

SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Board of Directors Meeting

of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Abbotsford -- April 1, 2017

For those who are unaware, SQUAREUPB.C. is a marketing initiative of the Federation, established in 1991 and chaired by Brian Elmer of West Kelowna, who serves in an appointed position.

Marketing Activity

Selling our Dance Forms as Unique Entities

At this point in time we have square dancing, round dancing and clog dancing as the most active forms of dance in the province, all of which the B.C. Federation embraces constitutionally.

From a promotion and advertising standpoint, it is difficult to market such different forms of dance on the same web page. We've created a page targeting new dancer prospects that's predominantly about square dancing at SquareDanceFun.info.

The intention now is to design similar pages for round and clog dancing. To that end, what we call "parked pages" have been put in place on the internet in readiness for the addition of content specific to those dance forms.

The round dance page will detail the dance form and list all the round dance clubs (only) in the province with contacts. Likewise, the clog dance page will be all about clogging with a list of those clubs and contact information.

The parked pages can be seen at the following links:

RoundDanceFun.info

ClogDanceFun.info

Paid Internet Advertising

SQUAREUPB.C. has conducted paid advertising on the internet, including social media avenues, for several years now. It's gone a long way to build awareness of our recreation but over the last year we've focused more upon recruitment in a very targeted method—by individual club.

The ads are in support of member clubs that conduct new dancer sessions in squares, rounds or clogging. The target group is a designated segment of the general public.

While funding is limited for the huge scope of the endeavour, simple awareness of our recreation over the years has been increased for about 1.5 million British Columbians utilizing Facebook alone.

That's without considering additional advertising results from ads placed on Google AdWords over the period. The ads on the Google browser appeared when people searched "Google" for topics where our dance activity would be relevant.

Since the first paid advertising began on Facebook in August, 2015, upon seeing our ad, about 9,700 of those British Columbians have been influenced to purposely seek more information about our recreation online by "clicking" to learn more.

These numbers come from extensive "analytics" made available to the Federation as a Facebook advertiser.

The Advertising Process

The two campaigns conducted this time around have only utilized Facebook advertising because that social media avenue presents many premium features.

A substantial change in the Fall and Winter efforts was that the ads were plotted according to market segmentation and for each individual club, targeting the city in which they operate. Despite a restricted budget, the results have been notable. Before, we just had one ad blanket the province.

The actual ads presented on Facebook were specific to each dance club's offering and generally ran for one week (called a "flight"). Most involved several photos set to a lively piece of music--some photos were of the instructing callers or cuers. Promotional text relevant to each club's lessons accompanied the visuals.

If an interested person wanted more details, they would "click" on "Learn More" at which point they would be transferred to what's called a "landing page." In actuality, they'd be directed to the specific lesson information relative to a given club but the full page can be viewed from the top at: SquareDanceFun.info

If your club is a member of the B.C. Federation and if you held new dancer sessions in the Fall of 2016 or Winter of 2017 (Jan./Feb.) for which you made us aware, your sessions will have been advertised specific to your club. If Facebook users, the residents of your geographic area within a demographic group most likely to be interested in dancing will have seen your ad until the allotted but limited daily funding ran out. Again, each club had its very own paid advertisement.

Your club's complete results can be made available to you upon request. Over 30 clubs participated in the Fall 2016 campaign resulting in analytics too extensive to reproduce here. Contact: dancinglikethestars@gmail.com.

Facebook's "Snowball Effect"

One of the highly valuable elements about advertising specifically on Facebook has been the social media's inherent interactivity with its users. Upon seeing our ads, users of Facebook have been indicating that they "like" the ad and some even showed that they "love" the ad.

Furthermore, users can "share" the ad with friends and relatives and post comments, resulting in a snowball effect. Often, comments are in the form of questions such as "are singles welcome" and "where is the dance hall--I'm new to the area?" We were sure to send out appropriate replies when comments justified doing so.

One interesting result from the sharing of our ad for a B.C. clogging club was that a woman in Saskatoon expressed how she would like to learn to clog. We certainly weren't running the ad in her city but someone she knew had shared the ad with her via Facebook and that resulted in her comment. Wanting to encourage her, she was sent a reply with contacts for the Prairie Lily Cloggers in Saskatoon who happened to be conducting new clog dancer sessions.

