showing our dance to others is a great way to update our image, demonstrate the fun and team spirit of our unique dance form, and interest others in joining our recreation. Yet to really be effective in using demonstrations as a means of bringing new dancers into our activity, it has to be done right and with a plan.

How many times has your group been out to a mall, a fair, a chili cook off or some other event? You had a great time doing a demonstration, but only had limited success encouraging those in the crowd to join your next new dancer program or class. I’ve spoken with many club and association leaders over the last 25 years who have said they still do some demonstrations, but they hardly ever get new dancers to join their group. Many clubs have just stopped doing them altogether.

The following suggestions are my opinions only. They come from personal experience and by talking to those who consistently succeed in bringing new people into their new dancer programs by doing these demonstrations. I’m not talking about the times we entertain people with our dance in convalescent hospitals and the like. I’m talking about those events where others can see us and be excited enough to join.

1. **MUSIC:** Think about the age of the group you would like to target and have your caller program the demonstration to what would appeal to that age group. You’ll also need to consider that the age of the dancers in the demonstration can’t be too far off the group you are targeting. If all your demo dancers are in their 70s and 80s and you are trying to appeal to people in their 40s and 50s, you won’t be as successful, even if you use music that they like. Be realistic, but definitely consider the age and music preferences of those you want to attract.
2. **DRESS:** If all your dancers come to the demonstration wearing their fancy square dance clothes, most of those watching will think you are all professional dancers and that they could never be as good as you are. They will also immediately think that it takes lots of time to be that good and will enjoy watching you, but will not participate when your caller asks all of you to go out and bring in volunteers to dance an easy number. It is my opinion that most of your group should wear clothes that your target audience would have in their own closet at that moment. It’s much easier for your targeted group to imagine themselves dancing if they already own the type of clothes that your dancers have on. If a couple of your members absolutely have to wear their traditional clothes, then so be it; but I personally feel it can have a negative effect.
3. **NON-PARTICIPATING PARTICIPANTS:** I know this sounds a little shady, but having some of your group in “plain clothes” can really help the success of your demonstration. Appoint several of your own people to dress in the same attire that your targeted observes would be wearing at the event. As they mingle on the outskirts of your demonstration, it makes it look like there are people watching already, so others will be more apt to stop too. It also is a great way to get your audience to join you when the caller stops and requests some of the audience to join. Your “non-participating participants” gladly volunteer to join in an easy dance. This helps provide some additional incentive for others to join. Believe me, it works. How far you go with this is up to you, but people are more likely to join your demonstration when they see others jump at the chance.

4. **NAMES, ADDRESSES, PHONE & EMAIL INFO:** Plan a way to have people sign up for some kind of a contest or raffle. Print tickets on your computer that has the information on your next class or new dancer event. Have the other part of the ticket be your copy asking for names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. This information gives you the ability to follow up by mail, phone, or email and contact these interested people with further information about the next opportunity to join you. This leads us to the next point.
5. **HOLD A RAFFLE OR PRIZE GIVE-AWAY:** Decide prior to your demonstration, what might appeal to your target audience. Some examples are free dance lessons, movie tickets, theater tickets, tickets to a sporting event, or a theme park. Use your imagination and the resources of those in your group. Don't miss out on this golden opportunity to provide an incentive to get personal information. Then be sure to follow up and personally contact those that have shown interest. These are important steps and are critical to your success. There may be some rules and regulations in your area dealing with prize giveaways, so check them out first.
6. **DANCING:** Be sure to have your caller keep the dancing easy and use movements that flow and look good. Your audience needs to picture themselves participating and if you're dancing figures like Relay the Deucey and Spin Chain the Gears, it can be a little intimidating to your observers and diminish the success of your demo. If you get too complicated, many will think it will be too hard for them to learn.
7. **SMILE AND HAVE FUN:** This point is pretty self-explanatory, but is often left out. Dancers should make eye contact with each other and with some of those in the crowd. Your success will go way up if you're having fun."

