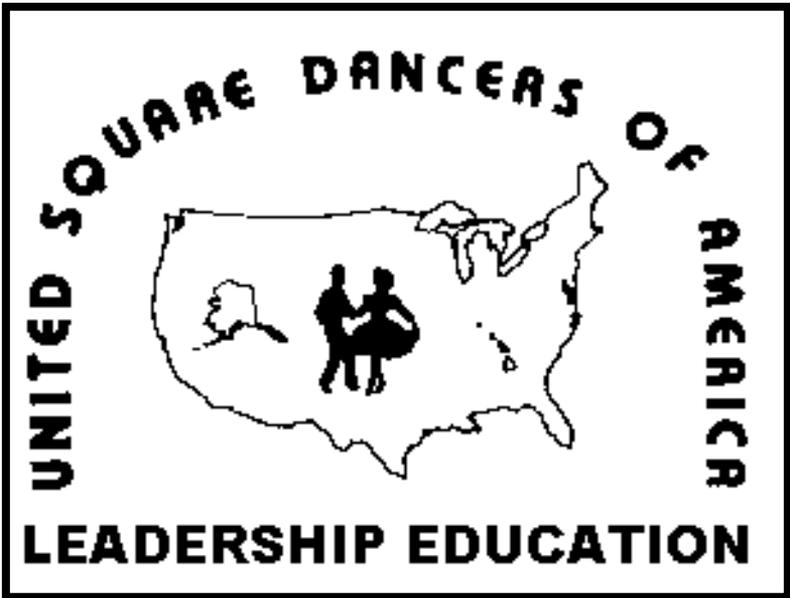


# IAN HENZEL PLAN FOR SQUARE DANCE RECRUITMENT



This pamphlet provides information on the recruitment of new square dancers. For additional educational information on square dancing, contact the United Square Dancers of America Education Committee.

## INTRODUCTION

Ian Henzel first introduced this square dance recruitment plan in the Chicago area to Chi Town Squares in the mid-nineties. Paul Waters, from Los Angeles, heard about it and introduced it to his group at about the same time. It works quite well in these areas where it has been followed to the letter. It should be noted that this plan is labor intensive and requires a dedicated person to oversee the operation and many more workers to implement the plan and keep it moving forward. There is a cost for mailings and phone calls and booth rentals at community functions if so desired. This recruiting plan can be implemented at the club level or regional level.

USDA was introduced to this plan by Paul Waters at the USDA sponsored round table held in Baltimore in January of 1999. It was attended by many national organizations interested in keeping our square dance activity alive and well.

The objective of the program is to build a list of possible square dancing prospects, then converting as many as possible to class members through personal contact. The whole program is based on personal contact. Statistics from Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Diego, where the plan is in full operation, show that for every 100 names on the list, probably 10-20 people will come to class at least once and 6-14 of them will actually take the class. This program yields about 10-20% conversion from list to class member.



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Square Dance!

IAN HENZEL RECRUITING PLAN  
(An Overview)

STEP I. BUILDING A PROSPECTIVE MAILING LIST

It should be noted that this is not a list for unsolicited mailing. This list of names is a list of people that have said that they would like to receive more information on square dancing.

1. Collecting names for potential square dance classes.
  - a. In order to get names you have to go where the people are, such as public events like fairs, craft shows, malls, community days and parades, etc.
  - b. Ask the people if information on square dancing could be sent to them.
  - c. Get name, address, and phone number. Phone number is important so ask for it first.
  - d. Also ask for email address, especially if people do not want to share their phone number.
  - e. No literature or handouts are given at this time. It was determined that handouts were just thrown away and were a waste of time and money.
1. Number of names to collect.
  - a. Recruiting is tough so don't get discouraged.
  - b. Keep in mind that for every "yes, send info", there will be 20 "no's"; it's all part of the recruiting process.
  - c. For every 10 names that have said "yes, send info", only 1-2 of them will yield a positive response which is approximately a 10% return for your efforts.
  - d. The positive response means that this name will come to a class to try it out but may or may not continue.
  - e. If it is determined that 3 squares are necessary to hold class, 100-150 names are needed to attain that goal. More names are needed if the majority of names are singles and not couples.

