

**CLUB DEVELOPMENT MEETING  
PHILADELPHIA 2019 CONVENTION**

**2019 IAGSDC SURVEY RESULTS**

**I. BRIEF BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE 2019 SURVEY PROJECT**

In last year's 3 very well attended Club Development meetings at the Seattle Convention, it became clear that that our host of Clubs have certain similar but also a lot of different situational issues. As a result, there was clearly no "one size fits all" solution to recruiting or retention. Clubs' different practices and approaches to club development seemed like they could be playing a factor in differing levels of success among Clubs. However, we did not even have a clear overview of what the details of Clubs' different practices are.

Our Clubs exhibit stories of success and decline. We have Clubs that have resurged after years of torpor. We have Clubs both large and small that continue to tread water. We have some formerly large Clubs that are struggling today. We have big Clubs that are getting bigger. We have some new Clubs that are steadily adding member. We have other smaller Clubs that are fighting, against significant headwinds to grow.

This year we undertook an ambitious survey that sought to educate us as an organization about Clubs' different practices and recruiting/retention habits. We sent the Survey to full member Clubs because those are the ones that we know have pledged to abide by IAGSDC Bylaws and principles.

41 Clubs responded out of 43 invitations sent out to Full Member Clubs back in April 2019. A very good return rate means we have results that are truly reflective of where IAGSDC Clubs stand today. It took a while to get all results back, as the final responses were just completed in a couple of weeks ago in June.

It is possible to look at the results both (1) in raw numbers and graphs and (2) by breaking the statistics down to compare the similar and differing practices and recruiting/retention tactics of Clubs that are (a) growing, (b) remaining about the same in number and (c) declining to see if we can identify certain patterns and learn lessons from the practices of different Clubs' experiences.

Below is a Quick Summary of the Results of each substantive question. We have made PDFs of all Survey Answer Summaries available on the IAGSDC Recruiting and Retention Facebook page for interested parties to review. We will be discussing all of these results during Convention at the Club Development Meeting scheduled for Saturday, July 6, 2019. All parentheticals written below inside [brackets like these] are meant to be talking points/discussion questions for the Club Development Meeting.

## **II. DATA, INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED from INDIVIDUAL SURVEY QUESTIONS**

*Questions 1 and 2 were personal identification questions that will not be widely distributed to respect individuals' privacy.*

### **Q3 Membership Growth Trends**

*How has your club's membership changed over the last 5 years?*

- 57% of Clubs reported they are either growing or staying about the same in members, while 43% reported declines in overall membership.

*But the numbers further break down as follows:*

- 20% of clubs reported that they are growing by at least 5% over the past 5 years. (3 clubs posted growth above 25%.)
- 37% of clubs reported their membership numbers remaining about the same.
- 43% of clubs reported declining by at least 5% or more over the past 5 years. (7 clubs posted declines of more than 25%.)

### **Q4 Club Marketing Efforts – Formal Marketing (as Opposed to Informal)**

*CLUB MARKETING EFFORTS. How effective has each of the following marketing/promotional efforts been for your Club over the past 5 years?*

- **Facebook** (paid and non-paid) is one of the most used marketing methods online. However, no clubs rank it as “Very Effective.” 12% rank *free* Facebook events as “Effective” and only 5% rank *paid/boosted* Facebook events as “Effective.”
- However, 30% of clubs have never tried using *free* Facebook Events, and 75% have never tried using *paid* Facebook Events.
- Clubs posting significant growth found **MeetUp** significant to their growth. None of the declining clubs had tried it.
- Few Clubs reported using **Instagram (3), Twitter (4), NextDoor (2) or SnapChat (0)** for outreach.
  - [Are we missing younger people by staying off the means they use to communicate?]
  - Note that only 1 Club found NextDoor effective, and otherwise no Clubs who did try these 4 social media platforms found them more than “Moderately Effective.”

