

New Friends / New Dancers

By

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The American Callers' Association in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and associations provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls to drive square dancers away from 2001 to the present. The American Callers' Association continues to relish and appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers and dancers all over the country and from abroad to continue these initiatives. The American Callers' Association will continue to provide information that will help the square dance community recruit, retain and retrieve square dancers as well as encourage the dancers to speak out on the cumbersome dance programs.

This month's American Callers' Association Viewpoint addresses suggestions to attract new square dancers to our beloved activity. Let's start from the beginning. Several marketing and administrative studies have

pointed out that recruiting can be accomplished by using promotional communications and advertising media.

Marketing theory in Consumer Behavior infers that promotional communications are more effective and much cheaper than using advertising media like television and paper format advertising. Let's look at what works best in promotional communications. Word of Mouth: INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND PEOPLE YOU MEET TO JOIN IN THE FUN WITH YOUR DANCING FRIENDS. JUST TELL THEM HOW MUCH FUN YOU ARE HAVING AND THAT YOUR GROUP IS LOOKING FOR NEW PEOPLE TO TRY IT.

Expand your recruiting efforts beyond your close friends and relatives. Take advantage of the people you meet in **stores, workplaces, churches** etc.

Often

Friends and relatives may show up as a courtesy to you but not have any real interest in square dancing. People you meet in other places like stores, doctor and dental offices, work places, churches may be waiting for something different to do. Often, they make the long term dancers as well as becoming long-life friends.

As you are visiting with new dance prospects, listen for their reactions and point out the health / exercise benefits. Point that dancing point the fun-

filled mental challenge of following and dancing while working with seven others in your group. Ask them to bring friends and for the fun nights of dancing. If your club ageees, mention that there will be beverages and snacks in alcohol-free and smoke-free environments..Focus on the fun night not on continuous lessons.

Two other promotional communications that are very inexpensive for a club to do is to gain permission and post flyers in stores, company, church, and school bulleting boards as well as offering demonstrations in stores, malls, and church activities or even company picnics. During demonstrations continuously pass out flyers.

Looking at other advertising approaches that have proven to be effective are church and school bulletins, public radio advertisement, and radio public service announcements. The last suggestion that is a bit expensive is to put a one liner in the Yellow Pages under Dancing and say Non-dancers may often look in the Yellow Pages for information on “Dancing.”.

“Square Dancing, call Telephone Number“

What about lessons? How can we keep new dancers dancing? The answer is quite simple but some resistance surfaces. Square dancing needs to move into the future by structuring a one floor program that can be taught in as

little as 12 week. The American Callers' Association "International One-Floor Program" has less than 85 calls. If we reduce that number even more, We would have a program that could be taught in 12 to 14 weeks. That would allow us to teach 3 classes a year with breaks in between for the new dancers to just dance. After one year just think how many more contacts we would be able to reach for recruiting. This is the key to reviving this activity- "people getting people." Please join with us in this initiative.

Please do not forget that when Harley Davidson Corporation was hurting, they were able to eliminate the "red Ink" and losses by realizing that they needed to return to the basics of a great motorcycle built by Americans. The renaissance actually was inspired and took place from the employees and the customers. Push your clubs, callers, and associations into taking charge of square dancing. The "gridlock" on the complicated and lengthy, stressful, and cumbersome dance programs can only be broken by the dancers who are the reason for square dancing. Let's do it! Everyone can win.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at Loulet@aol.com or Dr. Patrick Demerath at

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Website and Newsletters at American Callers.com.

Until next time, Happy Dancing.