

## **MARKETING 102: Putting your knowledge to work**

### ***David Wiley***

Once you've established your vision and targeted your audience, how do you use that to your advantage? We'll venture beyond the proverbial flyer table, discovering practical tactics for marketing your series, from the well-crafted press release to preaching to the converted. We'll also cover online marketing tools – debatably the most powerful form of marketing we have at our fingertips. What can you do with your physical set-up, your committee, the regular dancers, and your program to get those new folks to become regulars? Do you get new dancers by holding special events? Come talk about marketing and find out how it can be a key piece for developing and supporting your dance community!

### **OUTLINE: MARKETING 102 (David Wiley)**

Target Market: Everyone is a member of your dance community. They just don't know it yet.

Do not presume that any one person might not be interest in your program

All inclusive

1. Families
2. Students
3. Singles
4. Seniors
5. Visually impaired/blind community
6. Handicapped
7. Church Youth Groups
8. Marching Bands
9. Meet UP
10. Home School Students

Welcome Center Approach:

1. What happens at your welcome table sets the tone for the experience  
Is there a greeter/concierge (Wal-Mart perfected the greeter)  
Point out water source, restrooms, schedule
2. What's your opening message? What do you try to find out about your visitors  
While you have their attention. Small window of opportunity for data mining  
How did you find out about us?  
What brought you here?  
Have you ever danced (any kind) before  
Do I have your permission to partner you up with an experienced dancer for one or  
Two dances?  
Would you share your contact information with us so we can follow up with you for  
Future events (Name, address, phone, email, Facebook)

3. Follow up email congratulating them on their decision to try contra dance
4. Add to your FB group
5. New Dancer Buttons: I Like Beginners, Ask me to dance OR Dancer in Training

#### Dance Management:

1. Beginners Lesson-Sideline coaching
2. Working the Room-meet and greet, how are you doing/questions/comments

#### Other Marketing:

1. Buttons
2. T-Shirts
3. Advertising
4. Flash Mob Dances-parks, farmers markets, civic centers
5. Free Passes
6. BOGO deals
7. Family Package \$15 for all
8. Staging dances at large churches, senior centers, schools/colleges
9. Street signs (CONTRA DANCE TONIGHT!)
10. Klondike Bars

#### SOCIAL MEDIA: FACEBOOK

1. Create FB group
2. Create and update events
3. Share events with other FB dance groups

#### **ATTENDEE NOTES:**

- the need, ability, and desire to dance is innate
- everyone can dance, so everyone in your community is a potential dancer, they just don't know it yet
- your job to reel them in
- don't presume that anyone would not be interested in your program

#### People to market to:

- market to families: parents and their children can get into dance for \$15
- students: looking for fun, healthy activities
- singles
- seniors
- blind community
- church, youth directors are looking for things for their members to do
- marching bands (during off season)
- Meetup groups (audience comments)
  - one group, went from 20 to 30 people from a Meet up group

- brings in floods of ~20 dancers at a time, not necessarily regular dancers
- meet up groups: will attach your group to related events/groups
- can list event under 'live music', 'dance', etc.
- can send invites to related meet up groups
- i.e. 'baby boomers' group to do specific events
- need to be ready for an influx of new dancers
- more of a one-time thing
- if experience is good, then initially one-timers will want to come back
- some groups have a specific greeter for meet up group members, to welcome them, introduce them to experienced dancers
- international student groups at universities: advisors look for events
- moms clubs
- separate family dance (from contra dance series): monthly dance in Belfast, ME has potluck dinner + contra dance
- that is the future of our dances: bringing children into dancing
- civic groups: speaker's bureau, to speak to Kiwanis club, Lions club, etc.
- anticipate questions: (i.e. men wearing skirts in dance videos)
- community calendars: radio, website, bulletin boards, local TV
- take your passion out to the media
  - call program director, station manager
  - we are a nonprofit community organization promoting folk/contra/etc. dancing
  - give local news radio stations an excuse to play music
  - when touring band is in town for a dance, get them an interview with radio station
  - free publicity!

