

Marketing Seminar Report

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Participants:

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There are no magic solutions, if there were, someone would have found them by now.
Success is connected with action, persistence and a strong commitment.
Mistakes are learning experiences on the road to achievement.
Aim for good planning, organization, continuity and unity.

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What is good about Square Dancing that we can advertise?

Fun, Fitness & Friendship, Exercise for body and mind

Music and Dance:

Moving to music – a basic celebration of life
All kinds of music – Traditional Jigs, Reels and Polkas, Live Music, Fiddles, Accordions,
Oldies, Sing Alongs and Classics, Ragtime, Big Band, Country and Western,
Rock 'n' Roll, Disco, Modern, Latin, Foreign
Several related dance forms – Squares, Contras, Lines and Solo, Circles, Folk
Rounds – Waltz, Two-step, Foxtrot, Jive, Rumba, Cha Cha, Tango and more

Physical Activity:

Provides constant activity for 10 to 15 minutes then a short rest, not extremely strenuous
Little physical stress from bumps, falls, straining or lifting
Develops, improves & maintains coordination and quick reactions
A good alternative to competitive sports

Health Benefits:

Fun and interesting aerobic exercise that improves cardiovascular conditioning
Movement and direction changes increases endurance, flexibility, strength & balance
Burns calories helping to control weight, which improves and maintains good health
Keeps muscles and bones strong reducing the risk of osteoporosis
Mental stimulation reduces the risk of developing dementia

Relax and Revive:

Stress Reliever, Lots of Laughter
Concentration needed – forget problems for awhile

Good Environment:

Chemical-Free, scent-free, smoke-free, No alcohol or drug temptations
Reasonable volume
Liability Insurance

Inexpensive Recreation:

Cost of a dance is traditionally low because dancers contribute in other ways
Except for shoes, the gear required is minimal
Attire may be fancy and expensive but that isn't necessary

Mental Activity:

General Mental stimulation that simultaneously uses several parts of the brain
Develops and enhances listening skills, and good concentration,
Develops quick recall & a clear memory
Promotes learning of new ideas, short and long-term retention
A great visual, auditory and tactile experience
Appeals to the various aptitudes:
Musical, Mathematical, Historical, Artistic, Social, Cross-cultural
Heightens music awareness, and spatial orientation,

Social Activity:

Fosters teamwork, co-operation, tolerance
Provides a common interest that makes it easy to meet new people & make friends.
Bright lights, music and friends will counteract loneliness.
Fellowship at every dance
Friendships develop that may be lifelong and world wide
A great leveler – no concern over rank, religion, politics or social status
Appropriate for all ages, something to do as couples, individually or with a friend.
Lunch nights – social events
Could be a family activity

Appeals to all types of Motivation:

Power – opportunities for a position of leadership
Achievement – every tip is a challenge to finish successfully
Structure has lots to learn for those who want that
Opportunities to perform
Social – Friendship set to music, service to friends and community

Spiritual Activity:

Promotes harmony and fellowship
In fact it is a world wide movement towards cooperation, friendship and peace

Short Term Satisfaction:

A Win-Win game where the challenge is not competitive.
Satisfaction comes from team success but other teams can also succeed at the same time.
Success is self-evaluated and occasional mistakes are fun.

Potential Life Long Benefits:

Can be enjoyed throughout life – physically appropriate as long as one can walk.
The same vocabulary is used worldwide so great recreation for travelers.
It can open doors to friends everywhere so ideal for those who move.

World-wide Structure and Portability

Local, Provincial, Country, and World organizations and structure

Extra Side Benefits:

Camping, Traveling, Dining, Socializing in other ways with the new friends
May be an aid to raising money for charity if so desired
Supports the community by providing entertainment at holiday events
Last but not least - **IT'S FUN!**

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Why are we having problems with recruitment?

1. Those in the current work force (age 25-60) are reluctant joiners
 - a) Pressed for time, stressed with work, busy with their children's recreations
 - b) All types of service and recreational groups are having recruitment problems.
 - c) Multiple recreation options are now available so some choose just to dabble.
 - d) We ask for constant, long-term commitment that is often impossible.
 - e) Women are working so Square Dancing is no longer their one night out.
 - f) Baby Boomers never were enthusiastic joiners (Me Generation)

2. Modern Square Dancing has a serious image problem.
 - a) Very low profile – people don't know what we do or how to contact us
 - b) Out-of-date image of barn dancing or inaccurate image of clogging
 - c) Seen as an activity for old folks in fancy crinolines and frills
 - d) Inflexible structure – couples only, classes only in September
 - e) Too hard to learn and takes too much time

3. We have lost our critical mass at the entry levels
 - a) New dancers tend to bring more new dancers
 - b) Too few are dancing at and supporting the entry levels
 - c) Too many are too old – image is wrong and energy is gone

4. Dancing isn't an "in" activity
 - a) Men view dancing as un-masculine or too difficult
 - b) Dancing is no longer an automatic part of the school curriculum

3. Our Publicity Structure needs strengthening
 - a) We are competing with many other financially sponsored social activities as well as increasing opportunities for home entertainment. Casual volunteer efforts are not enough.
 - b) We need Media Synergy – one form of advertisement enhancing another
 - c) Publicity Chairs are needed at all levels. (Club, Regional, Provincial & National) page 3

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Strategy for Marketing in Nova Scotia:

What can we do more of, better, or differently to recruit and maintain dancers?