Ad Results Overall

It's notable that, given the number of ad appearances, people responded better to our ads in the Winter campaign involving mostly January start-ups. Facebook analytics report the following for each of the two campaigns launched during this dance season:

Fall 2016 Campaign-

- 101,063 people saw the ad at least once on their mobile or desktop computer screen
- 2,568 people purposely "clicked" on "Learn More" seeking details about the lesson offering

Winter 2017 Campaign-

- 58,894 people saw the ad at least once on their mobile or desktop computer screen
- 2,512 people purposely "clicked" on "Learn More" seeking details about the lesson offering

Totals for both campaigns:

- 159,957 people saw the ad at least once on their mobile or desktop computer screen
- 5,080 people purposely "clicked" on "Learn More" seeking details about the lesson offering

Ad Results for Specific Clubs

Some of the individual club results have been remarkable. In example, the Guys 'n Gals square & round dance club in Langley/Aldergrove achieved a fabulous 8,754 count of people who saw the ad at least once on their mobile or desktop computer screen. Accordingly, 329 people purposely "clicked" on "Learn More" seeking details about the lesson offering.

Likewise, the Rhythm Rounds round dance club in Vernon accomplished 8,283 views of their ad from which 230 people purposely "clicked" on "Learn More" seeking details about the lesson offering. The club had a viable group of newcomers to begin teaching the two-step on January 8.

It would be ideal to have all our clubs survey newcomers and report their findings regarding all the different elements that they felt influenced them to participate. Some of our clubs did take time to report when they noticed that the advertising on Facebook was producing notable results.

The Guys 'n Gals square & round dance club in Aldergrove exclaimed "something's happening here" then detailed that several new dancers showed up for their Sunday afternoon sessions and indicated that the Facebook advertising motivated them. The club concluded "we're all smiles!"

The Got 2 B Cloggin clog dance club's Vernon branch reported very good attendance as they started up a new group in that city in January, citing the Facebook ads as one reason.

In Parksville, the Let's Dance V.I. round dance club reported that the Facebook advertising was responsible for bringing them two "very enthusiastic" couples. They're enjoying themselves so much learning the waltz in round dancing that they've already asked to be registered for the next lessons in two-step.

What's notable is that those new round dancers are not square dancers. They've never danced to cues before. They've come to round dancing as a result of the advertising reaching out to the general public.

In our dance forms of square dancing, round dancing and clogging we have a time-tested, quality product (service) in which we believe. We just have to let people know about them, their benefits and their availability. A fellow named Leo Burnett once said:
 "The greatest thing to be achieved in advertising, in my opinion, is believability and nothing is more believable than the product itself."

Marketing to the Single Dancer

One element regarding the campaign results about which to take note is that many more women expressed interest in learning one of our dance forms. Many stated specifically that they would be attending as a single. This points to the need for our clubs to adapt to receive more single newcomers.

In square dancing, many clubs are now encouraging single women to consider learning the traditional “man’s position” in the square. Even in round dancing, some women will pair up to learn that dance form.

Also, all clubs should learn the concept of a “singles board” and construct one that will serve their needs. It pairs up singles in rotation during a dance to ensure that nobody sits out too long. It can be used on club nights and even during special dances or “party nights” when single guests may visit.

Funding the Campaigns

Again, the funding available limits the ability of the advertising to reach all of the targeted "audience." The campaigns conducted produced a result that only reached between 10 and 30 per cent of persons most likely to be interested in our recreation.

Apart from increasing the marketing budget using Federation coffers, clubs and associations could supplement their club or area’s advertising with additional dollars, possibly fundraising to do so. It would build their ad's effectiveness and reach more people. For instance, if a club wishes to boost their advertising, additional funding directed to the Federation’s treasurer will be applied only to that club’s individual campaign.

Your Federation has been funding SQUAREUPB.C. in the amount of \$3,000 for each campaign or \$6,000 for two. When the Fall campaign involves over 30 clubs, each with their own ad, that breaks down to only about \$100 per club for a one week campaign or about \$14.29 per day.

When Facebook identifies that the daily allotment of funds for a given club is used up, it stops the ad and posts that "the daily amount is spent." That's unfortunate when an ad ceases well before a day's end because there are many more people out there yet to recruit.

The advertising initiative will be addressed at the upcoming Board of Directors Meeting of the Federation on April 1 in Abbotsford. Be sure that your regional delegates are informed on the issue and can vote wisely whether to continue the advertising or to stop it.