## **WRITING A NEWS RELEASE**

*Recently I came across an article from CALLERLAB's book "The Modern Square Dance Image" (1978!) about writing a news release. The information is still relevant today:*

- Five points are important to a good news release: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY. If possible a sixth, HOW, should be included.
- It is important to get all these points in the first sentence or two, whether you're writing for newspapers or broadcasting. These first sentences are called the "lead". A good lead captures the attention of a reader or listener and makes him want to know more about your club's activity or project.
- Now go into the details of your story. Each succeeding paragraph should be of *declining* importance. Professionals call this writing technique the "inverted pyramid". It permits an editor to pick up the important facts of your story in the first few lines. Then, if he does not have space or time to use the whole release he can cut it from the bottom, where least important details are given. This is true of both print and broadcast material."
- Use short words. Write short sentences, short paragraphs. Two sentences make a good paragraph in a news release.
- Always give exact date in a news release: "June 10" rather than "next Thursday" or "tomorrow". Specify "October", not "next month."
- List the address as well as the name of a meeting place. Remember, you are writing for people who do not know.
- Never use a word in a news release that you would not use in everyday conversation. Never use a ten cent word if you can think of a good five cent one.

## WHO'S YOUR TARGET?

*At the April, 2014 Callerlab Convention Mike Hogan presented a marketing session called "Generational Marketing". Mike is from Omaha, Nebraska and started calling at the age of 13 – 38 years ago. He works full time as General Manager of Rutledge Integrated Marketing, a full service marketing, advertising and public relations agency. Below are excerpts from his handout on marketing as it applies to square dancing.*

### ADULTS 60 to 70

#### Profile:

This age group is semi retired, does light physical activity, and are willing to join a group and make longer commitments. They are slower learners. They want exercise that helps them stay healthy. They will dance in churches. They are okay with, but not excited about, dancing in senior centers. They are very family and church oriented.

#### Music Preferences:

Classic hits (70's-90's), modern country, classic country, and classic rock.

#### Recommendations:

- Very few changes needed.
- We use their favorite music.
- They will join a club and make a longer term commitment and will dance in the halls we use.
- They will dance with our current generation of dancers.
- Emphasize our health benefits.
- Involve travel opportunities if possible.
- Shorten your class time and possibly add a second night each week to increase retention.
- Don't set a required finish date for your beginner classes.
- Market to them through word of mouth, church bulletins and cause marketing events.

### ADULTS 50 to 60

#### Profile:

This age group is full time employed and they are beginning empty nesters. They want exercise to stay young. They are new grandparents. They are easily bored and impatient. They want to feel young. They will dance in a church. They don't mind senior citizen discounts, but don't want to be "old". They might dance in a senior citizen centre, but don't want to. They are embracing technology. They have laptops and are on Facebook.

#### Music Preferences:

Classic hits (70's-90's), modern country, classic rock, and rock.

#### Recommendations:

- Minor changes needed.
- Use more modern country and classic rock music.
- Move your dance out of the senior center if possible.
- Emphasize the ability to re-connect with their life partner.
- Once a week classes work fine.
- Emphasize square dancing as a way to stay young and healthy.
- Mix in travel opportunities, dinners, additional social activities beyond just square dancing.
- Change things up to keep their interest.
- Use club websites and club Facebook pages, as well as email to stay connected with them.



## **ADULTS 40 to 50**

### **Profile:**

This age group works full time and has middle school and high school aged children at home. They are very active and very busy. They are socially connected. They don't like long term commitments and are not joiners. They take care of children and parents. They belong to a gym. They like trends but don't have to be trendy. They embrace technology. They have laptops, smart phones, iPads, are on Facebook and text message friends and family.

### **Music Preference:**

Modern country, classic hits (70's-90's), and rock/adult contemporary.

### **Recommendations:**

- Moderate changes needed.
- Use more modern country and adult contemporary music.
- Keep using the classic hits music but cut back on classic country and adult standards.
- You'll need to offer multiple times for dancing as you'll be competing with high school sports for their time.
- Get out of the senior centre.
- De-emphasize dress code.
- When marketing to them, try not to use pictures, videos or live performances with dancers over the age of 55.
- Communicate with them through email, club websites and Facebook pages.
- Start capitalizing on social media.

## **ON-LINE ARTICLES BRING IN 20 NEW DANCERS!**

*Here's a success story that's possible for every club.*

Last fall, I met with caller/cuer couple, Merv & Sandy Meyer, from Kamloops, BC to talk about their promotional success. Sandy explained that the year before they had no new dancers, and that growth looked bleak.

Starting in June and continuing throughout the summer, Sandy wrote eight general interest articles about their square dance trips (eg. To Oceanside Festival, Peachfest, and even a demo). At the end of each article, she included links to several sites on square dancing, as well as their club's website. The articles were emailed to the Kamloops newspaper, together with several photographs. These were all posted in the on-line newspaper. Four of the articles were shortened and published in the printed paper.

