

SQUAREUPB.C. Report

**to the Annual General Meeting of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation
via ONLINE Video Conference – April 25, 2021**

Note that this report contains active internet links that should be “clickable” as long as the document is viewed in electronic form (digital)

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 volunteer position.

The core principle in marketing is that you develop a product or service that your target group either needs or wants. SQUAREUPB.C.'s goal to maintain a marketing approach requires that attention be given to first designing an attractive product or service that fulfills the needs and wants of a defined population demographic. Then we can present it at a desirable place or location for a competitive price before launching the publicity, promotion and paid advertising.

In our dance forms of square dancing, round dancing, clogging and contra dancing, we have a time-tested, quality product (service) in which we firmly believe. It remains important, though, that we adapt each dance form to meet those needs and wants for people in the 21st Century. After such adaptation, we have to let people know about the dance forms, their benefits and their availability.

Index of Key Content

- ***Prospect of a Substantial Post Pandemic Interest***
- ***The Slogan “Socially Reconnect” (page 2)***
- ***“It's not just restarting, it's rebuilding...” (page 3)***
- ***Possible (Free) Publicity/Promotion Strategy (page 3)***
- ***Possible Paid Advertising Strategy (page 4)***
- ***Educational/Instructional Sessions via Zoom (page 4)***
- ***The B.C. Federation's Toll-free Dance INFOLINE as a Promotional Tool (page 6)***
- ***The Year in Review (page 6)***
- ***Contemplating Revision to the Name “Square & Round Dance Awareness Week” (page 7)***
- ***Marketing Tools (page 7)***
- ***Marketing Assistance Available & Consider Joining the SQUAREUPB.C. Team (p. 8)***
- ***Supplemental information...***
 - ***Results from Winter 2020 paid Facebook advertising (page 8)***
 - ***Daily 2020 Awareness Week Facebook posts with links (page 9)***

The Prospect of a Substantial Post Pandemic Interest in our Social Recreation

We're in new territory. This could be the time for our dance forms to enjoy great appeal.

The pandemic has imposed safety protocols that have included social isolation. Once it is safe to congregate again, we must be poised to offer our various dance forms wherein people can socially reconnect. That social element also applies to the dance forms of round dancing, clogging and contra dancing.

Not only do our dance forms allow for personal interaction where you can smile and laugh as you look into the eyes of a fellow dancer but there's much more. We're about active living and great fun and we offer a generally economical activity. Due to layoffs and the loss of jobs, there will be many, many "working people" who won't have the discretionary dollars to participate in the more expensive recreations.

Furthermore, the period of coronavirus isolation has forced families to renew their social interaction within their "bubble." People have re-examined that interaction and have given greater value to their personal relationships. We might find notable interest in our activity by young adults, moms, dads and their kids in selecting something that they can do together--perhaps grandparents too.

The Slogan "Socially Reconnect"

The phrase "socially reconnect" probably has the best chance of grabbing the attention and the hearts of those socially starved during the pandemic.

We can start soon to build awareness of the dance fun and social interaction ahead.

Regarding the "when" about launching new dancer sessions; one speculation is that the time period for square dance lesson start-ups might be early 2022. On the Covid-19 vaccination front alone, we're all supposed to get a second vaccination when many still haven't had their first yet.

Also, in the recent Zoom marketing presentation by Callerlab leader Mike Hogan of Nebraska, he suggested that we should allow for a 3 month spread between the time we get the "green light" to congregate once again before we start dance lessons. It's true that the public will be somewhat wary of close contact and touching hands after observing pandemic precautions.

Perhaps we should establish a "Plan A," "Plan B" and perhaps even a "Plan C."

Relative to square dancing, Callerlab has developed a new "destination" program called "Social Square Dancing," consisting of 50 calls to be taught over 12 lessons.

The following images are prototypes for the kind of post-pandemic promotional messages that we can consider:



“It's not just restarting, it's rebuilding...”

“...We'd better start making plans to rebuild the whole activity” writes Callerlab caller coach Daryl Clendenin of Portland, Oregon, about square dancing. He continued “The history of the dance... shows that the real ‘golden years’ of square dancing immediately followed World War II... Social functions took a back seat. At the end of the war, things began to reopen. It was a time of rebuilding our social communities. It was a time for whooping, hollering and dancing. Square dancing was perfect.”

Daryl contemplates: “I think that if we are to ever revive our activity, we'll need to consider some changes to our programs. When I refer to programs, that covers a great amount of things. Not just choreography but classes, advertising, dance programs--including breaks, rounds, workshopping and the list goes on.”

In British Columbia we have much planning to do in order to launch new dancer lessons after the pandemic.

Your B.C. Federation and its SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative are ready to help.