- **Local Print Media/Ads:** Only 5% listed them as Effective while 29% labeled them as Moderately Effective. 27% rated them as Not Effective. 39% have not tried them at all.
  - o A high percentage of clubs posting significant declines have never participated in this activity.
- **Pride Participation:**
  - o Marching in Pride Parades specifically:
    - Only 2.5% rated it as “Very Effective” for Recruiting, while “17% rated it as Moderately Effective.” 41% rated it as “Not Effective.”
    - Another 39% of Clubs have not tried it. A high percentage of clubs posting significant *declines* have never participated in this activity.
  - o Pride Festivals/Booths specifically:
    - Here 0% rate them as “Very Effective,” while 10% rate them as “Effective,” 12% as Moderately Effective.
    - However, 56% rate them as “Not Effective.”
    - Another 22% have never tried them at all.
- **Demo Events for Other Organizations:**
  - o Only 2.5% rate them as Effective or higher.
  - o 23% rate them as Moderately Effective.
  - o 50% rate it as “Not Effective,” while
  - o 25% of Clubs have never tried it.
- **Other LGBTQ group advertising:** Majority finds it either Moderately or Not Effective, while 35% have never participated at all.
- **Structured Marketing Plans:** 88% of Clubs have never created one.

## Q5 Informal Marketing Means to Reach New Dancers

*INFORMAL SOURCES OF NEW DANCERS. New dancers can come from sources other than the club's official marketing and promotional activities. From which sources below have your new dancers/members come over the last 5 years?*

- 
- Word of Mouth is by far the biggest. 100% of Clubs reported it working.
- The next 5 sources that all polled 15% or more effectiveness overall are:
  - o Other local square dance groups (68%)
  - o LGBTQ\* social groups (33%)
  - o Posting flyers in public places (33%)
  - o Local contra dance groups (30%)
  - o Other local dance groups (15%)

## Q6 Informal versus Formal Sourcing of Dancers

*Over the past 5 years, has your club generated more new members through official/formal club marketing efforts (like those in Question 4) or through more informal sources (like those described in Question 5)?*

- 73% says more new members come from informal means than formal means with finding new students/dancers
- 24% say they get roughly the same results from formal and informal means
- Only 2% (1 Club) ranked Formal Club Marketing/Promotional as having produced more new members than informal means
- The majority of Clubs that have been growing selected "Word of Mouth." This included all of the Clubs who have grown at 25%+ rates.

**Q7 Word of Mouth Recruiting**

*How important has word of mouth recruiting been to the growth of your club over the last 5 years?*

- 66% rank it as Very Important.
- Another 29% rank it as "Somewhat Important"
- No one ranked it as "Not Important."
- The vast majority of "Somewhat Important" through "Uncertain" answers to this question come from Clubs that are not growing.

**Q8 How Often Clubs Meet Per Week (or Less)**

*How many nights per week does your club meet on average for recurring activities like teaching/workshops/dancing?*

- 61% of Clubs meet 1 time per week
- 27% of Clubs meet 2 times per week
- 5% of Clubs meet 2+ times per week (that is 2 Clubs out of 41)
- 7% of Clubs don't meet weekly.
- Most Clubs with significant growth and Most Clubs meet at least 2 times per week.
- The majority of Clubs that are not growing do meet 1 time per week. Still, 3 Clubs with significant growth do meet 1 time per week, so it is possible to grow while meeting once per week.
- Unsurprisingly the Clubs who are not able to routinely once per week are actively declining.

**Q9 Focus of Activities at Weekly Gatherings**

*What is the focus of activities occur at these recurring meetings?*

- 71% (29 Clubs) say it is a mix of teaching/workshops and full level dancing.
- 17% (7 Clubs) say it is mainly teaching/workshops. 3 of the 7 Clubs have experienced significant membership growth. 2 more have stayed about the same.

- Only 2% (1 Club) says it is mainly dancing with minimal instruction. That Club has also experienced a decrease of more than 25% membership.

**Q10 How Many Dances Per Year (not including Fly-Ins)**

*How many stand-alone or special event dances does your club hold per year? (Please do not include either your fly-in or teaching/workshop nights.)*

- 68% of Clubs hold 4 or fewer dances per year
- 17% hold 5-8 dances per year
- 15% hold 8-12 dances per year
- More than half of all Clubs with significant growth (>5%) hold 8 to 12 dances per year. Most other Clubs with significant growth hold at least 5-8 dances per year.
- The majority of Clubs with stagnant membership and declining membership hold 4 or fewer dances per year.

**Q11 Routine promotion of other local clubs' dances**

*Does your Club regularly promote and organize groups to attend the dances of other local clubs (IAGSDC affiliated or not) in your area?*

- 61% do promote other clubs' dances while 39% do not.
- The majority of Clubs with decreasing membership of 25%+ do NOT promote other local Clubs' dances, while the majority of clubs with increasing membership of 25%+ do regularly do this type of promotion.

