



TORONTO AND DISTRICT SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE ASSOCIATION

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

Is your club using, or considering using social media feeds, such as Facebook, to increase your promotional reach? If so, here are some guidelines to help increase the feed's perspective reach.

- You need to gain buy-in from the club's (formally) executive, (informally) callers and dancers
- Make a plan that covers an entire year, including the build-up to new dancers nights
- Use multiple channels for greater exposure, but not too many. Focus on local presence and geographic footprint.
- Club websites & Facebook pages are the best anchors, and free
- Cross-link your various social media feeds, especially connecting them back to your club website.
- Set up groups or pages with multiple admins, so responsibility can be passed on. Allow others to post
- Facebook pages are preferable to groups. They allow more control of content, better branding, and the option of paid advertising.
- Keep content fresh, at least to the past few months
- Talk beyond the membership, and present a positive but realistic image of square dancing
- All communications should focus on fun, and be inviting for prospective new dancers
- Post photos. Mention when and where. Use full name of callers, and first names of dancers only. Don't tag photos.
- Tie in with local events, neighbouring clubs, related dance forms, musicians, possible sponsors, provincial and national events. Farmers markets, fall fairs, music festivals all draw people who may be receptive to your message.
- Post regularly, and at predictable times. Even things like "Merry Christmas/Happy Canada Day" can help keep your organization in mind over quiet periods.
- Aim for a slightly younger demographic than your club membership, but don't expect 20-somethings to come to a Seniors Centre. Talk over your posts and ideas with non-dancers.
- Think critically of the whole dance experience. Social media will get prospective dancers to the first dance, but not back to the second.
- Club website should be very precise about when and where, with an address that can be recognized with GPS and Google Maps.
- Keep content dance-related. Avoid the impulse to politicise or editorialize. Be very careful to avoid negativity in tone.
- Take lots of pictures, and choose the better ones at home. Photographing dance in action is challenging. Experiment with camera settings, lighting, angles, panning

- Think inclusively about square dance and related groups, such as old time, contra, 4H, Junior Famers, LGBT, Scots & Irish set dancers. Be open to evolving perspectives on dress, partnering, traditional roles.
- Local media sources are looking for local stories. Make contact, and propose they come to an event.
- Don't under-estimate the nostalgic value of square dancing, and also the photogenic appeal of dancers in costume.
- Promote a significant dance event twice: 1 month in advance and 2-3 days in advance. Then post pictures from the dance shortly after.
- Don't be discouraged, success comes slowly from persistence. You will always be overcoming a poor public image of square dancing, but it has lots of benefits to bring. Accentuate the positive.
- Don't rely exclusively on Social Media to gain new dancers. Traditional channels can still be effective.

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