Beyond New Dancers
Upping your attendance by preaching to your converted

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Puttin’ On The Dance 2
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FOR THOSE READING:
• Our slides have been updated slightly as our presentation slides were more image based and we hadn’t written done some of our key messages.
• We’ve also included some additional notes. Apologies for occasional lack of clarity!
Want people to come back?  
=  
Dancers leaving the hall feeling…

"I had a REALLY good time"

"I made the right choice to go to that dance"

"I want to do that again and SOON!"

Why this workshop on preaching to your converted?  
• Dancers are only a first-timer once and new for a short time, series must cater to the continuum of regulars, session focuses on that  
• There is a LOT competing for their attention … family, other dancing, the internet… you name it.  
• SLIDE: Goal to have people feeling that "I had a really really good time" "I made the right choice to go to that dance" "I want to do that again and soon!“

So need to think about the whole dance event.

We're going to explore:
  1. Why people come/not  
  2. Dance vibes and how they impact people  
  3. How to create buy-in with your dancers
A great place to start – think about why DIFFERENT dancers come to dance and what might be reasons for not coming.
(So you can enhance/minimize some of these)

**Emily’s quick list of why people might come:**
- Friendly smiling faces
- Sense of belonging (not all need/want this!)
- Touching people
- Caliber of dancing
- Quality-style-variety of band/calling
- Live music
- Friends are there
- Fun
- New partner every dance
- Special events
- Exercise
- Family friendly? (either way)
- Learning stuff/stretching
- Social parts (pubs etc.)
• Get that part of a bigger dance community (even travel with others)

Emily’s quick list of why people might not come:
• Hall too hot/cold
• Building atmosphere (unconscious?)
• Don’t have anyone to come with (both travelling + just getting out the door)
• Other commitments (work, other social commitments, family)
• Location (distance, easy to get to, public transportation)
• Parking (give info on this!)
• Floor not good
• Cost (LOTS of options here)
• Weather
• Too tired (day of week?)
• Quality-style-variety of band/calling
• Sound quality (unconscious?) too loud?
• Family friendly? (either way)
• Level of dance (too low? Also too high/energetic for some... health issues)
• Style of dance (too old school? Too new school?)
• Don’t know/forget (send reminders!)
• Timing of the dance (wrong night of week, too early/late)
• Too many dances? Too little dances? Not regular?
• Creepy/aggressive/dangerous behaviors (even just bossy, pushy, pulling, know it alls, rude)
• cliques
• 'not my people'
• Pressure to dance
• No one age
• Dizzy>?
Vibe!

Includes:

1. The overall experience/feel of the dance event. (i.e., what it looks, sounds, physically feels like)
2. The vibe is shaped by: The Dancing, The Hall, and The Community Culture
3. Dancers can be impacted consciously AND unconsciously...AND in different ways.

Each dance series/weekends/one offs has "a vibe"

- Think about different weekends you go to and how they feel different.
- The vibe is regardless of whether you're aware or not AND whether you're working on it or not.
- To your advantage to be aware and to work on it.

How does the vibe impact people?

It can mean ....
- the difference between high and low attendance
- having a committed community or not
- beginners coming back or not

Different people attracted to different vibes!
- Who do you want to be catering to?
- Can cater to different groups but may be mutually exclusive.
Videos

Check out these two videos of the same English County dance. Two very different vibes. Neither is better than the other. But they probably appeal to slightly different audiences.

Pay attention to all the details… lighting, hall design, music, type of people at the dance, fullness of the hall, etc.…

1. Softly Good Tummas https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssnGBZ0RHBo
2. Softly Good Tummas https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR2_NVzyoLA
Dance experience

The music:
- Playing quality (i.e., technical skills)
- "Emotive for dancing?"
- Genre (old time, Swing, etc.)
- Age of musicians
- Same band/different each time?
- Other…

The calling:
- Clear/concise? (not confusing!)
- "Personality?"
- Community builder?
- Various details like whether call all the way through the dance (depending on tradition)
- Beginner lesson? (if so, what's the focus?)
- Same caller/different each time?