- f. Of the 10-15% that give it a try, 60-70% of these people will take class and join a club.

## STEP II. DATABASE MANAGEMENT

1. As names are collected, they should be sent to a database.
  - a. Database information must include phone number, name, address. There should also be columns to indicate when letters were sent, responses received from phone calls, and other pertinent information.
  - b. Helpful information would be email address and where the contact was made.
  - c. Leaving messages on an answering machine and email can be almost as effective as a phone call.
2. As phone call time approaches, the database manager must print out area phone call lists for people making the phone calls.
  - a. The database must constantly be updated as to letters sent, phone contacts made and response, dances attended, and any other information pertinent to that prospect.
3. Purging the database.
  - a. After classes have started and it has been determined who has committed to class and who is not interested, the names from the database are purged and the process is ready to start again.
  - b. This is about 4-6 months after recruiting has begun.
  - c. It should be noted that some people might ask to have their names kept on the database for another season so these names should not be discarded.

## STEP III. MAILINGS.

1. Each name on the list receives mailings designed to maintain the interest of the prospective student.
2. The mailings include the following:
  - a. The first of 4 letters is a welcome letter, stating the

- benefits of dancing, etc. This letter is to arrive within 10 days of the name being added to the list.
- b. The next three mailings are newsletters written specifically to the prospective dancers. These three newsletters talk of the fellowship, health benefits, how lessons are conducted, and a general overview of the dance activity. They should include benefits such as dancing in a smoke and alcohol free environment as well as other positive comments. The three newsletters are programmed to arrive 2 1/2 months, 1 1/2 months, and 2 weeks before lessons begin. The newsletter should include a contact name and phone number, the location where classes will be held, the date, day and time of the lessons.
  - c. Most importantly, the fun of this activity should be stressed in all letters including the welcome letter.
  - d. Example letters are attached.

#### STEP IV. PHONE CALLS TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS.

1. The first phone call is made one week prior to the start of lessons reminding them of the start of class including days and times.
2. A second and third phone call is made to every name on the list. These phone calls are made in the week following the first lesson.
  - a. If the name has come to class, they are encouraged to continue and given a general pep talk.
  - b. If the name has not come to class they are still called and are encouraged to come to future classes.
  - c. The phone calls are all made by dancers from the local clubs and follow a printed script so as to cover all facts. The second phone call will include either "we missed you" or "so glad to see you".
  - d. The phone calls should be made until enrollment for classes is closed.
3. Phone calling instructions are enclosed.

## STEP V. THIS ENDS THE RECRUITING PROGRAM FOR THIS SEASON

1. The database can now be purged keeping the few names and information that you want to save.
2. You are now ready for a new recruiting season.
3. The new square dance graduates are the best source of help for the new season since they are usually very enthusiastic about their new activity and are anxious to help.

## COMMENTS ON THE PROGRAM

Over the course of the program, each prospect is contacted eight times: once when their name is added to the list, four times by mail, and then three times by phone. The object of the program is to build a list of quality names and then converting those names into prospective students, all by personal contact. In the collection of names, it has been proven that names without phone numbers gave a 0% return. The other parts of the plan can be followed, and the lack of phone calls results in a 0% return of dancers. It was found that fairly good results were shown even when the callers only reached the answering machine of the prospects. A copy of the name collection sheet is enclosed and has been modified over the years. With phone number being so important, it has been moved to front and center. The sheet does not include a place for email address, but it can be modified to include that information if so desired.

All activity revolves around building a solid database of names. As the database evolves, names are sorted into local areas. The clubs in these local areas are then responsible for sending the letters and phone calling. Or the work can be divided according to however your group wants to do it. The important thing is proper data management. As phone calls are made and information is received from prospective students, these responses are sent to the

database to keep track of how people are feeling about attending lesson classes.