**Q12 Dance Levels Regularly Taught by the Club**

*Which levels does your Club teach regularly? (select all that apply)*

- 75% routinely teach Mainstream. [We were not aware of CALLERLAB's new rule separating Basic & Mainstream into different levels when this Survey was created.]
- 73% routinely teach Plus.
- 44% routinely teach Advanced
- 20% routinely teach Challenge 1
- 7% routinely teach Challenge 2 or beyond
- 7% do not regularly teach any level
- 12% of Clubs reported teaching other levels and special experimental formats, such as Blast classes.
- The majority of top growing Clubs (25%+ growth) do teach up to Challenge 1. All significant growth Clubs (5%+ growth) teach through Plus, and the majority of them teach through Advanced.
- Interestingly the majority of Clubs teaching Challenge 2 or beyond fall within the categories "Staying About the Same" or "Declining." Only 1 Club showing 5%+ growth is teaching Challenge 2 or beyond.
- All of the reported experimentation happening with alternative structures and different levels is occurring in Clubs with stagnant or slightly declining

membership numbers. Some of these experiments may be a response to difficulties in bringing in new members. None of the Clubs that reported high decreasing membership rates reported trying any of these structures.

**Q13 Frequency of Class Levels Being Taught**

*How frequently do you teach each level of class on average? (please select all that apply)*

- Mainstream: 29% teach only one time per year while 46% teach more than once per year.
- Plus: 46% teach only one time per year while 20% teach more than once per year.
- Advanced: 34% teach only one time per year while 12% teach more than once per year.
- C-1: 12% teach at least once per year
- C-2 or beyond: 5% teach at least once per year
- 15% said no regular classes being taught.
- Some Clubs reported success with special periodic Blast or Blitz Classes at different levels. A few Clubs described Blast-style teaching as their principal form of training new dancers.
- One Club explained how they only start classes when they know they have someone lined up to start learning.
- 100% of Clubs reporting growth of 25%+ teach both Mainstream and Plus more than once per year.
- 80% of Clubs reporting overall growth of 5% to 24% teach Mainstream *more than once* per year. 80% of those Clubs only teach Plus once per year (while the other 20% teach it twice per year). Interestingly, *100% of these Clubs also teach Advanced once per year.*
- The frequency of class levels being taught then drops fairly systematically across Clubs with either stagnant or declining numbers.

**Q14: Average Age of Newer Dancers Over Past 3-5 Years**

*What is the approximate average age of your newer dancers? By newer dancers, we mean those who have started in the last 3-5 years.*

- 45% list the average age of newer dancers as 41-50
- 33% list the average age of newer dancers as 51-60
- 10% list the average age of newer dancers as 30-40
- 8% list the average age of newer dancers as 61+
- 5% list the average age of newer dancers as under 30
- Strongest growth clubs had different answers here across a wide spectrum from under 30 up to 60 on average
- Good growth clubs all fell between 41 and 60 on average
- Stagnant clubs went from 30 to 61+

- Interestingly NO Clubs reporting overall membership decreases reported averages of 61+ for newer dancers. Some of these declining Clubs did reported average newer dancer ages between 30-40 and even under 30.
  - o *Discussion point: In past years, recruiting discussion often focused on how to lure in younger dancers under 35. Yet the highest plurality of new dancers within our Clubs falls within the 41-50 age group. With swelling life expectancies, the 41-50 age group may well be dancing for 20, 30 (or perhaps more) years as well. So should we broaden our target demographics, particularly since the 41-50 age group seems to be receptive? Of course we should welcome all age demographics!*

**Q15: Approximate average age of Each Club's Members Overall**

*What is the approximate average age of your entire your Club membership (not just newer members)?*

- 63% list the average age of their Club's members as 51-60
- 22% list the average age of their Club's members as 61+
- 12.2% list the average age of their Club's members as 41-50
- 2.44% (1 Club) list the average age of their Club's members as 31-40.
- Note that the majority average of 51-60 is different from the statement we often hear that most Clubs' members are 61+.
- Interestingly Clubs with an average age of 61+ appeared both at the top and bottom ends of overall Club growth. Of 9 total Clubs reporting a 61+ average age, 2 of those Clubs have been growing (1 of them by a lot), 4 Clubs' memberships have remained about the same, and 3 Clubs have decreased in membership.
- The 1 Club with an average membership in the 31-40 age range has "remained about the same" in terms of their overall Club growth.

