

Success Story #2

What do they do:

Effective Recruiting Handout

The Rocky Mountain Recruiting Plan evolved as an improvement from the Timberline Toppers Plan. This plan has been used by several clubs to create larger classes with better retention rates. One benefit, the class can be controlled to a desirable size. The Rocky Mountain Recruiting Plan can be used repeatedly to grow and strengthen your club. This is a summary of the RMRP.

1: A B C

Attitude: Your club must have an attitude that wants to recruit. If your club does not, your efforts to recruit a decent sized class will be wasted. Therefore, the first step may require an attitude adjustment within your club.

Belief: Your club members must have confidence and believe they can recruit new prospective members. Once they have made the efforts required, and succeeded, they will find it easier to recruit new members. Success breeds success.

Commitment: If the club members make a commitment to recruiting, they can succeed. If they do not, the recruiting campaign will fail.

2. Lesson Chairman

This person has overall responsibility for everything related to developing the class, instructing the class, and retaining the class members as new club members. The Chairman needs to be organized, be able to administrate, and should not be a brand-new club member.

3. Start of Campaign – Minimum Time

Allow a minimum of two months to develop your class. Three, four or even six months is not too much time. Your time starts with Step One, the letter to club members.

4. Start of Campaign – Getting Organized

The Lesson Chairman will gather a committee together. The objective of the first meeting is to create a plan from the day of the meeting through the Kickoff Social. Assistants include the Database Administrator, Publicity Chairperson, and Kickoff Social Chairperson. Responsibilities will be defined.

5. Set date classes start, location, and instructor.

6. Database Administrator

The Database Administrator will keep a list of all prospects and contact info: name, address, phone number, email, referring members name and source. The Database Administrator will be involved in steps 1-4 solely or with the help of others. The Database Administrator and Lesson Chairman will make progress reports at dances, reminding everyone to find guests for the Kickoff Social.

7. Publicity Chairperson

Choose someone to oversee overall publicity. Create a plan. If the preparations above are not made or follow up is not made, the publicity efforts are usually blamed as worthless. Jim Langdon (mntndncr@gmail.com) has a list of over 170 recruiting ideas. No one club has the resources to do everything on the list, so pick and choose ideas that will work for your club.

8. Kickoff Chairperson / Social Chairperson

The Kickoff Chairperson is responsible for the Kickoff Social, including menu and food quantities, place settings, tables, chairs, greeters, servers, program, etc. The social could be a chili dinner, potluck, breakfast, or any social gathering to kickoff and introduce guests to square dancing.

9. STEP ONE: Letter to Club Members

A letter is sent to all members, including officers and committee, asking them to help keep the club growing and strong. The letter requests members to give the lesson committee the names of two or more prospects. The Database Administrator will receive the names directly from members, from the Lesson Chairperson and other sources.

10. STEP TWO: First Letter to Prospects

A letter is sent to all prospects, within ten days after putting them in the database, to acknowledge that you are looking forward to meeting them, who to contact if they have questions, and that you will be in contact as the Kickoff Social gets closer. Note – you are inviting guests to a Social, not lessons.

11: STEP THREE: Invitations to Prospects

Four weeks before the Kickoff Social, mail all prospects an invitation to the “Chili Social and Introduction to Square Dancing”. Hand address envelopes, include a note, and sign the invitation.

12: STEP FOUR: Reminder to Members

Send a reminder to all members who submitted guest names to contact their guests two weeks before the Kickoff Social and let the Social Chairperson know who is expected to attend. List their guest’s names and remind them you have contact info available in case they have lost it.

13: STEP FIVE: Preparation for the Kickoff Social

The last two weeks before the event is hectic. The caller MC should be set. A reliable estimate of members and guests is needed to determine food requirements. Copy the Kickoff Chairperson on all “step four” emails so he/she will know who to contact if members do not contact her/him.

14: STEP SIX: The Kickoff Social

Greet the guests as they arrive, check them in, and give them name tags. Members should wear their badges and mingle. When it’s time to eat, guests go first, but members should sit with guests. After the meal have guests and members up for dancing. Mingle. Keep any demonstration brief. During breaks, make brief announcements on lesson details. Mingle. Have information cards or tri-fold flyers available. Have a sign-up table for lessons. Thank guests as they are leaving. Reminder: this is a party and the responsibility of club members is to mingle with the guests and make the event fun.

15: STEP SEVEN: The Class

You have a class but the job is not complete. The energy from one successful new dancer feeds another, the angels help, and everybody bonds during breaks. And still needed; a Class Coordinator and friends to set up the hall and assist as necessary.

16: STEP EIGHT: Retention

A 90% retention rate is possible and has been obtained repeatedly. Here are some contributing factors:

- Members try to welcome and become friends with new dancers from the start
- At the Kickoff Social, members mix with and welcome guests. They continue to build these friendships during lessons.
- During lessons the instructor takes a real interest in the new dancers.
- The class is sponsored by only one club. Angels are free to mix with new dancers.
- Lessons are taught twice a week for ten to twelve weeks. This helps retention and shortens calendar time.
- The instructors are club members; new dancers identify with the club.
- The new dancers are invited to regular club dances after they have had as few as three lessons, at no charge. They dance the first half hour. The squares are mixed member and new dancer couples. The calls are limited to calls the new dancers have been taught.
- New dancers are invited to join the club before graduation.