Challenges to the Facebook Advertising

The biggest challenge for these campaigns is trying to stretch the allotted budget to cover all applicable cities in B.C. Basically, it's underfunded for such a substantial endeavour. Again, clubs and associations could give their advertising greater impact through additional funding.

There continues to be a lack of up-front co-operation from the regions with regard to furnishing information in advance about new dancer sessions for each of their member clubs. That information is regrettably acquired mostly by research or queries into plans for such sessions. Much time is committed and many e-mails continue to go back and forth.

As the advertising begins for the clubs with the earliest new dancer start-ups, a guess has to be made regarding how many more clubs have yet to announce their new dancer sessions. That makes it very difficult to divvy up the budgeted advertising dollars.

Preferably, the regional Delegates and Alternates need to take ownership of their Federation's paid advertising efforts. Specific individuals should be identified to co-ordinate and furnish new dancer information for their clubs or area association to SQUAREUPB.C.

Federation's Facebook page

Web link:

[Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation](https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation)

The paid advertising on Facebook creates interest in our Facebook page because when people click on one of our Facebook ads, it shows as coming from our Facebook account.

Many people leave comments and some identify that they "like" the page to the degree that they want to follow postings. The number of "likes" currently stands at 378, up from 290 a year ago.

The page is updated to reflect activity in the B.C. dance community. Most postings to our page reflect new dancer sessions or ad campaigns such as the following:

- "Get Active in 2017!" – an article with photos in support of the Winter '17 campaign start-up posted Dec. 31/16 that reached a substantial 674 Facebook users
- "Sample Clog Dancing in Vernon December 18" – an article with photos posted Dec. 12/16 that attracted 194 Facebook users
- "Learn to Round Dance in the Fraser Valley" – an article with a photo accompanied by the Awareness Week proclamation, posted Sept. 13/16 that garnered 122 views by Facebook users.
- "Penticton Peachfest Square Dance Festival 2016 Profiled by Shaw Okanagan Cable TV" – a brief write-up under this heading directed people to a great video feature by SHAW TV about dancing at the August, 2016, Peachfest event. It reached 273 people and the 3 min. 10 sec. video can still be viewed on YouTube at the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZrMa3XUCPw>

Free “Tweets” about New Dancer Sessions/Event Calendar Listings

When time allows during each of the paid campaigns, “tweets” are sent out utilizing the social media outlet known as Twitter. The messages do not cost and are in support and promotion of clubs throughout the province holding new dancer sessions.

Used primarily is our www.Twitter.com/bcfedlive account which is interactive with other users. We also have an account used primary for events calendar-style postings at: www.Twitter.com/bcfeddancenews.

We currently enjoy 72 followers for our Federation’s @bcfedlive account--up from 68 a year ago--and 76 followers for our @bcfeddancenews account--up from 70 a year ago.

It is through the use of “hashtags” within the messages, that they reach beyond the followers into targeted communities. In example, a tweet containing #VictoriaBC within the text will group with all other messages containing that hashtag. The message will be viewed much more broadly by all those seeking information about news and events in Victoria.

Again, Twitter, helps to build awareness of our recreation.

Also in the “free” category, be sure to utilize the placement of community event calendar announcements about your lessons in your local media. Many media outlets are now inviting your submission to be made online, sometimes through online “forms” that you fill out.

Simply search the web to locate your media pages and look for tabs such as “submit an event.” Remember to search under the names for your radio, tv, community cable tv, newspaper and online news & information services. Radio stations are known to search event listings submitted online, on their own web page, to select ones for broadcast.

Here’s an example of an online listing:

https://www.kelownanow.com/events/events/Courses_Workshops/16/01/13/25294/Intro_to_West_Coast_Square_Dancing

Festival 2017 in Surrey to Benefit from Paid Advertising

The estimate of the number of B.C. clubs conducting new dancer sessions was a little higher than actual. It left some funding uncommitted from the two recent campaigns.

By agreement with the Federation’s 2nd Vice President, overseer of SQUAREUPB.C., about \$600 in funding will be re-directed to attracting spectators to our biennial Festival this

Summer. Facebook advertising will be utilized thanks in part to its ability to target the geographic area near the Festival event.

Festival organizers are welcoming spectators and there will be a \$2 fee for admission to all three days of the event. Attracting both local residents and visitors to the area, there is the potential to interest them in Fall new dancer sessions.

Advertising our Festivals as they approach then get underway is not new. We have done some major paid advertising to promote spectator attendance at past Festivals. In 1999 at Salmon Arm we had frequent remote radio reports from the Festival site on local commercial radio. At the very least, radio listeners became aware of and better informed about our activity.

