

Presentation to MBC on Recruitment

May 2, 2018

1. The MBC Recruitment Task Force has held two meetings so far. The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, hosted by the Samena Squares.
2. The first meeting was basically an exchange of thoughts and ideas among the clubs. The Task Force agreed that the best recruiting tool for most clubs is personal interaction with a family member, friend, co-worker or others. If each member or couple brought one new prospective student, we would be awash in students. Need to issue a challenge to our members to do as much recruiting as possible.
3. The second meeting dealt more with specifics. The Task Force reviewed a video produced in 2014 to attract people to our MBC lessons. The video was paid for by a grant from the State Square Dance Federation. The Task Force considered the video to be good, but probably not effective in attracting people to our classes. In addition, the cost of airing the video might be too high to air many spots.
4. Sherry Long made an excellent overview presentation/synopsis of a 94 page Caller Lab Marketing Plan document. Here are some of her findings:
 - The average age of a square dancer is 61. 58% are female, 77% are married or partnered. 50% of dancers are over 70, 31% are 60 – 69, 13% are 50 – 59, 3% are 40 – 49, <1% are 30 – 39, 2% are 19 – 29.
 - Focus Group research in 2000 shows that square dancing has an image problem in the general public. Considered out-of-date, country, hicks and hillbillies, old fashioned music, and only for old people in fluffy dresses.
 - A public awareness problem also exists. Modern Western Square Dancing does not have a high profile. People don't know about us. They don't know how to find out about us or the lessons even if they wanted to.
 - ABC's of effective Recruiting:
 - ✓ A – Attitude. Club has to want to recruit.
 - ✓ B – Belief. Club members have to have confidence and Believe they can recruit.
 - ✓ C – Commitment. Club has to Commit to recruiting.
 - People will generally act only if they have seen or heard something five times. Need to create a "Media Buzz" about lessons using all forms of media.
 - Start Recruiting Efforts a minimum of two months prior to start of classes.
 - Understand your target audience and develop a strategy.
5. The MBC should put a full page ad in the Council Notes (maybe even on the front page) to recruit individuals from the clubs for the Publicity and Social Media effort. This would include anyone with computer skills, but mainly they need to be highly motivated to help the recruiting effort.

- Have business cards made up for your club. Make duplicates, one for a prospective student to fill out their phone number on the back and return to you, on the spot.
- Carry a couple of the lesson brochures (thanks Melody) in your purse. Hand them out to prospective students to advertise our lessons. Bertha wears her square dance outfit when she goes shopping, church, or dinner prior to the dance. She is inundated by people who love the clothes and want to know more about square dancing.
- New graduates are so enthusiastic about square dancing and can be a great at recruiting their friends, relatives, co-workers, etc.

In Summary, there are specific concrete steps the MBC and the individual clubs can take that don't cost a lot of money.

- ✓ We need to effectively advertise our wonderful activity to overcome the perception of a bad image and the lack of community awareness.
- ✓ The MBC and the Clubs need to work together on a coordinated basis to make this happen.
- ✓ The MBC focus should be on general square dancing promotion and activity (including lessons), and the club focus should be on marketing their square dance lessons.
- ✓ Set recruiting goals and measure the progress.

Actions the MBC can take:

- Establish a standing Publicity committee to meet regularly. This committee would be led by the Publicity Chair and would be tasked with development of a Marketing Plan for the MBC (this will be a long-term project). Use Caller Lab document for some ideas. Also the internet has some marketing plan templates.
- The members of the committee will develop a Business Facebook page. Use Facebook to advertise the start of all club lessons. Link to all Club Facebook pages (if available).
- The Committee will establish a Meetup account to advertise the starting dates of all of the lessons for the clubs. They will monitor the account and respond to any interested person by greeting them and making them feel wanted (because they are!)
- Provide a MBC contact phone number or email address for prospective students to call.
- Consider funding radio ads for the lessons.
- Contact the clubs and create a baseline (for the 2017 – 2018 lessons) for the number of students that started lessons, the number of graduates and the number of graduates who joined clubs. Then compare the baseline numbers with the number of students who started, graduated and joined clubs for the 2018 – 2019 lessons so we know if we are improving or not. Establish a 2018 – 2019 MBC goal of a 20% increase in all three areas.
- Establish a blog to discuss square dancing issues.
- Consider developing an interactive website separate from the current website. This would be primarily devoted to promoting our lessons and attracting new students. Provide links to club websites for specific details about their lessons.
- Purchase lapel buttons for all council members that read: "Ask me about square dancing".

Actions the Clubs/Individual members can take:

- Go over the A, B, C's of effective Recruiting with your club.
- Set a "stretch" recruiting goal (e.g. – recruit 20 students) then challenge your membership to meet this goal. Support the Publicity Chair by recruiting a volunteer from your club.
- Set a goal on how many graduates will join your club. Challenge your club to meet this goal.
- Have select members put lesson ads in "Next Door" to cover your area.
- Put your own ad on Meetup.com. Recruit someone to take ownership of Meetup responses and make the potential student feel acknowledged and welcomed.
- If you don't already have one, consider making up your own Facebook page.
- Make up and share a 20 – 30 second "Elevator Pitch" for club members to use when talking with friends, relatives and people you think might be interested. Here is an example:

"I love square dancing! I've met so many of my friends at square dances. It's a lively, fun hobby. It is easy to learn, and we dance to all kinds of music today. I love that I get to dance with so many different people, have fun, and get some great exercise while doing it. You should try it!"

6. We need a Publicity Chair asap. We also need people who will support the Publicity Chair to develop the MBC business Facebook page, work with meetup.com. etc. It is too big of a job and we are too far behind to try and have one person do all of the work.
7. The Publicity efforts should be both at the MBC level and the club level.
8. Consider sponsoring a "no experience necessary" dance once per month.
9. Rod summarized a conversation with Karen Reichardt, Publicity Director for the Spokane Council.
 - They use Social Media as much as possible. Facebook, Next Door and Meetup.com are 3 main ones. There are many other sites to try out.
 - The MBC should have a Business Facebook Page (Free).
 - The MBC and associated clubs should use Next Door (Free). Next Door is for smaller local areas (eg: Camano Island), so the clubs should all consider putting ads in for their local area.
 - The MBC should advertise the lessons on Meetup.com. All the clubs that have start dates in September/October should be listed on the MBC Meetup page. Need club decisions on the start dates of the lessons as soon as possible. There is a small fee for the Administrator of Meetup (about \$20 per month).
 - Clubs should also consider their own Meetup ad, but change the title so it is different from the MBC title.
 - Advertise on local Parks and Recreation Calendars.
 - Need to follow-up on any contacts, either through email, phone, or responding to a Facebook, Next Door or Meetup interest.
 - Consider using Instagram or Twitter, especially if you want to recruit younger students.
 - Create a database for tracking all of the ads, contacts, etc. Does anyone have a database format they can share? The Rainbow Squares have one. I think the Spokane Council Publicity Director has one.
 - Statistics show that for every 100 students who begin lessons, 50 will graduate and 25 will join a club. Caution, don't let this become a self-fulfilling prophesy, several MBC clubs do a much better job of graduating students and having them join their club.
 - Fairs and Parades have not been very productive in attracting students. Even though people may sign up as interested, it doesn't translate into students for our classes.