

SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Board of Directors Meeting

of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Abbotsford -- March 28, 2015

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

Throughout the year, various B.C. Federation web pages are maintained and updated with content. See those web pages at:

www.Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation

and

www.Twitter.com/BCFedDanceNews and www.Twitter.com/BCFedLive

and

www.Blog.squaredance.bc.ca

and frequent updates are made to the promotional “landing page” at:

www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca

as well as the one for youth at:

www.KidsLoveToDance.squaredance.bc.ca

Marketing activity during the 2014/2015 dance season has included two major social media and internet advertising campaigns, one in the Fall and another in January.

The Fall campaigns ran from early September to early October. Their start was once again affected by late new dancer session details from several regions.

It is not proving adequate simply for the Delegates to be told at the B.O.D. meeting of the plan for paid advertising and the need for details about new dancer sessions for each city in their region. Whereas such detail was requested by early July, appeals for the information were still taking place at the A.G.M. in Penticton, a month later.

It's appreciated that Nick Turner of Williams Lake has volunteered to help acquire and assemble the information for future posting on the campaign pages.

The purchased Fall internet advertising utilized two different systems: Google AdWords and Facebook. The January campaign only utilized Facebook which showed greater effectiveness in the previous campaign.

Where known, new round dancer sessions were included on the “landing page” (where people are sent when they click on the ad) along with the square dance details under the appropriate city. See the adult landing page at: www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca

Fall 2014 campaign:

Google AdWords

On Google AdWords, our ad appeared on the computer screens of anybody searching for information based upon “keywords” that they entered into their search.

Keywords under which people searched, resulting in them seeing & clicking on our ad produced the following:

114 clicks searching for “fun”

108 clicks searching for “fitness”

74 clicks searching for “friendship”

11 clicks searching for “dance Vancouver”

8 clicks searching for “dance classes”

8 clicks searching for “clubs dancing”

Others were for 5 or less clicks on various keywords such as “dancing studios, social activities, new dancers.”

The Adwords advertising “creative” selected, as it is known in advertising, was “text-based” only with no photos, so the title and text copy had to stand alone to attract attention. Our ad read as follows:

Fun, Fitness, Friendship
www.takemedancing.squaredance.bc.ca
 Discover a great experience
 Try today’s style of square dancing

Results:

192,314 impressions (no. of times the ad is shown on a search result page)

469 clicks to our landing page

Facebook

On Facebook, while targeting the Boomers and some Generation X’s, an age 45 to 64 range, our Fall 2014 ad appeared not only in the standard ad space in the right hand column of Facebook pages but also within the information timelines as people viewed their pages, called the “news feed.”

The following is roughly how the creative appeared:



**British Columbia Square
and Round Dance Federation**

Sponsored



Like Page

Fun, Fitness, Friendship. Discover a great experience!
Try today's style of square dancing



Take Me Dancing This Fall

Discover a holistic dance form that improves your physical & mental well-being and offers an active social life. Today's style of square dancing has evolved to feature modern music and casual attire.

[Learn More](#)

TAKEMEDANCING.SQUAREDANCE.BC.CA

Results:

The ad appeared before 39,123 persons (described as being “served”). That figure was the ad’s “reach.”

1,096 clicks to our landing page were gained

Furthermore, Facebook users showed curiosity about our Federation page and many clicked on the “Like” button to express approval after reading its contents.

Under a “notifications” tab and for our use only, our account listed all such individuals with active links available to their personal Facebook pages. It was an opportunity to create our own list of persons who’ve shown interest and identify the cities in which they live. Some did not state their location, so an educated guess was made based upon the information on their pages. It might be an idea in the future to message those persons with a “thanks for liking our page” and an invitation to our dance sessions. Additional volunteer help would be needed to do that.

Dialogue Relative to Comments from Fall Facebook Campaign

Furthermore, several people commented favourably about our page and some shared it with friends. Comments were followed-up with a response.

For instance, a “Tracey J.” in Prince George wrote these words for a Facebook friend (“Danette T.”) to see as well: “We could do this!!!”

Our response told her that new dancer sessions were getting underway in her city and details were passed along on lessons being presented by the Northern Twisters.