**Q16: Number of Mainstream Graduates over the Past Year**

*How many Mainstream dancers has your Club graduated over the past year?*

- 29% of Clubs report 1-5 graduates over the past year
- 27% report 6-10 graduates
- 10% report 11-15 graduates
- 2% report 16-20 graduates
- 5% report more than 20 graduates
- 27% reported either zero or don't teach Mainsteam
- The Clubs with the most overall membership *growth* mainly fell into the +1-5, +6-10, and +11-15 categorizes here.
- Only 1 of the highest growth clubs is graduating 16 or more graduates.
- [For growing Clubs, *is this generally a story of "slow and steady growth wins the race"?*]
- 2 Clubs whose memberships have "remained about the same" have graduated more than 16+ graduates. [Perhaps they are on a roll, which would

be phenomenal. We should check to see if they are simultaneously suffering attrition of existing members, though.]

**Q17: Percentage of Mainstream Graduates from the Last 5 Years That is Still Dancing with Club**

*What percentage of your Mainstream graduates from the last \*5 years\* are still dancing with your club?*

- 29% reported that 25-50% of recent graduates are still dancing with the club
- 29% also reported that less than 25% are still dancing with the club
- 27% reported that more than half are still dancing with the club
- 15% said not applicable (don't teach mainstream, etc.)
- This means that 56% of Clubs have lost at least half of their recent Mainstream Graduates over the past 5 years!
  - o [Isn't this attrition a significant problem if you essentially have to graduate 2 dancers to statistically end up getting 1 longer-term member? Retention issues matter for Clubs' health.]
- *63% of Clubs with positive growth in membership have retained more than half of their new Mainstream graduates.* Only 1 high growth Club reports having lost more than 75% of their recent graduates.
  - o [Do these growing Clubs have a secret that we should explore?]
- The numbers flip as you look at Clubs with overall flatter membership or declines in membership.
  - o 10 of 13 Clubs with flat membership growth report losing at least half of their new Mainstream graduates.
  - o 11 of 14 Clubs with decreasing overall membership report losing at least half of their new Mainstream graduates.
- Retention of recent mainstream graduates is undoubtedly a significant issue in overall club growth.

**Q18: Informal Club-Sponsored Bonding Activities for Club Members**

*In addition to workshops/teaching nights and club dances, does your club regularly facilitate or sponsor informal "bonding" activities for club members?*

- 59% of Clubs say Yes; 41% of Club say No
- *88% of Clubs experiencing growth do sponsor informal bonding activities.* (Only 1 Club among this set did not.)
- The percentage of Clubs sponsoring Informal Bonding Activities then drops toward approximately 50/50 for all Clubs experiencing stagnant membership and declining membership.
- Clubs gave many examples of such activities that are included in the written answer materials.

**Q19: Number of Other Square Dance Clubs Within a 50-Mile Radius**

*How many other square dance clubs are there within a 50-mile radius of your club?*

- 83% of Clubs reported that there are 5+ other Clubs nearby
- 12% reported 1-4 other Clubs nearby
- 5% reported no other Clubs nearby (2 Clubs out of 41).
- Thus, 95% of our clubs have some other square dance clubs nearby.
  - o [Are other local square dance clubs more competition and/or more support for the IAGSDC Club in general?]
- 100% of Clubs experiencing growth have some other square dance clubs nearby (and most of them have 5+ other clubs nearby). But the same is true with Clubs experiencing the greatest declines in membership – 100% of them have some other local square dance clubs nearby.
- Both of the rare Clubs with no other square dance clubs nearby reported they still are experiencing either stagnant or slightly declining membership.
  - o [It would be interesting to explore if these Clubs have worked at making lemonade from lemons by promoting their uniqueness as an activity in their respective areas.]

**Q20: Misperceptions**

*Which misperceptions about square dancing have you encountered in your recruiting efforts for your club?*

- Top misperceptions run into by more than 50% of Clubs:
  - o “Too old fashioned” (85%)
  - o Must like country music (62%)
  - o Requires wearing funny clothes (54%)
- Clubs listed various other misconceptions encountered, including “takes too long to learn,” mistook it for line dancing, and that we only accept LGBTQ\* individuals.

**Q21: Any Annual Fly-In (or rotating/shared between several Clubs)**

*Do you currently have an annual fly-in (or have a rotating fly-in with other IAGSDC member clubs)?*

- 46% of Clubs have a Fly-In
- 37% of Clubs don’t have one now but have had one in the past
- 17% of Clubs have never had a Fly-In.
- Interestingly half of the Clubs with the highest growth do not currently host a Fly-In. All Clubs that are growing have hosted a fly-in in the past.
- Clubs that have *never* hosted a Fly-In are all Clubs that are stagnant in size or clubs that are somewhat decreasing in size.
- [Could there be some correlation between Clubs that have at least hosted a Fly-In at some point in the past and Clubs that are poised to grow?]