#### Welcoming:

- ask new people 'how did you find out about us?', 'have you danced before?'
- what happens when a new person comes into your dance will determine whether they come back
- unless they make an emotional connection to your group they will not be likely to come back
- warmly greet, get a little info about their experience, a little about what you're about to do, describe layout (i.e. bathrooms), contact info (Facebook, email, phone), how they found out about it (peer pressure!)
- based on experience, ask permission to partner with experienced dancers after beginners lesson
- new couples who come in, suggest they dance with advanced dancers
- (audience comment): ask permission to dance with someone's partner, and/or approach new couple as two experienced dancers

#### what to do with this new info:

- add emails to email list
- mail chimp

#### (audience comments:)

- weekly/monthly emails
- upcoming dance info, summary of what's been going on the past few months to bring in new dancers, president's message to dancers
- specific letter to new dancers, 'thank you for coming', intro to group

- ask people if they liked it, why or why not, would they tell their friends, etc.
- call, if time, or email
- works!
- add new people to Facebook group
- 'I like beginners' and 'I'm a dancer in training, handle with care' buttons
- [www.badgeaminute.com](http://www.badgeaminute.com)
- graphics available from speaker
- helps reduce anxiety about messing up
- beginner's lesson is very important
- it's a problem when people come in after the beginner's lesson has started

(audience comments)

- beginners lesson teaches about connection, giving good weight, swing, first dance (use dance to teach moves)
- social aspects: new partners each dance, level of eye contact, how to ask people to dance
- provide guidelines for callers
- teaching moments: about to do a dance with a hey, the caller selects a group to do a demo
- can also use teaching moments to teach style/behavior modification/etc. to experienced dancers
- alternate viewpoint: this tells new people 'this is complicated and difficult', instead use demo as a fallback
- beginners lesson is part of your marketing strategy (all dances are taught, plus x minute teaching session at the beginning)
- lesson also a means of introducing new dancers to experienced ones
- ask new dancers how it's going, are they struggling, make them feel appreciated and welcome (especially when they are sitting out)

Theme dances:

- can build a dance around any occasion
- holiday events: Valentine's Day, Halloween, New Years, etc.
- ice cream social, Hawaiian shirt night, any manufactured event helps advertise
- polka dot night, knee sock night
- skirts and shirts fashion contra (twirly skirts and Hawaiian shirts), have fashion contest
- contras and cupcakes: cupcake contest, get local bakers to be the judges
- weave competition into your dance program
- theme for one night at a dance weekend (polka dots and stripes, over the rainbow)
- burn calories before the Super Bowl (The 'foot ball' on Super Bowl Sunday in the afternoon before the game)
- buttons, t-shirts
- flash mob dances
  - have something to give the onlookers
- college campuses, related music events, farmers market
- free passes, buy one get one free
- stage dances at colleges to introduce dances to students
- approaching colleges:

- have connections: dancer who is vice provost
- find a dancer who has connections at college, churches, groups, etc.
- start a class at the college
- phys ed courses already exist at some colleges
- contra dance performance group
- credit for attending 'cultural events'
- teach history classes – how to do Virginia reel, etc.
- official sponsors of events
- official frozen treat: "I contra danced for a Klondike bar in Jonesborough TN"
- give out Klondike bar at dances

#### Social media:

- Facebook
  - impacts a lot of people with very little effort
  - create/update events, promote events
  - sell 'sizzle' of the event (i.e. fajitas in restaurants)
  - need to figure out what the 'sizzle' is for your event
  - take a lot of pictures, share them
  - people love to see themselves having fun
  - post pictures, tag people, those people's friends also see the pictures
  - need to then weigh in with details in comments when people have questions
  - biggest impact message to put out there: people having fun
  - be aware of and on top of how Facebook does group permissions, etc.
- twitter
  - use hashtags to bring in people, makes it easier to share
- Instagram for photos
- give people a takeaway: tips for beginners, etc.
- contact speaker for etiquette tips sheet

#### print media:

- editors are looking for human interest, community events
- send out press releases for every event
  - photo + copy-ready article
- you are all social engineers, trying to get people to choose your event over an endless list of things to do
- get to know editors, sell them on your program
  - get full page feature stories about contra dances, contra dancers
  - get out in front of public and tell your story
  - pictures of dancers are in public domain (but take down pictures if anyone objects)

Notes taken by Lucy Frey