

# How to Market Your Round Dance Activity

by John & Karen Herr



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We have had quite a bit of success with bringing in new Round Dancers into our Beginner classes. We have averaged just under 20 couples per set of classes. This does not mean that we brought in 20 new couples each time, but that the total represents repeating couples along with new couples. The number of new couples per set of classes is about 6 or 7. The majority of our new dancers do not come from Square Dancing, but from the general public. This article explains what we do to bring in new couples and how we manage to keep them.

## Marketing to bring in new students:

We have found that spending money is necessary to get new students. We spend our money on Google Ads, Postcards, Facebook, Banners, personal web-site, local ads, and a one-night stand. Sometimes we spend as much as \$200- \$300, but if we get just 2 new couples, it is profitable.

### 1) Banner:

We created a banner 13 feet long and 3 feet high. The banner cost us about \$75. It has the ROUNDALAB logo on it, and it says: "Learn to Dance, \$10, 303-681-3147". We put up the banner 3 weeks before the start of a new set of classes.

We put it up in an area where lots of driver-bys can see it. When we are not home, our phone answers with, "Hi. If you are interested in the dance lessons, please leave a message, and we will call you back as soon as we can."

The banner usually brings in about 5 phone calls, with about 1 or 2 new couples coming to the classes. The banner has paid for itself many times over.

### 2) One-night stand:

On the Friday evening in the week prior to our first night of classes, we invite potential students and our current followers to:

- a) a free Chili and Cornbread dinner (6:00pm), and
- b) an hour and a half of free dance lessons (7:00pm - 8:30pm), during which we teach three rhythms, such as Cha-Cha, Waltz, and Merengue. One of these is the rhythm that will be taught the following week. Attendees learn about 15 or more figures, and they will dance in each rhythm to hash-cues, ALL in an hour and a half.

When they leave that evening, they are excited about how much they learned in one evening and can't wait to come to classes the next week.

### 3) Personal web-site

We built our own websites. Take a look at:

- a) [www.denverpenguins.com/dnclessons](http://www.denverpenguins.com/dnclessons)
- b) [www.denverpenguins.com/dncsamplere](http://www.denverpenguins.com/dncsamplere)

Both websites explain Round Dancing, give our resume, and provide registration for classes (which we do not require). In addition, the dncsamplere site includes information about the one-night stand.

If you are not able to build your own website, please contact us for help. If you want, we can build it for you for very little money (because we will use the cookie-cutter approach).

#### 4) Google Ads

This is more difficult, but has been well worth the effort. In Google Ads, you can specify the area in which you wish to advertise. You can determine how much you want to pay per ad. The more you pay, the more customers see.

My Google Ad says, "Free dinner and dance lessons", go to [www.denverpenguins.com/dncsampler](http://www.denverpenguins.com/dncsampler). Our phone is included.

We advertise for at least 2 weeks prior to the one-night stand.

We have paid about \$150 to \$200. The Google Ads have brought in about 6-8 registrations, but only about 2 couples actually attend.

#### 5) Local Ads

We have put ads in our local Denver-area dance publication. We are not sure how much benefit we have gotten from that.

#### 6) Postcards

We tried this, but found postcards are very expensive and do not appear to have brought us any people.

#### 7) Facebook

We developed a simple ad with the help of Facebook, set a budget per day, and a total budget and then followed the Facebook prompts. The results were that we got a few new dancers.

#### 8) Word of mouth

This is the most powerful tool we have. If you are doing a good job, the students are learning a lot, they are having fun, and you don't have to promote yourself. They will want to bring their friends. All you have to do is remind them that their friends are invited to the one-night stand without any obligation.

Happy new students will be your next nucleus for bringing in more students.

#### **Retention:**

The key to keeping people includes:

- 1) How much interest you show in them,
- 2) How much they are learning (the quality of your teaching), and
- 3) How much fun they are having.

At every one of our dances/classes, or any other dance event that we attend, Karen goes around and spends a little time with every person possible. Imagine the bonds that are created.

Does your teaching move along? Do students feel that they are learning a lot? Do they dance/practice more than you talk? Do you attend ROUNDALAB to learn how to cue better, to teach better -- to learn from others who are very experienced and successful?

FUN! This is huge. It seems that some teachers feel that teaching perfectly is the only significant factor in building a successful program. There is no reason why a teacher can't teach serious stuff and not have fun also. We are frequently told that just watching us teach is worth the price of admission. What are they talking about? I am the straight-man and Karen is the comedian. We keep the people laughing while we are teaching strict body mechanics. When people are having fun, they learn faster and usually avoid frustration.

I have written a paper on how to put fun into your classes and dances, which is available upon request. We believe that it takes both quality teaching and FUN to build a great program.