Sandy said that the articles took her many hours to compose, and that she carefully selected photos that showed square dancing in a favorable light (lots of smiles, poses, interesting and colorful backgrounds, etc.).

In the fall 30 people came out for the club's two "free nights", and from that group, 20 signed up for their 10-week pre-paid course in square dancing!

In most communities, the general public doesn't even know that square dancing exists – just try asking 10 people where the local square dance club meets. Sandy's articles did two things:

1. Gave their club an active presence in the community.
2. Marketed square dancing as a fun activity that is worth pursuing.

If you have a "writer" in your group, try this free-of-charge avenue of marketing. In larger areas, communities put out their own newsletters or weekly papers, and they are receptive to general interest articles that involve people in their community.

### WHY FAX?

Ask a random group of people in your area where the local square dance club meets, and chances are that 10 out of 10 people won't know the answer. In other words, most people don't know we exist! This lack of information is part of our marketing problem. One way to address it is to educate the general public through advertising. The more people that read our ads, the more "popular" we become, and the more dancers we attract.

### FAX BROADCASTING WORKS!

Your Message Is Read. People are 2 to 4 times more likely to read a fax than direct mail! You're guaranteed at least one view per fax, unlike a magazine of a hundred pages where your ad may or may not be seen. Direct mail is often tossed without even opening the envelope. You can't do that with a fax. That's why a targeted fax broadcast almost always pulls a better response than direct mail.

It's Cost Effective. The cost to send a fax is a mere fraction of the cost of a postage stamp, envelope and print costs of a direct mail or a poster campaign.

It's FAST! Your message can be delivered everywhere within hours.

Timing Is Straightforward. It's easy to coordinate your fax campaign so it has the most impact on your event.

It Reaches A New Audience. Faxes to businesses, churches, recreational and community groups can reach a large number of people – the majority of whom are unaware of our activity.

### RED DEER'S EXPERIENCE

Last fall a club member faxed out a one-page ad advertising 'Team Dancing' to 3000 locations in Red Deer. She used 2 computers and 2 lines so it took several hours. They had 12 people come out as a direct result of the faxes. (When people phoned to inquire about 'Team Dancing', they were told that it is "square dancing modernized".

### COST COMPARISON

I googled four fax broadcasting companies, and the one that is the best fit (based on cost, locations, service and interest in providing information) is *Pipeline Media*.

PIPELINE MEDIA, Calgary

City/Town	# of Locations	Cost+GST
Calgary	21,491	\$408.33
Edmonton	16,307	\$358.75
Red Deer	2,200	\$85.80
Strathmore	217	\$50.00

BROAD FAX, Vancouver

Calgary	80,000	\$800.00
Edmonton	65,000	\$650.00

### FAX AD SAMPLE

This fabricated ad:

- Grabs the reader's attention with graphics and font sizes.
- Contains information that's easy to read and understand.
- Is clean looking (not cluttered).

Note: A reader looks at an ad for 3 to 5 seconds before making a decision to share it or turf it!



## MARKETING TO BABY BOOMERS

**Marketing is huge - both in what it covers and what it does.** Marketing is more than promotion and advertising. In fact, promotion falls under the main heading of marketing, and advertising falls under the sub-heading of promotion.

A.       MARKETING

A.1        Promotion

A.1.1       Advertising

Every product needs its own special blend of the **Four P's of Marketing**. Applying these Four P's to Square Dancing means: **PRODUCT** - ALL the physical details of our dance program (where, when, how) as well as the benefits and values that dancing represents.

**PRICE** - is the amount that the dancer must pay. Remember, people equate value of product with price - "you get what you pay for". Something for free isn't all that valuable.

**PLACE** - where your product is found is vital. For example, dancing at a senior centre as opposed to a community hall or ballroom invites a different crowd.

**PROMOTION** - includes live media and print advertising, demos, special offers, on-line marketing, dance parties, and more.

The basis of all good marketing is to know your customers - the dancers.

**Good marketing means knowing who our dancers are and what they want, even BEFORE they become our dancers!**

### THE BABY BOOMERS

The Silver Tsunami, Zoomers, The New Frontier, and Baby Boomers are all names for the biggest group in today's population. They are the generation born between 1946 and 1965, who are currently aged 48 to 67. In 2011, data showed that 9.6 million, or every 3 out of 10 Canadians were Baby Boomers. **This is the most likely group to target our dance product to.** It's a group where the key to a longer, healthier life is sociality.