The dancing:
- Skill level of dances possible
  (e.g., accessible for perpetual beginners?
  Challenging enough for expert dancers?)
- Technical skills (e.g., dancers always late?)
- Focus on fun, execution or what?
- Style of dance (e.g., sexy & hot)

Sound:
- Good mix (Nice low end! All instruments hear?)
- Volume (Too soft! Too loud?)
- Band happy?
Physical atmosphere

**Lighting:**
- How bright?
- Where is the lighting? (stage?)
- Type of lighting (e.g., fluorescent?)
- Decorative?

**Decorations:**
- Banner?
- Details like streamers? Bunting? Hangings?
- Posters and signs (e.g., etiquette, pictures)

**Welcome table:**
- What is it called?
- Clear ways for people to become informed & connected (email list)
  - ???

**Other:**
- Temperature (too hot? Sweaty?)
- Physical feel of the hall (gym?)
- Secular or non-secular space?
- Stage for musicians & caller?
- Location – (parking, public transportation, food close by, safe?)
- Other…..???
Lighting
Social tone / Community culture

• How full is the hall?
• What age are the dancers? Critical mass by age group?
• Gender split?
• What ‘type’ of people? Granola? Quirky? Hipster?
• How welcoming are the regulars? (cliques?)
• How accessible are the organizers?
• Are there clear ways to engage socially (volunteering? pub?)
• Any creepy/unsafe people?

And there’s still more you could consider beyond community, physical atmosphere, and dance experience... ... for instance:
  • Day of week + time of day
  • Break... Length? What happens during the break?
What’s your vibe?

1. What does your dance look like?
2. What does your dance sound like?
3. What does your dance FEEL like?

…..The DANCING, HALL, and COMMUNITY CULTURE

…..From various perspectives (the brand new person, the occasional dancer, the really 'advanced' dancer, you, other….)
Your vibe – strengths & shifts?

1. What do you really like about your vibe?
   What do you do well?

2. If you want to shift …
   (a) How you like your dance to feel overall?
   (b) What are a few specific things you’d want to shift?

2 min for people to jot down more about their vibe + if want to shift, what?
give list and get them separate to rate whether their community address these? New people too?
maybe something re list of things that impact vibe + get people to tick off what characteristics they’ve
considered? What could work on? (provide handout post-conference on these ideas
and others summarize that there are topics to consider (handout?)

refer back to survey sheet – add to?

show of hands and call on a few: 
who’s dance does ‘x’ well?
who would like to do ‘x’ better?
who’s dance doesn’t address ‘x’?
Etc.
Why is buy-in important?
You've got your dance. You believe in it... Maybe you'd do almost anything for it. Maybe you've got a few more real keeners. But why get more buy in from others?

THEY BRAINSTORM FIRST, we give a few extra reasons
- Come out more frequently (up level of dance, help new people, $$)
- Bring friends,
- Up your number of volunteers, even key volunteers (e.g., people to haul /store sound gear)

So going back to top... creating sense of belonging, commitment, and ownership
So will guide you through a few ways and share more...
Ottawa example
what dancer gets for membership
Upped price in 2014, no effect  # of members (about 25% sustaining, still 100)
Season's pass 20 people.
Positives for the dance
'belonging' that comes with membership – come more regularly (habit thing),
more volunteers( committee members even!), brings friends
Increases revenue (not just dances), solid source... special projects
Negatives for the dance
Buttons feel exclusionary?
Dancers feel expert?
More of a 'season'? (line-up, break in summer)
   Big launch of the season before.... Part of why think going well!
Regular? Not? Frequency (too much/little)
In hall announcements

KEY: Energy of person? Clarity? How long? ... seen many a painful set of announcements

What are key messages?

Upcoming events

Anything on safety? Community building/connecting? How to find organizers?

What about beginners?

Other...

Email announcements

Clear + concise BUT also energetic/hype/personal tone? (depending on series)

How often? (reminder day or two before)

Who can post?

Adding etiquette?

Welcome email... NEW (win those new people over)

2nd dance free cards in addition to on the website + sign up list

Links to social media, listing our community

GETTING THEIR EMAIL? ... sign up list that promote but also 2nd dance free cards
+ pass on to friends Actually, email announcements can be forwarded on to friends – word of mouth! – make it easy and encourage people to spread the word (make sure info stands alone for new dancer–specifics about time, place, beginners session, shoe policy, etc. the regulars on email list ‘already know’)

Special events scattered throughout the year can create an awesome vibe.

Dance weekend
Dance workshops (learning! Different topics!)
Social – Potlucks, Pubs
Special times of year for food/costumes/coloured clothes: Halloween, xmas, robbie burns, st patricks, new years, end of year

etc.
Dancers feel like the belong when they have a voice and can help make a difference. Thus, giving opportunities is important!

Examples:
- Easy ways for them to volunteer (invites.... Do you make it clear that they can actually get involved and would like the help? roles clearly defined, easing them in, bringing cookies?)
- Surveys occasionally
- AGMs where invited + food
- Helping out at outreach events (e.g., demonstration dances)
- Other????
Still so many other ways of creating a deeper sense of belonging/buy-in.
What works for you?

Here are a few examples for back pocket:
- Volunteer party
- Pub social
- Clothing exchanges
- Opportunities to learn/grow/get better (e.g., waltzing)
- Encouraging people to get out to other weekends (even connecting for travel/lodging)
- Learning music/band/calling
- YouTube postings (series)