1) Identify our primary Target Markets

- a) Age 50 and up, empty nesters, retirees
- b) Those looking for physical fitness groups, weight control & health benefits
- c) Church goers – clean, honest & polite environment, social venue
- d) New to the community – Transplanted people and immigrants, newlyweds
- e) Lonely Singles and spouses whose partners are into other activities
- f) School children for the long term view and possible new dancers from parents or teachers

2) Adjust to accommodate Singles

- a) Allow clubs to be listed as Couples Only
- b) Accept new singles with the stipulation and that they
 - Be willing to learn to dance the opposite gender roll or
 - Be willing to dance with someone of the same gender.
- c) Encourage singles to learn to dance the opposite gender roll.
- d) Find a simple way to show a gender switch (ties work well).

3) Produce various brochures appropriate for different targets

Welcome Wagon, Retirement Seminar, Health Benefits, Schools

4) Find ways to be more visible

- a) Dance in a public location whenever possible
- b) We need to work on our image
- c) Always have information available and try to follow-up when advertising in person.
- d) Personal Advertising
 - Personal Invites are by far the most successful method of recruiting new dancers
 - All dancers should always be proud to be ready ambassadors
 - More Demos, Try-Me and Exhibition dancing
 - More Square Dance Parties (one-night stands)
 - Use every opportunity to display at a local mall, at Community activities, at Fairs
 - Offer to provide a Square Dance Party at church events
 - Remember Senior Centres are a kind deed and the visitors might become dancers.
- e) More Radio advertising – Coming events
- f) More Print advertising
 - Newspaper – coming events, Newspaper and Magazine articles – include photos
 - Phone Book – attempt to place the CSRDS 1-800 number in our Yellow Pages
 - Make sure Library listings are up-to-date
- g) More Hand Out advertising
 - Posters and Brochures: Club information, Health benefits, Start up ads
 - Placemats, Free passes, Business Cards, Bookmarks
 - Places to distribute material: Beauty Shops, Church bulletins, Doctor's Offices, Laundromats, Libraries, Retail outlets, Recreation groups, Shopping Mall Boards
 - Tourist kiosks, Town hall, Welcome Wagon, Y's

h) More Internet advertising

Have a special page for information about how to get involved.

Publicize club open-house events well in advance

Include a map showing the town location of all the clubs.

Include sub-maps showing how to reach the halls where each club dances.

Page devoted to encouraging other organizations to include square dancing in their event.

i) More TV Advertising

CSRDS Public Service Ad from BC

Callerlab Infomercial

5) Analyze the goal before dancing for the public

Exhibition Dances are intended primarily to entertain

a) Exhibitions are full attire

b) Exhibitions are all Singing Calls or Traditional

c) Exhibitions include Stage performances, Parades, and Holiday entertainment

Demonstration Dances are intended to entice new dancers

a) Relaxed dress code

b) It should look easy but not boring

c) Laugh at the mistakes but try to avoid chaos

d) Demonstrations might include a Try-Me segment

Try-Me Events are intended to let new dancers experience the fun

a) Avoid fancy attire

b) Use as little specialized terminology as possible

c) Keep the time on the floor short

d) Socialize between tips

6) We need more dancers involved with the organizational process including publicity.

a) Begin with club involvement. Encourage that by asking all members what skills and knowledge they have that they would be willing to use in assisting the club to function. (Publicity, Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Hospitality, Archivist, Newsletter, Awards, Phone Committee, Sunshine, Refreshments and Social time)

b) Encourage transition to Regional Association and Provincial Federation

7) Improve the image that we present to the target market

a) Enthusiasm

b) Strong presence and a thriving activity

c) A unified approach

d) Clear description of our product

"Modern Square Dancing is non-competitive, 8-person groups enjoying caller directed, continuously varying, geometric patterns danced to many kinds of lively and popular music."

"Modern Round Dancing is pre-choreographed and cued ballroom dancing enjoyed by a circle of couples dancing in unison. Rhythms include waltz, two-step, foxtrot, jive, rumba, cha-cha, & tango."

8) Keep in mind the competition and find ways to out-compete or work together

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|--|--|
| a) Alternative to Couch Potato | Movies, Videos, Internet |
| b) Nicer atmosphere | Bars, Casino |
| c) Healthy, Social and Fun | Gyms, aerobics, health clubs |
| d) Evening Entertainment for Camper and Skiers | Outdoor activities |
| e) Non-competitive | Organized Sports (bowling, golf) |
| f) Includes Charity events | Service Organizations |
| g) Entertain at their events | Interest organizations |
| h) Be included in listings | Continuing Education courses |
| i) Cooperate | Competing Square and Round Dance clubs |

9) Consider adjusting the product to better fit the customers

- a) Various lunch formats if lunch is a prime attraction:
 - Consider having snacks available all evening
 - Consider potluck suppers before or in middle of the dance.
- b) Provide a greater variety of dance times to accommodate various schedules
 - Consider 7:30-9:30 pm for early morning workers
 - Consider Daytime dances for Retirees or after school for Youth
 - Consider weekend dances for families
- c) Encourage the family activity aspect
- d) Consider Multi-Cycle Classes
- e) Develop a continuum that fits those dancing rather than a set structure
- f) Emphasize fun, downplay the push to graduate, relax the attire a bit
- g) Consider a fast class of 3 Saturdays (several hours each)
- h) Consider a Council whose sole purpose is to run classes.
- i) Provide more dances at various class plateaus.