At Festival 2005 in Abbotsford, country radio was utilized and the radio station had a reporter on the Festival site complete with the radio station's bright promotional canopy. That campaign even included paid radio ads that were specially-produced to tease the coming of the dancers.

***Investment in Training for SQUAREUPB.C.
Addresses Latest Marketing Methodology
& Technological Advances***

The constantly changing environment within our information age requires continuous upgrading, especially relative to marketing.

An opportunity to undertake such upgrading in a unique way through online videos has been secured. An investment in educational videos via the LinkedIn social media service has been made to improve marketing tools available to SQUAREUPB.C.

Furthermore, new information about marketing methodology via the internet and technological advances can be shared with our member clubs and their associations. About \$300 has been paid for the service with the support of the Federation's 2nd Vice President, overseer of SQUAREUPB.C.

Already, one of the videos about designing an effective web page promises to enhance a "web page design workshop" being presented in Vernon on April 29. Sponsored by the Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association (Region 3), the workshop is fully booked by interested volunteers.

***Create a Promotional Page Specific to New Dancers
on your Club Web Site***

Your club promotion/publicity/advertising for new dancers will benefit greatly from having a dedicated page for them on your club's web site. It can answer frequently asked questions and really "sell" your lesson offering. You can direct newcomers to it in your literature and when you speak to them. If you wish, the B.C. Federation's webmaster can even assign an "alias" web address that's more promotional, such as the Federation's SquareDanceFun.info.

An example of such a dedicated page can be found with the Westsyde Squares square and round dance club in the Central Okanagan. New dancer prospects are directed to the following alias address:

WestsideDanceFun.info

whereas the actual page to which it forwards is:

<http://www.westsyde.squaredance.bc.ca/newdancers.html>

Proclamation

Thanks in recent years to the dedication of Federation President and Chairman, Ken Crisp, we've enjoyed access to a B.C. Government "Proclamation of Square and Round Dance Awareness Week" (3rd week in Sept.). It's evident that this publicity tool is under-utilized by our membership.

In the Fall of 2016, CBC radio in Vancouver mistakenly associated our proclamation with an old-time square dance event held in the city and gave them some of the credit.

Plan now for your club or association to conduct something in celebration of the week, whether it's a dance display, press release or photo opportunity for the media. Awareness Week in 2017 should be September 17 to 23.

One of the best media responses seen in recent years was with regard to the Westsyde Squares of the Central Okanagan. The submission of a press release to all their area media outlets resulted in exposure on Kelowna's news and information web site "Kelowna Now dot Com." The article is still posted online and available for viewing at:

https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/West_Kelowna/15/09/12/Square_and_Round_Dance_Awareness_Week_Kicks_Off_in_West_Kelowna/

Still one of the best responses to a press release by commercial tv news was that experienced in January, 2016, when Global Okanagan Television sent a camera to explore a free lesson in the "New, West Coast Square Dance Program" at West Kelowna. Here's a link to the television station's web page where the 1 minute, 53 second report can be reviewed (be sure to read the article below the video window):

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2452995/square-dancing-moves-to-a-new-rhythm-younger-voice/>

The upcoming 2017 Proclamation will be brought to the attention of Federation members this Summer. Once available, it will also be displayed on the government web site where you'll have to select it at:

<http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/2017procs>

See the 2016 Proclamation from last year at:

<http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/SqRndDanceAwrWk2016>

Learn to Market Our Recreation

A marketing approach requires that attention be given to designing an attractive product or service that fulfills the needs and wants of a defined population demographic; presenting it at a desirable place or location (and date/time) for a representative value-based but competitive price before launching the promotion or advertising. (Don't let your price imply "cheap" and, therefore, of little value.) Promotion alone is not enough. Is your dance program "saleable," especially with regard to the length of the learning period?

It starts with understanding your "customer"—in our case, the new dancer prospect.

Your Federation has posted on our Dance Connection web site a transcript from the marketing seminar presentation at our 2005 Festival in Abbotsford. It details the professional research by Callerlab, completed in 2000, regarding the decreasing participation in our recreation. Head researcher Jim Hensley presented valuable information that helps guide us into the 21st Century. See it online at:

<http://www.squaredance.bc.ca/jim-hensley-marketing-seminar>

One of the strongest recommendations from that research was that we re-position square dancing (in the marketplace) as a fitness activity.