**Q22: Is Non-Club Member Attendance Required to Be Financially Viable**

*Does your club depend on attendance by non-club members at teaching/workshops/dances to make those activities financially viable?*

- 37% of Clubs say Yes
- 49% of Clubs say No
- 15% of Clubs say “Sometimes” and provided commentary
- One interesting comment was “we are the only club that teaches A & C so other clubs must come to us.”
  - o [Is this Club assuming an endless supply of new interested dancers who have just learned Mainstream & Plus? Do A&C Clubs owe any moral duty to help support local Clubs teaching the building blocks of Basic, Mainstream and Plus?]

**Q23: Whether Clubs Have Reached Out to Former Members Recently**

*In the past 3 years, have you made outreach efforts to former members who have stopped participating?*

- 78% say Yes, 22% say No
- 88% of Clubs that are growing positively answered Yes to this question.
- Comments indicate that outreach efforts often are “spotty” and passive, often relying on leaving former members’ names on mailing lists in the hope they will see Club notifications and decide to rejoin. There was a perceptible waft of non-enthusiasm for this activity notable in the comments.

**Q24: Average Length of Classes at Different Levels**

*How many weeks does each of your classes normally last on average? Please do not include weeks skipped for holidays, etc. Click "N/A" if you do not teach that class level currently.*

- **Basic/Mainstream:**
  - o 41% take 16+ weeks to teach this level;
  - o then it is fairly even divided between Clubs that take 8-10 weeks, 11-13 and 14-15 weeks, respectively
  - o 18% do not teach it
- **Plus:** 26% take 16+ weeks to teach it, while another 28% take between 8 and 13 weeks (23% do not teach it)
- **Advanced:** 47% take 16+ weeks; a few take less time (44% do not teach it at all)
- **C-1, C-2 and beyond:** Most Clubs that teach these levels take well more than 16 weeks, while the majority of Clubs do not teach these levels at all
- **Other Levels like SSD-50, GDP, Basic Only, etc.:** 14% of Clubs teach these levels while 86% do not; of the 14% teaching them, 9% report taking less than 8 weeks to teach them while 5% report taking 11-13 weeks to teach
- *Almost 90% of Clubs that are growing take 16+ weeks to teach Mainstream and Plus.*
- There is a notable trend toward shorter reported Class lengths among Clubs whose numbers are stagnant or declining.

**Q25: Charging Angels to Dance on Lower-Level Class Nights**

*Do you charge for "angels" (experienced dancers) to dance with students learning Mainstream and/or Plus levels?*

- 42% of clubs charge angels the same amount as the students
- 40% do not charge angels to dance with students at all
- 18% charge angels, but less than the students pay
- Interestingly the majority of *growing* clubs do charge their angels to dance with the students, and the amount that angels pay is evenly split between the same as or less than the new students.
- The clubs experiencing stagnation or decreased growth are the ones with notably higher frequency of charging angels less or not at all to dance with students.
  - o [Is this a chicken or egg problem where Clubs suffering membership stress charge less to existing members to keep them dancing but then suffer due to having less overall financial cushion for their activities?]
- Some clubs reported having "strange ways of collecting our dues" and "charging yearly fees" that include all dances.
  - o [Is it worth looking at whether those practices have an effect on growth?]

**Q26: Fee Structure Used for Basic/Mainstream Classes**

*What is your current fee structure for your Basic and Mainstream classes?*

- 45% of all Clubs report using a "Pay As You Go" structure (students pay per week)
- 55% of all Clubs use a "Pay Up Front" structure
- However, 67% of all *Growing Clubs* use the "Pay As You Go" Structure.
- Approximately 60% of all Clubs whose numbers are *not growing* overall (either stagnating or declining) use the "Pay Up Front" structure.
- Comments included how a few Clubs give both options to students (with a discount for paying up-front), some experimented with Pay Up Front but abandoned it, and some who have been Pay Up Front are experimenting where students pay in chunks at different intervals.

**Q27: Amount that "Pay as You Go" Structure Clubs Charge Per Session**

*If you charge on a "pay as you go" basis for Basic/Mainstream, then how much does each student pay per session?*

- 48% of Clubs that use this method charge \$5 per session
- The rest charging "Pay As You Go" break down as follows:
  - o 17% charges \$10+ per session,
  - o 17% charges less than \$5 per session, and
  - o 17% charges between \$6 and \$9 per session
- 80% of *Growing Clubs* that use "Pay As You Go" charge between \$5 and \$7 per session.