10) Come up with a catchy phrase (here are some currently in use):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Square Dancing is FUN | Square Dance with pride world wide |
| Friendship Set to Music | Happy Homes are Homes that Dance |
| Dance for the Health of It | It's Hip to Be Square |
| A New Song and Dance Routine | Be There of Be Square |
| Square Dancing – Fun, Fitness and Friendship for Everyone | |
| Physically, Mentally and Emotionally Good for You and Fun Too! | |
| A recreation for all ages and ideal for Seniors | |
| Add Fun, Fitness & Fellowship to your life – become a Modern Square or Round Dancer | |
| Many people define fun as something interesting and upbeat. | |
| Want to try something new for a change? Square dancing is all of that and more. | |
| If you enjoy walking for pleasure and exercise, you'll love square dancing. | |
| It's like walking to music. Two left feet? No problem | |

11) Attempt to work with other organizations

- a) Get doctors to recommend Square Dancing as a healthy recreation
- b) Get more return aid from the Heart and Stroke Foundation

12) Persistence: How much time, energy and money do we give to a promotional idea?

- a) Define success before you begin.

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Possible major projects:

Some of these ideas came from Callerlab Winning Ways – see the Callerlab website

Advertise on Cable TV

Produce a Square Dance show (1/2 hour once a week – recorded club dance condensed)

Fun Nights and Try Me Dances

Offer Fun Nights to area churches

Combined clubs offer regular casual nights open to visitors

Late August roundup of club and potential class

Introductory Nights followed by a Welcome Party

Pot luck supper open house

Charity Events that include a Try-Me Dance

Intro session for half hour before Special Dances then invite public to stay
and include easy mixers and lines between tips.

School Square Dancing

Government has money to spend on youth physical activities

Dancing is a great alternative to competitive sports

How about Home Schooled youth – might get a family activity going

Maybe provide some competitive or performance incentive

Take advantage wherever dance is required in the curriculum

Make it part of Physical Education, History, Math or Art.

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A Successful activity also requires long-term retention:

Suggestions to Help Keep New Dancers Interested:

The Learning Process: Is learning fun?

All dancers should help angel some – dancing should appear popular & large

Is etiquette and styling included in the instruction?

New Dancer Newsletter or Handbook to transmit all the useful bits of information

Square Dance history, Local dance history, attire, etiquette, styling,
organization information, traveling information ...

Call them "New Dancers" not "Class Members"

Make sure each new dancer has a Mentor from the club

Provide club badges sooner

Follow up on those who miss or seem to drop-out, help them catch up

Include some social activity as well as dancing

Theme Dances

Get New Dancers involved in the big picture:

- Tell them about the wide world of square dancing
- Include at least one tip at specials for New Dancers
 - (How about free entrance until they can dance more than 1 tip)
- Hold New Dancer Dances and cater to the New Dancers
- Plan Summer Dancing for New Dancers to review their new skills
- Assign a mentor couple to each new dancer couple

Use New Dancers to help promote Square Dancing

- Have a fun night for the friends of new dancers.

Suggestions to Help Maintain Current Dancers:

Ensure a positive attitude in the club

- When you need something done, ask someone directly
- Be positive, keep mentioning all the good things going on
- Make it seem like good things are the norm and perhaps they will be
- Work hard, lead by example, be involved with everything
- Do the right thing, support and thank people for their efforts
- Be proud of your club at all levels – encourage people to join,
 - be willing to demonstrate, carry the banner at festivals,
 - be willing to provide entertainment at civic events,
- Sunshine Committee – Birthdays, Anniversaries, Illness etc.
- Have Greeters before and after dances

Communicate in every way that is available

- Use e-mail, newsletter, microphone, telephone, individual conversations
- Send Welcome Back mail-outs to all dancers on present and previous lists
- Provide wallet size dance program schedule for members and visitors

Develop a strong club structure

- Strong leaders that lead, teach and delegate
- Committees that help spread the load
- Special task assignments that take advantage of special skills
- Encourage good communication
 - Membership lists available
 - Calling Chain for weather and other problems
 - Yearly reports, Club newsletters, Club webpage
 - Printed flyers and Calendars available
- Outreach with demos, fund raisers, visits to other clubs,
- Hospitality – greeters, acceptance of all, friendliness
- Inclusion – encourage participation in the club structure, accept suggestions
- Express appreciation to those who attempt to help
- Critical Mass – try to keep the numbers of members, students, and angels
 - above the critical mass that keeps producing more.
- Try out ideas until you find something that works for your club