Almost intuitively, several years ago the B.C. Federation, through SQUAREUPB.C., paid for a professional fitness survey relative to the value of square and round dancing as exercise and for mental and social stimulation.

The survey was conducted in the Central Okanagan by strength & conditioning coach Chris Collins (MSc - physiology) of Okanagan Peak Performance. He presented some very positive findings.

It's the only definitive, professional analysis that we've commissioned on the health and fitness benefits of our activity.

Your Federation is undertaking to retrieve that survey to be posted on The Dance Connection. It will be useful to clubs, associations and the Federation as a convincing argument in positioning square dancing as a fitness activity.

***Free Promotional Literature Available
as a B.C. Federation Member***

The Federation now has two brochures available to its membership for promotion of square and round dancing. Each is a double-sided tri-fold.

One was designed a few years ago and has a medically-oriented theme, entitled “Your Prescription for Better Health.” It presents the many holistic health benefits of our recreation and is intended to target the health-conscious Baby Boomer generation. It can be found as a printable PDF-format document at: <http://betterhealth.squaredance.bc.ca>

More recently, the Federation’s Revitalization Committee has designed and produced a more generic tri-fold brochure and a rack card to help in your recruitment. Entitled “Today’s Square Dancing, You’ll Be Surprised,” a space on each is provided preferably to apply labels with your local contact information.

The “rack card” is intended to be placed in promotional racks such as those seen in doctors’ offices. In the same theme as the brochure, it’s on a stiffer card stock, two-sided in colour.

Quantities of this material are available for free through Dennis Sutton of Sidney, B.C. Samples are available. Contact him at: dsutton9@telus.net or phone: 250-652-9271.

Furthermore, our Dance Connection web site provides two different posters that tie into the theme of the brochure and rack card. You can edit the lower portion to reflect your club lessons and contact information then print it. One version is entitled “Group Hug – You’ll be Surprised” and it matches the tri-fold brochure to create a “media synergy.” The other identifies “Today’s Square Dancing” and pictures leg silhouettes.” Web link to the posters: <http://www.squaredance.bc.ca/posters-2>

SQUAREUPB.C. Services & Assistance

Do remember that a couple of our most basic communications tools are the toll-free INFOLINE at 1-800-335-9433 and e-mail through info@squaredance.bc.ca The province-wide phone number was re-directed in mid-July of 2015 to the home of volunteer receptionists Brian Elmer and his wife, Rosalyn Garnett in West Kelowna.

Be sure to include the INFOLINE number in distribution of your event notices and lesson literature. Particularly do so when several different clubs are involved in a promotion and no single telephone number will serve as an information centre without some inquiries incurring toll-charges.

Don't forget to keep your Federation's INFOLINE volunteer receptionists up-to-date regarding your events. E-mail information to: dancinglikethestars@gmail.com.

See the Federation's fresh, revitalized web page at: SquareDance.bc.ca.

In your promotions, remember to tell of the 10-minute promotional video, aimed at Baby Boomers, called "Dancing Keeps You Young." Send people to it online at:

DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca OR DancingKeepsYouYoung.com

At the time of this report, our video has been viewed no less than 11,508 times, up from 9,965 times one year ago.

Also consider showing in your advertising/promotion/publicity our promotional "landing page," particularly SquareDanceFun.info detailing the many benefits of square dancing and listing square, round and clog dance clubs throughout the province that hold new dancer sessions.

Many travelling dancers are turning to WheresTheDance.com to find dance events. In separate sections, it will list both your club's regular lesson night and your special dance events for which you've probably generated posters. Consider submitting your events to this US-based free online listings service. Contact them by e-mail at: info@wheresthedance.com.

Remember our social media pages and get involved at:

[Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation](https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation)

and

[Twitter.com/BCFedDanceNews](https://twitter.com/BCFedDanceNews) and [Twitter.com/BCFedLive](https://twitter.com/BCFedLive)

SQUAREUPB.C. is available to assist regional promotion committees or club promotion/marketing persons.

Contact Brian Elmer by phone at 250-768-2694 (toll-free: 1-800-335-9433) or e-mail brian@squaredance.bc.ca

If you have marketing training or are just interested in professional-style marketing of our great recreation, your volunteer assistance will be very welcome. SQUAREUPB.C. was intended to be a team effort.

This concludes the SQUAREUPB.C. report to the Board of Directors Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Elmer, West Kelowna
SQUAREUPB.C. Chairperson