If an individual club is following this program on an individual basis, then there is no special format for teaching the calls. However, if several clubs in a region are following this program, then all classes in the region should start in the same week and follow a programmed list of dance calls. Prospective dancers can take lessons at any of the area classes and are able to move from one class to another because they are all teaching the same moves in the same week. The dancer is encouraged not to miss any lessons and is able to do this because all classes are taught the same moves in any given week. Sometimes illness, work schedules, etc. can interfere with lesson classes, so this is a real help to the beginning dancer.

After lessons have begun, dances are scheduled for the beginners. These dances should be held every month or two to give the new people a taste of what club dances are all about. All students are encouraged to attend these dances. Entrance fees collected at these dances should be returned to the recruiting program after expenses for the dance have been met. Fees should also be charged for the first dance night since the recruiting program carries a price tag (see below), but that is up to the club to decide.

It is difficult to assess a cost to the program since every area is different. However, consider the following. There is minimal cost in collecting names other than someone's time and some copies of a sign up sheet. If you must rent a booth at an affair such as an arts and crafts show, community days, or other functions the price begins to rise. How many booths you rent in your recruitment efforts must be considered when determining cost. These functions might allow you to roam through the crowd and get names for no cost. Check first to be sure its okay to do this. Mailings could be your biggest expense; Uncle Sam doesn't come cheap. Keep in mind that there should be four mailings to each address. Phone calls can be a minimal expense if there is

someone to make the calls in all area codes affected by the recruitment program. There will probably be some extraneous expenses no one thought of at the outset, so set aside some extra monies "just in case".

Following the letters and phone calls, the names from the database are all discarded and the process is started over. It is felt that if the names didn't respond the first time after eight contacts, it was of no use to keep the names in the database. There is one exception to discarding all names. Those names that told phone callers that they could not attend this year but are still interested and would like to be contacted next year were maintained on the list.

So as stated earlier, the plan does involve some hard work and organization with some expense. Consider this one last thought: if you were able to recruit a square of dancers for your club's lesson class it could generate about \$1200. With 8 people in a square being charged \$4.00 each comes to \$32/week. Times that by 40 weeks and you have \$1280! Charge \$5.00/person and that number comes to \$1600 which could really help offset the cost of the class. Good Luck!!



## MAKING THE INITIAL CONTACT

### Obtaining Name, Address, And Phone Number

The goal of the recruitment program is to obtain as many names, addresses, and phone numbers as possible that will be entered into a database. A "thank you for your interest" letter will be mailed within 2 weeks of acquiring the name, followed by 3 newsletters. The letters will then be followed up with a reminder phone call just before classes begin. Through the mailings and phone calls, these people will hopefully be convinced to at least give our activity a try. But it all starts with the initial contact. Following are some pointers.

1. Ask, "Would you like to have information sent to you about square dancing?" At this point in the process, they are not being signed up for square dance lessons.
2. For every 1 person that says "Yes" there will be 20 that say "No". But you have to get the 20 "No's" in order to find the one "Yes". Even if it's not an enthusiastic "Yes", any kind of "Yes" is good enough. The mailings have proven very successful at convincing the most reluctant to give square dancing a try. **Be assertive and somewhat aggressive to get that name, address, and phone number!!**
3. If you are recruiting from a booth, get in front of it to slow the crowd. Be friendly and ask if they would like to have square dance information sent to them. Have clipboards ready with sign up sheets and pens on them so no one has to go searching for anything. Some club banners and pictures of dancers displayed in the booth could help in getting peoples' attention.
4. Check the form to be sure its legible and that no information is missing - especially the phone number. People who signed up but did not give a phone number never came to a single class despite having received all

4 mailings!

5. No handouts are given at this time; they seem to be a wasted resource. However, some people insist on having something and a business card with a square dance hot-line number on it would be appropriate. But try very hard to get a name, address, and phone number before giving them the card.



