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!

To start:
• It’s not only about getting new people in the door but also how to convert them into dancers/folks that want to come back! Focus on second is as important as the first :)
‘Selling’ your dance to new people
• The lady in the bottom right knows nothing/very little about traditional dance. She could just as easily go out this Saturday to a movie, play etc.. Or she should stay home and watch Netflix.

• We’re actually trying to “sell an experience/product” and there’s lots of competition out there. Yes, it’s funny/hard to believe that our dancing (that we’ve bought into so wholeheartedly) is a product. However, for a brand new person, it’s just like any other recreational opportunity.
• Additionally, we’re ‘selling’ a non-mainstream experience. An awesome experience but non-mainstream so it won’t appeal to all. (Good to remember.)

• So who will it appeal to?
• And... our sell needs to be good!
• What kind of ‘product’ do you have for sale? See above pictures... ... something that feels very community oriented? Maybe some angry dancers on the floor? Maybe some really ‘hot’ dancing that will appeal to certain newbies but be intimidating/off-putting to others?

• It’s important to look at what ‘product’ you have for sale... ... from an outsider perspective as well as a regular, not just from your lens as an organizer.
• And are there shifts that can be made in the ‘product’/experience your offering that would make it more appealing to certain crowds.

• This is all before you begin publicity (or as you continue publicity). Consider tweaking what you’re ‘selling’ to appeal to the crowd you want.
Implementing your sell

Considerations

Big picture
• Sell should closely align with product (or where trying to head anyway!)
• Sell should be consistent across
Why do you want new dancers? What are YOUR reasons? Because why you want new dancers impacts the type of publicity/sell you make and where you publicize.

For example... are you looking for???

• Younger people = 20-somethings from neighborhood? College students? High school students? Families with young children? 30-something singles? Under 50s?
• People looking for a new activity = new in town, empty nester, learn something new, be more social, get more exercise, something to do with friends, something to do with spouse, compliments something else they already do (trad jam session, Jane Austen society, International folk dance, concerts)
• People looking for community = social connection, place to contribute
Implementing your sell: Various Tools

- Flyers – these are more informational handouts, maybe even listing a whole season
- Posters – these get posted lots of places on walls etc..
- Website
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, other?
- Events listings in print OR online
- Articles in print web OR online
- Radio/tv/other
- Email lists
- Outreach events (where you would find dancers… folk fest, waldorf school spring party)
- Cross advertising (groups with similar audiences… outdoor clubs, social meet ups, 50+ groups, trad music sessions, folk clubs)
- Word of mouth!
- …. Other?

Once you know who you’re looking for, think about what type of tools would be best and where you might use them. (E.g., if you you’re looking for college-age students and want to try posters, think about where you would put the posters in addition to how you’d design them.)

Random notes:
- Don’t reinvent the wheel every time. Have a system. Write really great text and reuse (e.g., if doing event listing, get great text the first time and then send to lots of places)
- Choose tools carefully and do them well
- Need to make sure you can keep all your tools up-to-date

Other tools:
- Arts high schools, alternative ed, home schooling
- Dance studio cross advertising
- Fitness organizations
- Youth free dances
- Special beginner workshops
- 101 course as part of a city recreation program
Email lists (as in your own)
• Encourage people on your email list to forward onto friends – 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’)
• Also as new people join your email list, win them over with a very carefully crafted welcome email.

Word of mouth ....But how? Some strategies...
• Word of mouth from converted is your most effective marketing resource—fewer dancers in the door but won over (whether they come back or just good will) is way better than lots of new people but sell doesn’t equal experience (negative advertising). Not an endless supply of new people.
• Regulars – encourage regulars to invite 3 new people over a season but really help those people fit in (e.g., drive to hall, participate in beginners lesson with, help find a few good partners, socialize at break, invite back next time)
• Encourage birthday parties (if go with bunch of friends more likely, different ways to structure this)
• Devil in details – how implement these matters a lot!
• Steal ideas from others.
• Get REALLY good wording

Notice some differences in these posters.
• What pops out?
• Who are they trying to attract?
• What type of event is it? (what trying to sell/how trying to sell)
• How is the poster/flyer to be used?
More examples... ...
 Implementation

Ottawa contra

A few examples from Ottawa Contra
Our old website.

- Bland colours
- Very static (no movement)
- Little information on the talent
- Not easy to read

... ... ...
‘New’ website made around 2009 with tweaks since.

