

Recruitment

by Tim Marriner

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One of the most important necessities of our activity today is the need to find prospective new dancers. Unfortunately, many current dancers have grown weary looking for new people for various reasons. Existing dancers often have hounded their neighbors 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 groceries 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 of 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 the 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, LiveLivelySquareDance.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.