A 2012 presentation called "Square Dance Makeover: A New Menu for a New Customer" was presented to the BC Square & Round Dance Federation Board. It provided the following information on the Baby Boomer market.

***"Our new customer doesn't want what we're selling in its current form. We need to adapt our thinking and practices to serve their interests. It's a core customer relations principle."***

***"Many of the decisions that we currently make are based upon what's best for our clubs. Now we need to turn that thinking around to consider what's best for the customer - those who will FORM our clubs."***

The article further outlines the Baby Boomer's profile.

- *A very great difference in mindset over the World War II generation.*
- *Baby Boomers see themselves as up to 20 years younger than they actually are.*
- *Well-educated.*
- *The first generation to be raised in front of the television.*
- *Technologically enlightened - they are media savvy to the point that they have high expectations of promotion and advertising.*
- *Very active.*
- *More interested in maintaining their health than their moms and dads were.*
- *Not "joiners" - in seeking entertainment or an activity, they only commit to short-term engagements, preferring not to undertake long term lessons and classes.*
- *Not a homogeneous group, diverse, non-conformist, self-absorbed.*
- *A little bit rebellious - disliking the term "boomers" - some self-identify as 'zoomers'.*

CALLERLAB's "Square Dance Image Survey", 2001, reported that:

*"The Baby Boomer empty nesters are pressed for time, stressed with work, and already heavily preoccupied with free time activities. They have many options to choose from for leisure entertainment, and are reluctant to get involved with any activity that requires a long term commitment. They prefer activities that flex with their needs, and permit spontaneity."*

*"This target population sees square dancing as out of date, country oriented, for hicks and hillbillies, using old fashioned music, and patronized by senior citizens in fluffy dresses, with big hair, big belts and RVs."*

## **WHAT LIES AHEAD?**

In order to attract new dancers, our product needs to be repackaged and updated. New ways to change our image from the club level all the way up to the national level need to be introduced. **By altering our product a new product life cycle can begin.** By leaving our product as it is, our numbers will continue to decline until they are too low to continue.

Group responses from the participants of the BC presentation gave the following suggestions:

- *Make our dance form more attractive, particularly our dance outfits (eg. casual attire).*
- *Change the places where new dancer sessions are held. "Seniors Complex" doesn't appeal to the youthful mindset of Boomers, regardless of their age.*
- *Consider promoting our dance form with names such as: a party ('Community Dance Party'); social dance; folk dance; team dancing.*
- *Make our lessons a shorter commitment to learn.*
- *Blend the new dancers with the accomplished dancers sooner.*
- *We're the problem.*

These are only a few suggestions that would make our product more appealing in today's market. The bigger questions to ask are:

1. What are you, as a dancer or leader, willing to change?
2. How can you do it?
3. And, lastly, will you?

## **TODAY'S SQUARE DANCER - Do We Have An Image Issue?**

The CALLERLAB Foundation is an international professional organization of callers, whose purpose is to preserve and promote square dancing. In 2000 they appointed caller Jim Hensley, their current marketing director, and his market research company to determine the public's perception and image of square and round dancing.

**The research showed we have badly under-estimated the image issue we have!**

Information about our image from the survey include these comments:

*"Almost all focus group participants claimed to be familiar with square dancing. The square dancing with which they are familiar is NOT modern western square dancing however - they know about traditional square dancing. Just a few actually were aware of modern western square dancing."*

*"The images which people have of square dancing are formed by traditional square dancing and they are not flattering."*

*"Words and images used to describe it:*

- Country, hillbillies, hokey, cowboys
- Barns, grange halls, hay seeds, rural scenes, old fashioned and not with it.
- Fluffy dresses, plaid, big hair, big belt buckles and bolo ties, matching clothes.

- Older people, seniors, RVs and motor homes.
- Out of date music.
- Primarily for people who do not have a lot of other options for entertainment (e.g. people living in rural areas)."

"A few non-dancers were intrigued by descriptions of modern western square dancing and claimed they might give it a try."

"More non-dancers were not intrigued, however. What did not appeal:

- The clothing, especially for women - they want casual, jeans, no dress code.
- An unshakable image that it is for older people, and they aren't old enough."

Tony Oxedine, a professional traveling caller, gave the keynote address at the 2003 U.S. National Square Dance Convention, titled "*Square Dancing - Is It Broke? - Can We Fix It?*" In his address, he, too, talks about our image.