## PHONE CALL INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. The Initial Phone Call

Try to talk to the person you are trying to reach. In effect, you are giving a sales pitch, such as "Come join us!" Although you might be able to convince someone to try square dancing by leaving a message on an answering machine, you are far more likely to meet with success if you actually talk to him or her. However, if you call and are unable to talk to them in person, by all means leave a message with your name and number so that they can call back if they choose to. The return rate from leaving a message was reasonable but there is still nothing better than personal contact. Also remember that you are not making a cold call. These people have already received 4 pieces of correspondence from the square dance community. A possible conversation (in person or leaving a message) could be the following:

Hi! I'm (your name) from the (club name) calling to remind you that our beginning square dance class starts this coming (day and date). The class will be held at (location). This will be an open night which means you can come and give square dancing a try just to see if you like it. No experience is necessary. I hope to see you at class but if this is not convenient for you, try (name of another club). They will be hosting a class on (different day and time) in (different location) and they would be glad to see you.

Even more than the words, they will hear how you are saying them. So make the calls while thinking of the best time you have ever had square dancing and let them hear the enthusiasm in your voice. Of course each call will be a bit different. So hold on tight to that happy thought, and just "go with the flow". Try to be ready to answer some common objections or questions like, making every class, time to learn, where to dance after lessons are through, etc. Be sure to let them know of other clubs in the area that are also having class so they don't have to miss any if they don't want to. Let them know that the amount of time it takes to learn to dance really depends on them since there are 5 levels in

square dancing and they can stop after they have learned each level and just dance for a while then go on if they so choose. However, the initial basic/mainstream levels traditionally take about 40 weeks. Tell them about class dances that will be held during the class year and then club dances afterward. You could also mention weekends and conventions that happen all the time as other opportunities to dance. (All of the above information should have been in the newsletters that they received but it doesn't hurt to reiterate it here.) If someone is making objections, this is an excellent sign that they have some questions and just need to be convinced.

If the phone calls are being made for a region rather than an individual club, it is important to present all clubs equally to encourage the person to attend whatever class is most convenient for them. At this point these people do not belong to any club and it is important to keep from implying any rivalry. Since all we have is a home address, it might be more convenient for someone to attend class right from work, which is another reason to mention several clubs. It would be a shame to lose possible square dancers because they thought lessons were only on one certain night at only one location.

## 2. Missing or Incorrect Phone Numbers

Although great care has been taken in gathering, keying and proofing the data, some of these phone numbers may either be missing or may not be correct. If you get a wrong number, try to get a correct one from the phone book or Directory Assistance. If the number on the phoning sheet is incorrect and your research fails to yield a correct number, contact the person managing the database. He/She should have the original data collection sheets and can take another look to see if the number was keyed correctly.

## 3. The Phone Call Lists, Keeping Track

Phone call lists should be issued to those willing to make the calls. On the lists should be columns for each phone call and the results of each call. The lists are useful for keeping track of whom you called, whether you were able to reach them or if you

left a message, and any other pertinent information regarding the phone call.

After each week of class, an updated list will be provided with the names of the people that have attended that week. This will tell you what kind of phone call to make in subsequent weeks.

#### 4. The Follow Up Phone Call

Each of the individuals on your phoning sheets is to receive a follow up phone call. This time, the message is either: "Thank you so much for joining us. Are there any questions I can answer for you?" OR "We missed you! There are still (1 or 2) more open weeks. Will you be able to make it then?"

Again, make the appropriate notes as to whether you have been able to reach them and anything else that might prove useful if you need to contact them again. Make clear notes for data analysis purposes.

#### 5. Held Over Names

Through the course of making phone calls, you are likely to encounter some people who will be unable to attend class this year, but would be interested in attending in the future. If so, please clearly indicate these people in an extra column on your phone list. Typically, there are no more than a handful of people that want to be held over to the next year.

#### 6. Turn In Telephone Follow Up Sheet

After the final phone call, turn in your phoning sheet to the database manager. An analysis of this year's promotion program will be done in order to determine improvements that can be made for upcoming years. A critical part of this will be to analyze the information on the phoning sheets.

6. GOOD LUCK!!

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## SAMPLE WELCOME LETTER

Thank you for your interest in joining the square dance community in (your location – city, town, etc.)