In another case, “Debra K.” of Chilliwack wrote:

“A few years ago we went to a church which did square dancing and we had loads of fun! Intriguing!”

She was told of the Chilliwack Rhythm Reelers sessions starting September 18th.

Winter Marketing Activity

Funds were budgeted in such a way as to plan for a Winter 2015 campaign in January, utilizing about half of the \$5,000 originally granted. Again, the January campaign only utilized Facebook which showed greater effectiveness in the previous campaign.

In promotion of our youth dance clubs, for which only the one in the Central Okanagan was offering lessons, separate advertising ran only on Facebook. It largely targeted parents, aged 28-50. There is a separate promotional landing page for youth at:

www.KidsLoveToDance.squaredance.bc.ca

January 2015 campaign results on Facebook:

Adults--

Targeted Adults aged 40+

The ad appeared before 117,501 persons--the ad’s “reach.”

1,977 clicks to our landing page were achieved

Note that the “creative” – the physical look of the advertising for the adult Facebook campaign was similar to that used in the Fall except a photo of a younger couple was used. Research says that the Boomer sees him or herself as up to 20 years younger than they are. They might relate better to the younger image.

Youth--

Targeted Parents aged 28 to 50 yrs.

The ad appeared before 5,383 persons--the ad’s “reach.”

168 clicks to our landing page were achieved

Dialogue Relative to Comments from January Facebook Campaign

Similar to the Fall campaign, various “likes” of our Facebook page and specific comments were logged by people and dialogue was undertaken with those individuals.

For instance, a Fatica M. of the Vancouver area wrote “I like to dance.” Our response to her suggested three new dancer session opportunities in the Lower Mainland, specifically brand new sessions at Champlain Heights and Thunderbird Community Centres and the sessions at Burnaby Lake Pavilion presented by the Swinging Singles.

Alexi C. of Coquitlam also commented “I like to dance” and was directed to sessions by the Swinging Singles or Guys ‘N’ Gals or Town ‘N’ Country Swingers.

A Brenda N. of Surrey commented “Hello, this Swinging Singles should be in Surrey, Cloverdale, Langley area.” She was suggesting that there should be a singles square dance club outside of Burnaby.

Return communication thanked her for the suggestion and recommended that she attend new dancers at the Guys “N” Gals on Sunday afternoons in Aldergrove.

Another comment came from a Kelly T. in Burnaby who wrote:

“I have some square dance dresses of my grandmother’s. I was wondering if you would be able to tell me where I could sell them.”

She was provided with suggestions about advertising the dancewear and the opportunity wasn’t missed to recommend that she discover today’s style of square dancing on Tuesday nights at the Swinging Singles in Burnaby.

Observations & Challenges about the Internet & Social Media Advertising

Something particularly notable from the January Facebook campaign was the considerable interest in our recreation by the ethnic community. Views of various personal profiles revealed interest, for instance, by Asian, Phillipino, Slavic, Arabic and East Indian communities. The last names of individuals who “liked” our Facebook page included: Fong, Mendes, Bhullar, Shidfar and Singh.

Of course, we welcome such interest and wonder if it is, at least in part, because in their cultures the persons have no pre-conceptions of our activity--possibly no previous encounters--making it seem like something new.

Among the challenges for these campaigns are the fact that our activity, looking back upon the research, has an image problem. That can result in disinterest in our advertisements after a person reads the words “square dancing.” (We could benefit in B.C. and elsewhere from some major media re-branding.)

Another difficulty is the fact that in most cities the new dancer sessions only take place at one location, only on one of seven days in the week and usually only in the evening. The availability is poor for busy people.

In larger centres where retail stores are open evenings Wednesday through Friday (i.e.: malls), any of those workers on the night shift cannot consider dance lessons but might do so on Monday and Tuesday nights when they don't work. In smaller centres, especially small towns where one industry is the main employer, new dancer sessions should be scheduled to maximize participation—certainly not taking place during a shift change, if that is the case.

Furthermore, a person can click on our ad, read about new dancer sessions in his or her community then find out that the number of lessons to learn full Mainstream is very high (Callerlab recommends 29 two-hour sessions for a total of 58 hours). If they are time-pressed persons and reject our lessons, the advertising can't be blamed for them finding a dance instruction service in which they can't participate because of its demanding commitment.