"People either know nothing about us or they figure we're still dancing half drunk in someone's barn. Sometimes we don't do ourselves any good in this regard."

"We have to understand that to the 'real' world, our clothes look kind'a funny. Now to each of us, we all look 'normal' but to 'civilians'?????"

"So if you're doing an exhibition in the public - CONSIDER not having everyone dress in full square dance regalia. Have some of the dancers wear western attire, or heaven forbid - even casual clothes. Show the people watching you that you really are normal people."

"We have to be aware that to the general public - we look funny. Our attire recommendations are throwbacks to the 40's and 50's. Back then, if you looked at women's 'dressy' dresses, they weren't that much different than what they wore to go dancing - just add crinoline. Consequently they didn't look THAT different."

Both the Survey and Tony Oxedine's Address cover much more than just our image issue, and both provide realistic, feasible suggestions that would help to promote our dance activity.

### **How Can Our Promotional Ads Help Our Image?**

Keeping in mind that 90% of non-dancers see us as country bumpkins dressed in funny clothes allemande-ing left to fiddle music, these suggestions can help our image:

1. Use pictures or photos of dancers in modern, casual dress. **A picture is worth a THOUSAND words.**
2. Eliminate wording in your advertising (brochures, posters, newspaper ads) that might suggest "traditional square dancing", such as 'hoe-down', and 'folk dance'.
3. Back when square dancing was taught in schools often the boys felt they were being "punished" by being made to dance with the girls! Avoid words like 'classes' and 'lessons' which conjures up negative memories of school days.
4. Focus on what square dancing can give to the non-dancer, ie. fun, fitness and friends. In other words, sell the benefits of square dancing as opposed to the lessons.
5. Finally, make sure your ads answer the 5 W's - Who, What, Where, When, Why - and then the How.



## **SUCCESSFUL SQUARE DANCE RECRUITING - Does It Exist?**

*An article written by Alabama Caller Patrick Demerath in the October, 2012 American Square Dance Magazine lists five proven methods to recruit new dancers. He writes, "All of them are proven methods, but they have one single thread in common. The club members and callers wanted to bring in new dancers. Without this intense desire, these are merely mechanisms or motions of trying to start a new class."*

*What are these methods? Could they work for your club? Have you already tried them, and how successful were they? Now is the time to start planning for next year's group of new dancers. Consider using one or ALL of these methods, and see if it helps your club to grow.*

### **Front Lawn & Car Signs**

One group of clubs pooled their resources and put signs in their cars and signs on their front lawns. They merely said "Square Dance 232-5345." The person answering the telephone explained the new square dance lessons and gave them directions to the dances. The result was a large new and enthusiastic turn out of new dancers for square dance lessons.

### **Sunday School Classes**

Several clubs reported that they asked their members and friends if a club representative or even a square could visit Sunday school classes of the various churches. They explained square dancing and left flyers/brochures. The result was again a large number of new dancers for lessons.

### **Club Invitation**

Several clubs developed and used a 'Who Do You Know Form'. Club members invited people to visit their club and attend the free open houses for new dancers. The club members supplied the club president information on each person. The club president put each person's name on a database in his computer and contacted him or her by both telephone and written invitations. The club president continued to follow up prior to and throughout the recruiting period. The result was a large number of new dancers to the club.

### **Lunch Hour Dances at Businesses**

A fourth club started an innovative approach where the club dances in a commercial business building once or twice a week over the lunch hour. Why can't we have clubs like this in our business districts? The answer is we can. This approach results in an often untouched supply of new dancers who want to join the fun.

### **Internet Advertising**

Some clubs and callers are reporting success by advertising or having a site on the internet featuring the clubs, square dance lessons and contact information. People who may never learn about square dancing have surfed their way to dancing.

Any of these proven methods may need to be tailored to suit your club. The most important thing is to start your planning NOW. We know we have an excellent product to offer - let's find the best way to market it.

**Editor's Note:** The article's author, Patrick Demerath and his wife Angela, learned to dance in Lubbock, Texas while on his first Air Force tour. In 1973, they transferred to Taipei, Taiwan where he started calling and introducing square dancing to the Taiwanese people. They continued to call and teach wherever they were relocated - Texas, Spain, Guam, South Korea, Hawaii, and finally Montgomery, Alabama. In 2000 Patrick earned a doctorate in Marketing, and is active in the *American Callers' Association*. This Association was founded in the mid-1990s to create a simpler square dance program with less calls (to replace the current mainstream and plus programs) so that everyone can dance in one hall together.