Results:

Successful class sizes have varied from 20 (“The Plan saved our club!”) to 60. One club had four consecutive classes of 40+ and grew from a most-likely-to-fail club to the largest club in the state. The size of the class is controllable; experience indicates approximately 1/3 of the initial prospect pool will start class. In several instances, the club has been told to stop recruiting weeks before the scheduled start of classes, to avoid a class too large to handle.

Marketing Plan:**Target:**

Friends and acquaintances

Benefits Sought:

Entertainment/Social Activity

Competition:

Snow skiing and outdoor activities

Strategy:

Annual lessons during the height of tourist season with complete year-round dancer support and retention. Kickoff Social with well-defined steps for success. Lessons held twice a week. Workshops for new dancers throughout the year. Immediate blend of new dancers in with existing club.

Tactics:

Management Structure:

Lesson Chairperson

Database Administrator

Publicity Chairperson

Kickoff Chairperson.

Committee Plan

Database

Marketing Plan

Special Event

Personalized Cards/Invitations

Email Marketing

Results: From 20 to 160 members in four years!

This program is now called the Rocky Mountain Recruiting Program.
And now for a follow-up:

MOUNTAINEERS CLASS – FALL 2017

Jan Hormuth

This year, Jim Langdon introduced the Rocky Mountain Recruiting Program to the Mountaineers. Although we had been doing a lot of the pieces of the program, we adopted the entire program. The main emphasis was to set up a committee of 5 couples to divide the work. We also had expectations that the Club Members were to actively pursue new dancers. Our goal was to collect 100 names and end up with 20 new members.

Prospecting

We did no newspaper advertising but did put up signs. There was an article in the Denver Post in March about the benefits of dancing and brain health. We got several inquiries from that article. We did several summer demos at which we did heavy prospecting. Our members submitted several prospects and these were the most successful names. We invited prospects to a free chili dinner and introduction to square dancing kick-off night. Of the 30 prospects who showed up, we have 10 couples and 4 singles (24) who should finish classes by Christmas. This program has a 90% retention rate, and we expect them all to become members.

Classes/Cost/Commitment

We started classes in September and are holding them twice a week in order to finish in three months. We feel there is better retention of calls with a shorter span of time between classes. We offered our classes at \$10/Class/Person. However, they could get a 50% discount if they paid up front. This has resulted in a solid commitment to come to every class. The students who elected to pay on a “by class” basis eventually dropped out.

Angels

We have at least a 50% angel to student ratio at each class. Also, some angels and the instructor, Bill Heiny, come 30 minutes early to offer additional instruction for anyone having difficulty.

Jim Langdon would love to share The Rocky Mountain Recruiting Program with all square dance clubs. Please give him a call (970 485 5217, mntndncr@gmail.com) if you would like to know more about it.

The following article is reprinted from the Colorado Round Dance Association newsletter.

Dancing for Your Health Sandi & Dan Finch

Were you part of the National Dance Day celebrations? If you were dancing somewhere Saturday, July 22, 2017, you were. The fourth Saturday in July was recognized by Congressional resolution in 2010 as a day to raise awareness about the benefits of dance to maintain good health and combat obesity. Flash mobs, dancing in the open at The Music Center, grooving on your own—YouTube is witness to the many ways it was celebrated this year.

Time magazine has now told us dancing is good for us. A headline in its March 4, 2016, issue proclaimed: “People who took dance class improved their fitness three times more than non-dancers.” The story reported on research by the American Heart Association which concluded that even if you are up in years and out of shape, you should be dancing. Aimed at Latinos, the study recruited 57 people, all sedentary and aged 65, and assigned them to a program for four months. Some took health education classes, the others took classes in Merengue, Cha Cha And Salsa. The dance group moved better and showed more improvement in their medical conditions than the control group.

NPR (Southern California Public Radio) aired a broadcast May 3, 2016, about a University of Oxford study that showed people who were dancing in sync with others around them (the same moves to the same music) had a higher pain tolerance than those who danced on their own.

What? The study concluded that the brain interprets dancing in sync with others as good for you, an evolutionary result where the brain experiences a sense of reward when doing things with and for other people. Sounds like a good argument for round dancing to me.

Woman’s World magazine, in its August 1, 2016 issue, revived the 2003 research at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City that concluded that frequent dancing can make you smarter. Stimulating the mind by dancing can ward off Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia, as well as reducing stress and increasing a sense of well-being. The study followed 469 people over age 75 for five years as they engaged in sports and did sedentary activity like reading or working crossword puzzles. One of the surprises reported was that golf, swimming, bicycling - pure physical activity - offered no protection against dementia. The only physical activity that did was dancing. In fact, dancing cut the risk of dementia by 76%, more than any other activity.

Why, you might wonder? When brain cells die, and synapses weaken with age, neural connections are lost. The brain will “re-wire” if it needs to. What you needed to golf or bike, you learned years ago. Dancing requires some decision making, learning new steps, listening to your partner, reacting to what you lead, all of which increase the connectivity between brain neurons. The study also noted that whatever you do, do it frequently. Seniors who did crossword puzzles four days a week had a lower risk of dementia than those who did them once a week. When you’re done with that daily puzzle, grab your dancing shoes and get ready to rev up the brain.