Also, our full Mainstream program lesson periods prohibit frequent start-ups through the year. A new dancer prospect generally has only a short window of opportunity, often a few weeks in September, to join-in or otherwise has to wait a year for the next lessons.

Another campaign challenge is the dollar investment. This isn't a local or regional campaign but one of provincial scale, having to reach throughout B.C. to many of the 4.4 million people (2011 census). In order to keep each of two separate campaigns running for several weeks, a "daily spend" has to be set. Once a dollar amount set for a given day is reached, the ads stop appearing despite probable interest by many more people over the rest of the day.

***Federation's Facebook Page "Likes" Are Growing
& Twitter Pages Being "Followed, Re-tweeted and Favourited"***

Another benefit from the internet advertising is that our Federation's Facebook page has seen a great increase in "likes"--now at 234. A year ago at this time we only had 150.

WhatIs.com describes "likes" as:

The Facebook "Like" button is a feature that allows users to show their support for specific comments, pictures, wall posts, statuses or fan pages... the "like" button allows users to show their appreciation for content without having to make a written comment.

Our Twitter pages have 62 people following @BCFedDanceNews (45 last year) and 45 are following @BCFedLive (19 last year). @BCFedDanceNews serves primarily as a bulletin board whereas @BCFedLive is interactive with other Twitter accounts. We are engaging people.

Furthermore, some Twitter users are finding our information of such value that they'll re-tweet it, which means they re-distribute it under their account. Also, some will "favourite" our postings, meaning that they particularly like the message.

Twitter – An Avenue to Building Awareness & Promoting New Dancer Sessions

At no cost, occasional promotional messages are posted on Twitter throughout the year but particularly at the time of new dancer sessions. Utilized most is our @BCFedLive Twitter account, targeting specific cities through the use of "hashtags" (such as #Surrey, #Abbotsford)

In January, many tweets went out in promotion of new dancer sessions from the Lower Mainland up to Powell River.

The initiative to re-introduce square dancing in the Vancouver area through the Champlain Heights and Thunderbird Community Centres was reason to issue many tweets utilizing geographic hashtags. It was pleasing to see some of the messages re-tweeted by persons, businesses and organizations as endorsements of the sessions.

Press or Media Releases Can Tell Our Message Broadly

In support of the two new dancer sessions in January at Vancouver, a media release was written and distributed to the media.

It's timely to tell of success through a release sent to media in the Central Okanagan in March. It told of the Spring Fling dance event and of a Callers' Workshop the next day at the same location. While a Global Okanagan tv news crew couldn't attend on the day of the dance, they were able to visit the callers' workshop and did a report on teaching square dance callers. The finished report aired on the 5:30 and 11 p.m. Sunday newscast.

Note that the newscast is available online through the tv station's web site:

The complete online version of the newscast of March 15 is 17 minutes, 10 seconds. The exact length of the dance story is 1 minute, 23 seconds. To access only the dance story at the link below, move the horizontal slider to the 11 minute 15 second point in the newscast.

You'll find the 5:30 pm newscast on the station's web site at the following link:

<http://globalnews.ca/video/1885680/global-okanagan-at-530-mar-15-top-stories-2>

Federation's E-mail Information Contact Proves Useful

We not only have the toll-free INFOLINE (1-800-335-9433) to connect with the B.C.

Federation but there's also the e-mail address: info@squaredance.bc.ca. That address links to webmaster Phil Douziech and he forwards all inquiries to the appropriate destination.

An inquiry was received in early March from a woman in Vernon named Amanda who was seeking a caller for her church's May event. They want to square dance!

It wasn't long before our communication avenues were pressed into service and she was linked up with a caller to entertain at their event.

Once they get a taste of the fun, perhaps the caller can convince many of them to attend new square dancer sessions in Vernon in the Fall.

Over 8,000 Views for our YouTube Promotional Video

Our promotional video on YouTube called "Dancing Keeps You Young" has been viewed 8,016 times at last check. Last year at this time it had only 6,000 views (www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca). That is, at least in part, thanks to it being featured on the promotional landing page to which people are sent when they click on one of our advertisements.