**Q28: Amount that “Pay Up Front” Structure Clubs charge up front**

*If you charge on a “pay up front” basis for Basic/Mainstream classes, then how much do you charge new students to learn the full level?*

- Most common amount is \$51-80 per class, which is what 26% who use this method say they charge. However, this answer includes *all* of the Clubs currently suffering the greatest declines in membership.
- The rest of Clubs charging “Pay Up Front” break down as follows:
  - o 22% charge \$101-150 per class
  - o 17% each charge (a) \$50 or less, (b) \$81-100 and (c) \$151+ per class, respectively.
- *This wide variation suggests that Clubs have not systematically pooled information about what amounts work better or worse.*
- *Growing Clubs* that use this structure are also split about what they charge per session, with everything from \$50 or less to \$151+ appearing.
- Similarly amounts charged by stagnating and declining Clubs using this structure vary widely, though the most notable finding is that Clubs that have declined overall seem to most commonly be charging \$51-80 per Class.

**Q29: Level of confidence in the fee structure you use**

*How confident are you about the effectiveness of your payment structure (“pay as you go” or “pay up front”) in ensuring the largest number of mainstream graduates per class?*

- 38% are either “Extremely” or “Very Confident” in their chosen structure
- 31% are “Somewhat Confident”
- 13% are “Not Very” or “Not At All Confident”
- 18% are “Unsure/Never Thought About It”
- *All Growing Clubs* fall into the “Extremely/Very/Somewhat Confident” Bucket
- With Stagnating Clubs, 29% say they are either “Not So Confident” or “Unsure/Never Thought About It”
- With *Declining Clubs*, 47% say they are either “Not Very Confident,” “Not At All Confident” or “Unsure/Never Thought About It” regarding their payment structure.
- [We need to facilitate better information sharing about different fee structures’ success and details among different clubs. How can we do that?]

**Q30: Any Free Admissions (Open Houses) to New Dancers Learning Basic/Mainstream**

*Do you offer free admission to new dancers who are starting to learn Basic/Mainstream (typically during Open House periods), and if so, how many weeks do you allow new dancers to participate for free?*

- 65% offer some free admission period;
  - o the most common answer is 2 weeks free (30%), followed by
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> week free (20%); then
  - o 15% of clubs offer 3 or more weeks of free admission to new dancers

- Only 7.5% do not offer any free admission weeks
- 10% of those who answered do not teach Basic/Mainstream at all.
- Another 18% had special structures described in the commentary answers.
- Among *growing clubs*, the most common answers are 1-2 weeks of free dancing.
- The majority of clubs offering 3+ weeks of free dancing to new students are either stagnating or declining in membership.

**Q31: Annual Membership Dues, how much**

*What are your annual membership dues for club members?*

- A wide variety of answers, led by:
  - o \$50+, charged by 28% of Clubs;
  - o \$25-\$35, charged by 18% of Clubs;
  - o \$16-24 and \$36-49, each charged by 10% of Clubs;
  - o \$15 or less, charged by 8% of Clubs
  - o 26% of Clubs answered they had alternative structures specified in Comments
- *All of the Clubs that are growing the most (25% or more) charge toward the cheaper end of the spectrum: one at \$15, a second at \$16-24, and a third at \$25-35 per year.*
- *The highest levels of annual membership dues are especially prevalent among the clubs that are declining the most in membership.*
- Several Clubs indicated that they do not have any annual membership fees. A few structure it as a “donation” system.

**Q32: Benefits Given to Club Members**

*Which benefits do you give to your Club Members?*

- Most common benefits are:
  - o Free club name badge (67%)
  - o Access to club directory (49%)
  - o Discounts to dances (38%)
  - o Club newsletters (33%)
  - o Discounts to weekly classes (31%)
- 13% of Clubs *do not give any* of the indicated benefits to Club Members.
- Numerous Clubs added comments about giving discounted club uniform and other clothing pieces, insurance coverage and more.