Possible (Free) Publicity/Promotion Strategy

Much can be done to inform the public now of our upcoming dance lesson offerings post-pandemic. Using conventional media and social media we can start by reaching out to the public with general awareness messages even before it's safe to congregate again.

We can issue press releases to media outlets announcing how we're poised to present social reconnection solutions after the pandemic.

Consideration will have to be given to the scope of coverage each media service offers. At the B.C. Federation level, for instance, with news of the broad plan to socially reconnect British Columbians we can contact Global B.C., CBC British Columbia and CTV British Columbia television outlets. Also, CBC British Columbia radio has the capacity to cover the province. Vancouver's large newspapers like The Sun and The Province generally include interior distribution.

Additional press releases focusing upon dance clubs in various regions can be issued to media services such as the regional television operations at Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Okanagan Valley, Thompson-Shuswap and the Cariboo.

Not to be forgotten are commercial radio stations that tend to focus upon the city in which they're located. Also, community newspapers are a very important local avenue to get dance information into communities. Furthermore, online news and information services generally serve a specific community or region (examples in the Okanagan Valley: www.castanet.net, www.kelownanow.com, www.infotel.ca/kelowna).

We can maximize the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, especially using geographic “hashtags” on Twitter.

One particular avenue on Facebook is to access community Facebook pages.

That's just a sampling of what could be done in teamwork fashion.

Possible Paid Advertising Strategy

The SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative has had funding allotted over the years to purchase very targeted paid social media advertising. Originally that funding was split between “Google AdWords” and “Facebook” but the latter proved to be more cost-effective.

It’s of interest once again to appeal for such funding to utilize Facebook except, given the great post-pandemic opportunity to really “sell” our lesson offering, it should be substantial. There are many reasons to invest in the medium.

The Facebook platform is a powerful advertising tool by the fact that it’s digital. It can target your most-desired persons through careful filtering right down to people’s likes and dislikes as well as their geographic location. We’ve been running individual ads for each member club conducting new dancer sessions. Facebook users who become interested by an ad can “click” to be transported to specific lesson information for the dance club in question.

Furthermore, Facebook furnishes advertisers with “analytics” from which you can assess effectiveness. Facebook users can “like, love, comment, share” an article or “post.” Notable is that a club representative can monitor comments and actually reply, possibly thanking the person for commenting and inquiring if they have any questions.

The system will track each time your ad appears on a computer screen and, especially, track every time a person “clicks” on “Learn More,” seeking additional information about your lessons. That’s similar to having a person take a printed pamphlet from you and actually reading it.

The rest is up to the details of the lesson offering:

- does it serve the person’s needs and wants?
- at a geographic location and in a building desirable to the person?
- on a convenient day of the week?
- at an agreeable hour? (consider working people and families)
- does the price reflect value and quality or is it so low it implies a worthlessness?

Our past Facebook advertising has largely had to serve two purposes at once: build awareness of a dance form available locally and invite new dancer prospects to a club’s lesson offering. Now, remember that we’re in uncharted territory regarding post-pandemic lesson promotion. Our message of social reconnection has the potential to grab the public’s attention in a big way by the fact that social interaction is what they’ve missed during the pandemic.

Educational/Instructional Sessions via Zoom

Several focused Zoom sessions have taken place since January, 2021. Each took advantage of the Zoom platform wherein participants could show visual materials like graphics and photos as well as see and talk to one another; great for the question & answer portion. They’ve been most valuable and have been posted in full on the B.C. Federation’s YouTube channel. See the list with links below.

Of particular note are a couple of early Zoom sessions over March 18 & 21 featuring Callerlab leader and marketing executive Mike Hogan of Nebraska. He kindly presented two largely similar sessions on the topic of marketing.

In brief, Mike taught us that what you're selling must meet the needs and wants of your target population. For instance, 50-somethings won't want to take lessons in a seniors centre because they don't see themselves as "seniors." Also, working people—especially those with very early workplace start times—will not attend any weeknight lessons that run too late.

Mike presented some excellent graphics or "slides," one of which was the "marketing funnel" that showed building "awareness" of your dance form at the very top. That has to precede everything, well in advance of actual lesson promotion. We can start building awareness soon by utilizing conventional media and social media.

Also, he introduced "The 4 P's," being the marketing process of Product (ours is a dance lesson Service), Place, Price and, after those, Promotion.

