

## **INTRODUCTION**

Recruiting new dancers is a never-ending task within the square dance movement. Square dancing is a great form of entertainment, therapy and exercise. It is also a great equalizer, as there are no income, education or culture barriers. PhD's dance along side of clerks, mechanics, engineers, sanitation workers, small town folk, city dwellers, politicians, world travelers, dentists, ministers - all looking for the same thing - fun, fellowship, entertainment and relaxation in a friendly, family atmosphere. No one is too old or too young to join in for an evening of square dance fun and fellowship.

How do we find new prospective dancers? How do we approach them? How do we persuade them that square dancing is the hobby for them? WE RECRUIT, RECRUIT, RECRUIT!

## **RECRUITING PLANS**

To conduct a successful and prosperous recruiting program, a club must design and develop their recruiting plans and guidelines well in advance. Their plans should consider class dates and schedules, length of class sessions, class size, class fees, class facilities, caller, angels or club helpers, attire, training materials, handouts, literature, interaction and interface with the club members and

the club activities, class publicity and promotion, and club member support and involvement with the class. Educate the club members (recruiters) by developing an information sheet that provides answers to questions that will most likely be asked by the new prospects. These information sheets should include data about the club as well as the total square dance activity.

## **RECRUITING METHODS**

**Personal Contact:** The most successful method of recruiting new dancers. Solicit your friends, family members, acquaintances, business associates, etc. Encourage these potentials to bring their friends. Transport your prospects to the early lessons until they establish a rapport with other students.

**Exhibitions / Demonstrations:** Perform square dance exhibitions or demonstrations at shopping centers, malls, fairs, community events, church events, etc. Be sure to present a colorful, fun and friendship atmosphere to the spectators. Wear proper square dance attire. Involve the spectators if possible to demonstrate how easy it is and how much fun can be experienced in just a short time. Pass out flyers regarding your club and its class information.

**Party / Benefit Dance:** Offer to sponsor a Western Square Dance Party for a church group, civic organization or business group. Sponsor a Benefit Dance for a charitable cause that is open to the public. Demonstrate the club dancing and then involve the spectators, to let them taste the fun and fellowship that goes with square dancing. This recruiting method offers the potential of signing up a complete group of prospects at one time for the lessons.

**Advertise:** Design, develop and distribute posters and flyers advertising your class plans. Place flyers in malls, stores, community bulletin boards, Chamber of Commerce, Welcome Centers, Welcome Wagons, Community Service Centers, waiting rooms, business offices, etc. Advertise via electronic billboards and the community service features of local radio and TV stations. Advertise and publicize by writing club, class, square dance articles for local newspapers and local square dance publications. Build a dynamic, live dancing club square dance float for use in various community parades and pass out flyers along the route.

**Recruiting Tools:** Flyers depicting all the pertinent information can be passed out at exhibitions, malls, dances, placed in publications or news media, placed on bulletin boards or stacked in convenient places for people to pick up. Homemade or special made posters may be placed in

high visibility areas in malls, centers, stores, bulletin boards, etc. Handouts may be made and distributed person to person, which will also spark conversation and an opportunity to meet potential dancers one on one. Invitations may be developed and sent to prospects or to previous dancers that have dropped out of the dance activity.

### **RECRUITING PROCESS**

**Preparation:** Preparation is essential for a successful recruiting program. Recruiters should be a near expert about the club, class plans, square dance movement on a local and national scale, and should be knowledgeable regarding costs, methods of payment, schedule, location and other class details. Recruiters should have flyers, posters, handouts and other attractive material available for distribution.

**Personal Contact:** Promote the square dance activity as a wonderful source of wholesome entertainment, exercise and an opportunity of great fun and fellowship. Sell the "club" concept, its members and its activities to the prospects. Promote the class lessons as an inexpensive evening out on the town, with the finest people, learning something new while exercising.

**Follow Through:** Offer to pick up your prospects and take them to the first few lessons. Meet with your prospects for a light snack before or after class. Call prospects immediately if they are absent from class. Keep your "recruits" under your surveillance until they mingle with their classmates and have become a solid member of the class. Keep fanning the spark until it glows and bursts into a full flame!



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# **RECRUITING NEW DANCERS**



This information sheet was developed by the Education Committee of the UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA, INC. and will provide a brief summary of just a few of the topics concerning the recruiting of new dancers. These same recruiting techniques apply to square, round, contra, clogging, and other folk dance clubs.

Leadership Education material can also be printed directly from USDA web site at [www.usda.org](http://www.usda.org)

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