**Q33: Encouraging Club Members to Attend Fly-Ins and the Convention**

*As a club, do you encourage your club members to attend other IAGSDC Clubs' fly- ins or the annual IAGSDC Conventions?*

- 100% of all Clubs reported that they do this

**Q34: Percentage of Club Membership that Has Attended Other Fly-Ins**

*What approximate percentage of your club membership has attended any other IAGDSC Club's fly-ins over the past 3 years? [please do \*not\* consider those attending the annual Convention for the purposes of this answer]*

- 50% of Clubs say that less than 25% of their membership has attended a different Fly-In
- 30% of Clubs say that 26-50% of their membership has attended a different Fly-In
- 15% of Clubs say that 51-75% of their membership has attended a different Fly-In
- 2.5% of Clubs say that 76%+ of their membership has attended a different Fly-In
- Among Clubs with the highest growth, *all* of them say that 26-50% of their membership has attended a different Fly-In.
- Among Clubs with the greatest membership declines, over 70% say that less than a quarter of their membership has ever attended a different Fly-Ins.

**Q35: Percentage of Club Membership that Has Attended a Recent Convention**

*What approximate percentage of your club membership has attended an official IAGDSC Convention over the past 3 years?*

- 41% say 26-50% of their membership has attended a recent Convention
- 38% say less than 25% of their membership has attended a recent Convention
- 18% say 51-75% of their membership has attended a recent Convention
- 3% say 76+% of their membership has attended a recent Convention
- These numbers reflect generally high participation in annual Convention.
- *The Clubs with the largest declines in growth reported the lowest percentage of Convention attendees.*

**Q36: Members Who Have Attended a Callers' School Recently**

*Has your Club had any of its members attend callers' schools over the last 5 years?*

- 51% have had between 1 and 4 members attend a Callers' School
- 59% have had 0 members recently attend a Callers' School
- All Clubs showing 25% or more growth have had Callers' School participants recently.
- 62% of Clubs that are staying about the same size have had Callers' School participants recently, which is encouraging.
- Clubs with the largest declines in memberships have had the least Callers' School participation.

**Q37: Number of Club Callers**

*How many club callers does your club have?*

- 44% of Clubs have 1 current Club Caller
- 33% of Clubs have 2 current Club Callers
- 18% of Clubs have 3-5 current Club Callers
- 5% of Clubs have 6+ current Club Callers
- 75% of growing Clubs have 2 or more callers.
- The Club with 6+ callers is among the Clubs whose membership is just staying about the same.
- 61% of Clubs with declining numbers have just 1 Club Caller.

**Q38: Means of Club Communication to Members**

*Through which written means does your Club regularly communicate its notices and announcements with its members? (select all that apply)*

- Three forms of communication dominate:
  - o Email/emailed newsletters (97%)
  - o Facebook (71%)
  - o Group's club website (69%)
- No other single means of communication tops 21% usage.
- Physically printed materials now account for 15% of communications.
- Some Clubs cited "informal telephone-trees," phone calls, and texting.

**Q39: Knowledge of Available Recruiting/Retention Resources**

*How much do you feel you know about the following RESOURCES meant to help your Club's recruiting/retention efforts?*

- Highest knowledge demonstrated about the following:
  - o All Join Hands Initiatives (66% are "Very" or "Decently Informed")
  - o CALLERLAB Knowledgebase (61% are "Very" or "Decently Informed")
  - o IAGSDC Club Development Grants (55% are "Very" or "Decently Informed")
  - o IAGSDC History Wiki (50% are "Very" or "Decently Informed")

**Q40: Preferred Means of Receiving Communications from IAGSDC**

*By which means would you most reliably read communications from the IAGSDC and other clubs about events, upcoming dances, notices, etc.? (select those that you check/review often)*

- Top Preferred Means are:
  - o Email (95%)
  - o Postings on IAGSDC Facebook Group (41%)
  - o Postings on IAGSDC Website (38%)

**Q41: Level of Confidence About the Future of Own Club**

*How confident are you about the future of your Club?*

- 77% of respondents fell onto the "Confident" end of the spectrum:

- 28% are either “Extremely” or “Very Confident”
- 49% are “Somewhat Confident”
- 23% of respondents fell onto the “Not Confident” end of the spectrum:
  - 13% are “Not So Confident”
  - 10% are “Not At All Confident”
- All of the “Not At All Confident” sentiment came from Clubs with the largest declines in membership.
- The “Somewhat Confident” sentiment was spread across all growth demographics. While it became more prevalent as growth levels decreased, even some Clubs that are growing chose it and must have some underlying concerns about the future.

**Q42: Prevalence of Local Competition from Other IN-PERSON LGBTQ\* Groups/Activities**

*Do you feel like your club is competing against a lot of other local in-person LGBTQ\* activities for potential new members' attention?*

- 53% say their Clubs are competing against a lot of other local LGBTQ\* groups for attention
- 47% say their Clubs are NOT competing against these local groups for attention.
- 63% of Clubs with significant positive growth confirm they are doing it despite local in-person LGBTQ\* competition.
- 53% of Clubs with significant declines in growth say they have local in-person LGBTQ\* competition.