The (name of your club) is one of approximately (# of clubs) in our area. We have been dancing for many years and invite you to join in the fun.

Square dancing provides:

- Fun, mental stimulation, pleasant exercise ... and it's easy to learn!
- A great way to expand your circle of friends.
- A worldwide square dance organization with clubs all over the United State and Canada and throughout the world.
- An annual 4-day convention with over 10,000 participants, and many shorter conventions, camping activities, and volunteer activities that help local charitable organizations.

The (name of your club) will begin the season of beginners' classes in a few weeks to start you on your way toward enjoyment of a whole new world of fun and excitement.

We've enclosed a New Dancer Newsletter. Watch for another newsletter to be delivered later in September. These will give you a good idea of the great fun and social opportunities our clubs provide as well as background information on our activity.

Thanks again for your interest, and we'll see you in the fall!

Sincerely,

P.S. If you have any questions, please give us a call. Also, if you have any friends who would be interested in learning to square dance, call us to have their names added to our mailing list.

**NEW DANCER NEWSLETTER**  
**(#1 of two issues from the (name of your club))**

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Thanks for your interest in square dancing! Whether you're already enthusiastic about joining a class or just want to find out a little more about square dancing, we hope this newsletter answers your questions.

Bet you didn't know there's an opportunity to square dance nearly every night in the (name of your area). The public isn't aware of this because dances are advertised only to those who've completed lessons. Most dancers participate once or twice a week, so there are lots of choices. The dances feature different levels of complexity, so completing more lessons gives you more choices.

### **Classes**

Square dancing is party time every time you do it! Square dancing brings people together for fun and fellowship – even when you're learning. The fun starts on the very first night. You meet new people and make new friends.

You can start lessons with (your club name) in September and continue once a week through January, with some holidays off. By spring you'll be dancing at the level called "Mainstream" so you can enjoy summer dances. You can take additional classes to reach the "Plus" level. Most dancers wait at least six months before taking plus lessons.

### **Dress**

Beginner classes are conducted in a very casual atmosphere, so dress is also casual. You can wear slacks, jeans or even shorts. Club dances are usually, but not always, somewhat more dressy than lessons. Men often wear a long-sleeved western shirt; women usually wear full skirts and crinolines, but a "prairie skirt" is also considered appropriate attire. You should always wear comfortable shoes.

## Dates and Times

The (name of your club) holds beginner classes on (Monday) nights beginning on (date) from (time) in (location), (address). The first three lessons are free! Directions and a map are on the reverse of this newsletter.

## Benefits of Square Dancing

Whether you're an experienced dancer or a beginner, square dancing is FUN! It's dancing, it's thinking, it's teamwork. Moving rhythm to the music helps keep you physically fit. Reacting quickly to the square dance caller's calls keeps you mentally on your toes. And your team of eight dancers depends on you to keep those toes moving.

The social aspects of square dancing contribute greatly to the fun of the activity. Square dancers are people from all walks of life. In addition to the interactions and friendships formed during classes and dances, from time to time the (Club name) hold purely social events – such as picnics or parties – without dancing. Square dancing is a great way for active, contemporary people to meet others and build a wider circle of friends.

Add any other interesting information about your club that you think would be beneficial in creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm about square dancing and lessons. Don't be too wordy. Don't over-kill.

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**NEW DANCER NEWSLETTER**  
**(#2 of two issues from the (name of your club))**

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Thanks for your interest in square dancing! Whether you're already enthusiastic about joining a class or just want to find out a little more about square dancing, we hope this newsletter answers your questions.

We hope our previous issue piqued your interest in square dancing! We hope that as you learn more about it, you'll be more interested in trying it for yourself. Remember, the first three lessons are free!

### **Classes Start Soon!**

The (club name) Square dancing is party time every time you do it! Square dancing brings people together for fun and fellowship – even when you're learning. The fun starts on the very first night. You meet new people and make new friends.