Note that the opportunity arose in recent months to acquire a similar address (u.r.l.) for the video, that being www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.com. It was seen as a sensible acquisition because people are quite familiar with the dot com extension as opposed to dot ca. In order to avoid any confusion and because the promotional video is an excellent marketing tool, the Federation Executive purchased the additional domain address. Either address now links to the same video. The annual cost is under \$20.

"Selling" Square Dancing More Effectively Needs Attention to Marketing – Not Just Promotion

An advertising industry company known as "Boundless Marketing" says it well:

"Consumer wants and needs should drive marketing decisions and no strategy should be pursued until it passes the test of consumer research."

Source: <https://www.boundless.com/marketing/textbooks/boundless-marketing-textbook/an-overview-of-marketing-1/introduction-to-marketing-18/customers-wants-and-needs-107-4453/>

Our dance community leaders must get to know our new customer, particularly what they want in the form of a leisure time recreation, before we can "sell" new dancer sessions to them.

There is reason for continued concern about the tendency for the dance community to concentrate on "promotion" as the sole solution to attracting new dancers. We were warned about that by professional researcher, Jim Hensley, who stressed that we must first make the necessary changes to our dance instruction offering.

A business, even one like ours that's task-oriented instead of profit-oriented, has to have a service (or product) that people need. What subsequent generations need from us has been

made crystal clear: shorter learning periods, sooner dancing in clubs and comfortable, casual attire. Furthermore, they'd like at least a couple of opportunities during the year to take new dancer sessions, not just one brief window of time every fall.

Also, we need to re-think our pricing because the next generation relates low fees to a low quality experience. They are willing to pay for a good quality experience and we can command better rates because ours is a "great" experience!

Additionally, our dance service needs to be presented in a pleasant environment, one in which the new dancer feels comfortable. Evaluate your lesson-place and make changes if necessary.

If our dance offering meets the consumer's wants and needs, then we have a "saleable" service. The final element of promotion won't be a "hard sell" because if the other elements are in place, people will be seeking what you're offering.

Kudos to Dance Community Publicity Efforts

Clubs that planned an event or got some press through Square and Round Dance Awareness Week in September deserve congratulations. It was nice once again to have a Proclamation from the B.C. Government.

Some notable efforts in seeking media attention include the following:

The Ocean Waves of the Comox Valley accomplished a fabulous health-centered write-up in the Comox Valley Echo newspaper. The article was titled: "Square dancing makes you smarter and healthier." See:

<http://www.comoxvalleyecho.com/news/lifestyles/square-dancing-makes-you-smarter-and-healthier-1.1338410>

The Penticton Squares achieved a photo and good write-up in one of the local papers. See the article online at:

<http://www.pentictonwesternnews.com/entertainment/277649611.html>

The Westsyde Squares of West Kelowna gained Square & Round Dance Week attention through the online news service "Kelowna Now." See:

http://www.kelownanow.com/news/news/Lifestyle/14/09/19/Westsyde_Square_Encourage_New_Dancers_to_Join

The great effort by Mary Anne Turner in Williams Lake to maintain an informative Facebook page for Williams Lake Square Dancers deserves acknowledgement. See the following and especially look for the snowshoe square dancers video from February 11:

<https://www.facebook.com/williamslakesquaredancers>

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

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: www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca OR www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.com

Also consider showing in your advertising/promotion/publicity our promotional “landing pages,” particularly www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca, detailing the many benefits of square dancing.

Don’t forget that the Federation developed a tri-fold, double-sided brochure that presents the many holistic health benefits of our recreation. It can be downloaded and printed from the following web address:

www.BetterHealth.squaredance.bc.ca

Many traveling dancers are turning to www.WheresTheDance.com to find dance events. Consider submitting your dance events to this free listings service.

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

Such assistance was given in early February when an extensive workshop about marketing took place in Okanagan Falls with volunteers in the OSRDA’s Communications & Marketing Committee. Explored were social media promotion avenues; characteristics of the various generations as identified by demographers; age and community composition statistics for the South Okanagan from Statistics Canada information and much more.

Contact Brian Elmer by phone at 250-768-2694 or e-mail brian@squaredance.bc.ca

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

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