The following is a list of "clickable links" to each of the early 2021 Zoom sessions with some yet to be posted:

Caller-teacher perspectives with multiple presenters – all January 24:

Daryl Clendenin – Part 1 on square dancing's history and post-pandemic thinking
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obqd8xD_eps

Daryl Clendenin – Part 2 on square dancing's history and post-pandemic thinking
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj6UVFhgvY&t=21s>

Gord Ruedig (Powell River) on the West Coast Square Dance Program
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXVlyNHu9A8&t=42s>

Brent Mawdsley on Social Square Dancing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yES00gUiYFY&t=20s>

Ray Brendzy – About Callerlab
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaPnlQelqVw>

Brian Elmer on Post Pandemic Marketing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCR005nqgWc&t=582s>

Marketing workshop with Mike Hogan - March 18
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yES00gUiYFY>

Additional marketing workshop with Mike Hogan - March 21
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP10L9xZYIE>

The public image of our dance forms – Part 1 - March 25
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cm-gaS3JcaQ>

The public image of our dance forms – Part 2 - March 25
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=235jArisMz8>

Use of Social Media in dance promotion – April 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOYUN_eV9eY&t=921s

Teamwork in our dance forms and in our need to work together – Part 1 – April 8
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNjJq85F8qU>

Teamwork in our dance forms and in our need to work together – Part 2 – April 8
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKRIZMGF8ws>

Writing Press Releases – April 15
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujmu082nhFo>

The total selection of videos on the Federation’s YouTube channel can be found at:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK7iAGys3NKCbC8YNV1svPQ/videos>

The B.C. Federation’s Toll-free Dance INFOLINE as a Promotional Tool

(excerpted from a separate report on the INFOLINE)

Our B.C. Federation member clubs and associations are encouraged to furnish the Toll-free Dance INFOLINE contact number (1-800-335-9433) in their upcoming post-pandemic lesson promotions.

While local contact information in your publicity, promotion and paid advertising is important, it’s not always practical in situations where that promotion is broad, such as reaching into several cities or a large region of the province. The one INFOLINE number can better serve the purpose.

Provided that clubs pass along dance lesson details to the INFOLINE receptionists (brian@squaredance.bc.ca), it can serve as a central information source when it’s not feasible to list many different contacts.

It’s anticipated that post-pandemic interest in our ideal social recreation by the socially-starved public will be substantial. The Toll-free Dance INFOLINE can serve as a “first contact” for those seeking to socially reconnect on the dance floor.

The Year in Review

Reflecting upon the efforts by your SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative since early 2020, here’s a point form summary:

- A Winter 2020 paid Facebook advertising campaign launched in January and February and was largely completed. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted dance lessons and all had to be terminated. For more details on the Winter 2020 results, complete with a link to an actual Facebook ad example, see “Expanded supplemental information to ‘The Year in Review’” after the close of this report.
- Several clubs were assisted by SQUAREUPB.C. with regard to no-cost community calendar announcements (CCA’s). CCA’s submitted in the North Okanagan in support of lessons at the Vernon branch of Got 2B Cloggin resulted in several media postings such as:
 - Infotel online news, Vernon: <https://infotel.ca/events/lessons-in-contemporary-precision-clog-dancing/3-24967>
 - Global TV News, Okanagan Valley, promoting lessons in contemporary precision clog dancing.

- Some other clubs were assisted with no-cost press releases, such as one for Nanaimo's Amalgam-Eighters & Travelling Squares' combined new square dancer lessons. Another for the new Valley Promenaders in the Western Fraser Valley resulted in reproduction, at least in part, in the February 13/20 issue of the Aldergrove Star newspaper. See it at: <https://www.aldergrovestar.com/entertainment/new-square-dance-club-offers-free-lessons-in-february/>
- As the pandemic encroached upon us, the Federation's Facebook and Twitter pages were utilized to inform the dance community of relative news, especially many cancellations of regular dancing and dance events.
- Our member clubs were made aware of the September 2020 provincial Proclamation of Square & Round Dance Awareness Week. See the Proclamation at: <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/SquareandRoundDanceAwarenessWeek2020>. Our special week this year (2021) should be Sunday Sept. 19 to Saturday Sept. 25. See a subsequent section about the contemplation of changing the Awareness Week name to be more inclusive of other dance forms.
- Lacking the ability to celebrate Awareness Week appropriately during the pandemic, we turned to Facebook to post daily articles over the week about our dance forms or some aspect such as Festivals and Conventions. For a full list of all the posts, complete with links (many of which contain interesting links to videos) see "Supplemental Information" after the close of this report.

Contemplating Revision to the Name "Square & Round Dance Awareness Week"

The B.C. Square and Round Dance Federation has member clubs that enjoy clogging and contra dancing. It would be appropriate to revise the full name for Awareness Week beyond just square and round dancing. This could be done effective the next B.C. Proclamation in September of this year (2021).

Subsequently, the actual Proclamation would briefly detail each dance form.

The inclusion of four dance forms in the title is cumbersome, so one consideration would be to call it "Dance Awareness Week" or perhaps "Folk Dance Awareness Week."