**Q43: Prevalence of ONLINE Competition from Other LGBTQ\* Online Groups/Activities**

*Do you feel like your club is competing against ONLINE APPS and other INTERNET- based LGBTQ\* activities for potential new members' attention?*

- 38% say their Clubs are competing against a lot of other ONLINE LGBTQ\* groups/activities for attention
- 62% say their Clubs are NOT competing against these other ONLINE LGBTQ\* groups for attention.
- This perception changes significantly depending on current level of Club growth. Clubs with the highest growth universally (100%) say that online competition is NOT a factor, whereas 61% of Clubs with any declines say that ONLINE competition is a factor.

**Q44: Greatest RECRUITING Challenges – Open Question**

*What do you feel are the greatest challenges to recruiting new dancers for your club?*

- Clubs currently experiencing *positive Growth* focused on battling square dancing's reputation/perception as well as the worry of eventually "running out of friends" to invite.
- Clubs whose Membership is *Hovering About the Same Level* focused on those items above plus the level of commitment required to learn square dance, general apathy, "attracting youth" and "breaking through the clutter on social media."
- Clubs experiencing *current Declines* also focused on age of their current membership as a challenge. They mentioned "attracting the 18-25 year old to keep the clubs alive past 10 years." [Is this really necessary? Isn't the reality that we tend to get people entering their 40s-50s as their priorities and interests evolve? The numbers above seem to suggest that.]

**Q45: Greatest RETENTION Challenges – Open Question**

*What do you feel are the greatest challenges to retaining current club members over the longer term?*

- Clubs currently experiencing *positive Growth* focused on offering adequate classes and programs for current members, handling "top heavy" clubs, battling the repetition/boredom involved in constant teaching/workshop cycles, and making everyone feel welcome and included
- Clubs whose Membership is *Hovering About the Same Level* focused on those a bit plus several mentioned external factors like the nature of the gay community today with everyone "living online," dealing with population aging, and working on ways to increase "social connections." [This last seems like an important step based on the data above.]
- Clubs experiencing *current Declines* also focused on the same points as the last paragraph above, but some also noted they are "all now C1 or better dancers" and "none of us fee like.." angeling for Mainstream again. They also mentioned social/personality riffs in which individuals got insulted and left certain Clubs. The need for facilitating more social interactions came up again here more than once as well.

**Q46: Open Comments. Space for Any Other Thoughts on Recruiting and Retention**

*Open Comments. Please share any further comments, concerns, suggestions and/or anything else you would like to relate regarding Recruiting and Retention.*

- No Clubs experiencing the highest amount of growth left any input here.
- One Club mentioned they would like for IAGSDC's Club Development Grants to remain available to repeated programs year after year. It is something the IAGSDC is going to consider.
- Some mentioned how all recruiting has turned to Facebook and MeetUp.
- Some mentioned how less than half of attendees at introductory Blast classes end up making it through Basic, which is a problem.

- Another Club said it is “reconsidering” its practice of using Blast classes as success with them has dwindled.
- Some Clubs that exclusively dance at higher levels wonder if such Recruiting/Retention topics should apply to them at all.
  - [Query where all they think their trained dancers ready for more advanced levels appear from?]
- Some asked for help incorporating good ideas into a coherent growth plan.
- Sadly a couple of Clubs added they were close to folding. One Club is talking about de facto merging with a local straight C1 Club that is also struggling for membership.
- One club experiencing a lot of membership decline discussed the potential of “hiring young ringers” to dance and attract other young people to the Club.
  - [Among Clubs experiencing declines, there seemed to be a certain running preoccupation with finding extremely young dancers. The reality that the majority of growing Clubs seem to be experiencing is that most new members come from the 41-60 age demographic, which can also be replenished over time as prospective dancers age into that bracket as well. Of course younger dancers are very welcome, and some make great long-time members as well, but the many demands on their time and focus seems to make them harder to recruit. Is broader age demographic outreach a key adjustment here?]
  - [Clubs need to view recruiting as ongoing, not as a one-time initiative that, if successful, would be taken care of via new young members who would then hang around for 40 years or more. There is always going to be attrition, and recruiting/retention efforts need to be embraced as an ongoing reality of all IAGSDC Clubs.]