You can start lessons with (your club name) in September and continue once a week through January, with some holidays off. By spring you'll be dancing at the level called "Mainstream" so you can enjoy summer dances. You can take additional classes to reach the "Plus" level. Most dancers wait at least six months before taking plus lessons.

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## **Dates and Times**

The (name of your club) holds beginner classes on (Monday) nights beginning on (date) from (time) in (location), (address). Directions and a map are on the reverse of this newsletter. Call one of the names on the back of this sheet for more information, or just come out and dance!

## **Square Dance Calling**

Eight people form a square, dancing together for one series of calls. Usually they dance with other people for the next series of calls. Each series of square dance calls is referred to as a “tip.” A tip generally last from about 15 to 20 minutes and consists of two parts. The first part is more challenging, as the caller gives calls in different orders and from various starting positions, so the dancers must pay close attention. The music forms a background and a beat for dancing.

The second part of the tip is the “singing call,” where the caller sings some of the words to a song that may be rock, folk, country/western, Broadway show tune, spiritual, or whatever. He/she intersperses dance calls at appropriate times; dancing is smooth and the choreography has a pattern. It isn’t barn dancing or the square dancing you knew in school gym classes. There are new dance steps, patterns that keep changing, and unique calls to learn.

## **Where to Dance**

Regular club dances, such as those sponsored by the (Club name), aren’t the only places to dance. There are festivals, conventions, camping square dances and parties in addition to dances scheduled by local area clubs. In June, the National Square Dance Convention will be held in (what location?), with over 10,000 participants expected. As at any convention, dancers fill hotels and campgrounds in and around (what location?); shuttle buses transport them to dances and to numerous other activities. Participants come from around the world, dancing as much as 12

hours a day at all levels – Beginner to Challenge.

## **Fees**

The (club name) lessons are held in cooperation with (sponsoring organization if you have one.) Advance registration isn't required. You can come to the first three class dances without registering, but you must pay (\$ fee) per person at the third session in order to continue. That covers (# weeks) of lessons (less than (\$ / lesson)). This means you can “try out” free square dancing for three weeks if you're not yet convinced you'll like it. We know from years of experience that most people enjoy it more each time they come, so we're sure that by the third week you'll be eager to continue! We look forward to seeing you on (date and time lessons start)!

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# Square Dance!

## **Notes for your recruitment plan**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

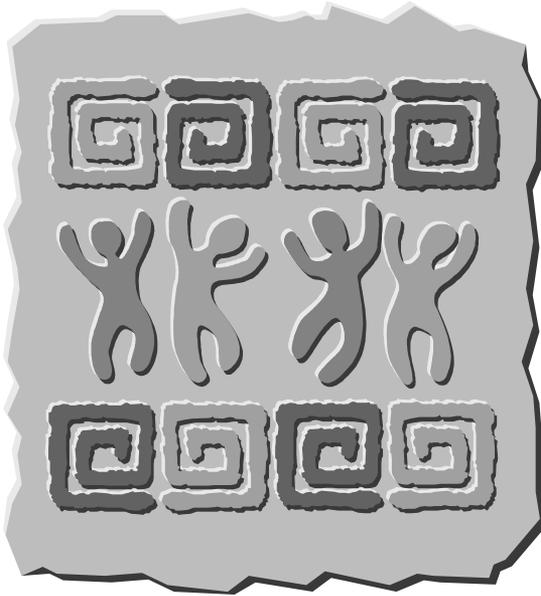
Ian Henzel

Caller and member of the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs

Paul Waters

More information on this plan can be received from Ian Henzel at [IanKH@aol.com](mailto:IanKH@aol.com) or Paul Waters at [paul\\_waters@msn.com](mailto:paul_waters@msn.com).





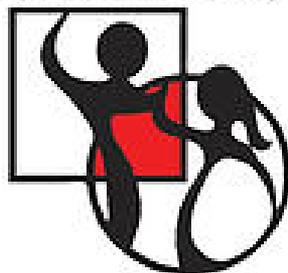
This pamphlet provides information on the recruitment of new square dancers.

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