The observance of our special week will take place this year from Sunday Sept. 19 to Saturday Sept. 25.

This will require further deliberation.

Marketing Tools

Our B.C. Federation and the SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative maintain several communication and social media "tools" to advance our great recreation:

- The Federation web site: www.squaredance.bc.ca
- Toll-free Dance INFOLINE – 1-800-335-9433
- The 10 minute "Dancing Keeps You Young" promotional video on YouTube: [DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) (DancingKeepsYouYoung.com is no longer active). The video has now achieved 15,694 views since its original launch in July, 2010.

- The promotional “landing page” at www.squaredancefun.info, which includes a list of all our member clubs that conduct new dancer lessons, including squares, rounds, clogging and contra. Facebook users are sent there when they “click” on one of our paid ads. Note that a revision of the page is planned in order to adjust the layout and convert it to a “responsive design” format wherein it will automatically adjust to display properly on various fixed and mobile devices.
- Social media pages:
 - Facebook – now having achieved 595 “follows:”
www.Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation
 - Twitter:
www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews – now with 97 “followers”
and
www.twitter.com/bcfedlive – now with 90 “followers”

Marketing Assistance Available & Consider Joining the SQUAREUPB.C. Team

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. Just call or e-mail to join in.

This concludes the SQUAREUPB.C. report to the online AGM meeting by Zoom video conferencing, scheduled for 1 pm PDT Saturday April 25, 2021.

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

Expanded supplemental information to “The Year in Review” — Paid Facebook advertising:

The following is a review of the Winter 2020 Facebook campaign excerpted from an earlier report:

- Winter campaign saw 525,422 appearances of one or more of our club lesson ads on Facebook screens around the province. Of those appearances, 102,816 Facebook users saw one of the ads at least once and 6,032 “clicked” within the ad seeking more information about lessons in their city
- 22 individual ads were produced for the Winter campaign, wherein some were multiples for the same club where needed, such as the first ad promoting an open house then the second advertising the first regular lesson. Unless the club supplemented the funding, the allotted dollar amount for a given club was split over the multiple ads.

- One notable Facebook ad during the Winter 2020 campaign was that for the Valley Promenaders, a new Thursday afternoon square/round dance club in the Western Fraser Valley (Abbotsford, Aldergrove, Langley). Supplemented funding allowed for 3 different ads to run consecutively, promoting their free square dance lessons with an introduction to round dancing throughout February. The second of the three ads promoted their “free chili, cornbread & salad lunch,” featured during their Grand Opening event. Overall, the club’s Facebook campaign saw 70,562 appearances of one or more of the ads on Facebook screens in the 3 cities. Of those appearances, 19,322 Facebook users saw one of the ads at least once and 705 Facebook users clicked within one of the ads seeking more information. See the actual 15-second ad for the Grand Opening week (no sound) at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/posts/2932444436800894?dco_ad_id=23844364009970365

Supplemental information – 2020 Awareness Week:

The celebration of 2020 “Square & Round Dance Awareness Week” on the B.C. Federation’s Facebook page. Links to individual posts, one per day throughout the week (Sunday Sept. 20 to Saturday Sept. 26, 2020):

September 11, 2020 - Initial announcement, inviting Facebook users to “share” the upcoming posts:

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3502580319787300>

DAY 1 OF 7 – About Square Dancing
IT’S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!
Sunday September 13, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3509804845731514>

DAY 2 OF 7 – About Round Dancing...
IT’S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!
Monday September 14, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3512790215432977>

DAY 3 OF 7 – About Clog Dancing...
IT’S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!
Tuesday September 15, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3516470358398296>

DAY 4 OF 7 – Discover Contra Dancing...
IT’S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!
Wednesday September 16, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3519641974747801>

DAY 5 OF 7 – Youth Participation in Square & Round Dancing...
IT'S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!

Thursday September 17, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3525593440819321>

DAY 6 OF 7 – Health benefits of square, round, clog & contra dancing...
IT'S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!

Friday September 18, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3529465093765489>

DAY 7 OF 7 – Festivals and Conventions
IT'S SQUARE & ROUND DANCE AWARENESS WEEK
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA!

Saturday September 19, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/3532721556773176>

VIDEO POSTS in support of Square & Round Dance Awareness Week 2020:

An Introduction to the Square Dance (2 minutes) – with introductory text

Posted Sunday September 13, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/videos/374529076907957>

Introducing Round Dancing - Choreographed Ballroom (2 minutes) – with introductory text

Posted Monday September 14, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/videos/766961260514590>

The Clogover Vine clog dance workshop (50 seconds) – with introductory text

Originally posted April 25, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/videos/690650691746392>

Discover Contra Dancing (1 min. 45 sec's) – with introductory text

Posted Wednesday September 16, 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/videos/747341652499197>

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