- Looked at over 30 other contra website to find ‘BEST PRACTICES’ (great to do for any tool!!!!)
- Didn’t want something too flashy/professional as we are a volunteer-run organization that does folk dancing ... not the same sell as the swing dance for-profit businesses in Ottawa.
- Active: The pictures in the top right corner are constantly changing/rotating. Plus we list our upcoming events in top left corner.
- Occasionally feature special events occasionally at top of front page (as do here0
- Social media tools accessible in top left.
- (Hopefully) catchy colours.
Front page specifically targeted to new people
- Wording very carefully chosen.
- Photos and video show a full hall, lots of colour, awesome music.
Our dancers were unaware of differences in bands six years ago. We’ve worked hard to educate them through featuring lots of info on the schedule page plus sending info in emails (including CAREFULLY selected YouTube videos)

Having photos, write ups, and links to the various talent also put a face to the experience for new people.
Facebook

- Who is going to manage/host the Facebook group? One person can manage but if they are the only person posting, not many people are going to see posts and it won’t be useful. So find a few regulars and get them posting… it creates a community and those who are part of the group think it’s really happenin’.
- Above is a group. You can also create events. The key to the event is that you need to get your dancers inviting each other as well as their other friends to the event as well as make the event page exciting. Otherwise, there’s no point.
There’s so much else that we do. For example;

- Flyers – Promote a whole season (dancers can buy a seasons pass)
- Posters – see slide 9 on the right. Consider targeted locations to put up (e.g., near hall, in health food stores, etc.)
- Event listings: Great success with various online event listings including CBC, city of Ottawa, Dance Ottawa. 3+ journalists have tracked down and done radio/tv spots through these postings + we get dancers.
- Cross-listing with dance events, social groups, trad sessions, folk clubs, etc.
- Twitter, thinking of a contra 101, etc. etc.
Implementation

Puttin’ On the Dance 2
Attention dance organizers, a conference just for you...

Puttin’ On the Dance 2
Ottawa, Ontario
March 20-22, 2015

Registration opens October 15, 2014
Conference $225* ($150 before January 20)
Non-attending accommodations

For ideas on how dance communities can assist with
costs see “How to Fund Your Attendance” at
www.puttinonthedance.org

Supporting the people who sustain our vital dance tradition.

Puttin’ On the Dance is a knowledge exchange opportunity for
organizers of dance festivals and similar dance-related events, for
professionals who work in the dance world, for artists who create
dance, and for businesses and organizations who support dance.

The goal of the weekend is to improve the effectiveness of
the dance industry and to build a stronger sense of community,
expertise, and knowledge. The conference will offer a breadth of
workshops, presentations, and discussions to share ideas, improve
practices, and strengthen our field.

Look for more information to be posted on our website:
www.puttinonthedance.org

*Conference fees include meals and entertainment. All attendees must pay conference fees in advance via the website.

For more information, contact...
www.puttinonthedance.org

[Additional text not visible in the image]
Explore strategies for implementation with sell and audience in mind

Coordinating implementation w/ sell and target audience - dance scenarios
• Target audience (adults, 20-somethings, families, culturally minded, community minded, etc.)
• Type of dance (contra, ECD, one-off, weekly, monthly, special event, etc.)
• Reason for new dancers (new energy, start-up, numbers in decline, spread joy, etc.)
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<th>Flyers</th>
<th>Posters</th>
<th>Event listings - newspaper</th>
<th>Event listings - online</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Meetup</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Email list - own</th>
<th>Email list - others</th>
<th>Snail mail</th>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Word of mouth</th>
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<th>Other - free card, etc.</th>
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Win them over…

Why new people will come back: Some theorizing

1. They feel successful.
   “Newcomers will have the most fun when they do well.” &
   "If people feel they are successful ... they will enjoy it more and return.”

2. They feel they belong, their kind of people.

3. They had a LOT of fun …
   worthy of them fitting into their busy lives.

Other reasons?

Does your dance ‘help’ new people in wanting to come back?
Got them in the door but now what??
- Ottawa Contra tracks who comes back a second time through 2\textsuperscript{nd} dance free cards – over 5yrs, the average is 35%. And that’s just the second time, not additional times.
- Your experience won’t be a fit for every new person but can you convert more to regulars? (i.e., those that have a neutral/positive experience and for whom it’s a good fit)

Now, as much as winning over,...... why would people NOT come back?
- Brainstorm ideas on why not.
- What could we do to shift/minimize these?

Now, strategies to win them over.
Brainstorm ideas (few examples below)
- Best event ever (great talent, nice people, etc. etc.)
- Designated welcomers/greeters? (creepy?)
- Acknowledge that hard work and may only dance part of evening
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} dance free cards
- Get them on email list & Facebook as soon as possible (welcome email...
carefully crafted)

- **Feel successful – caller choice of dances + clarity, kudos from caller & organizer & dancers**
- Feel like belong/their people – social time? What here?
- Handout for beginners? Space on website?
- Encourage socializing (e.g., invite to pub after)
- Shorter dances? Simpler? Short/clear walk throughs
- Conversations with regulars on how to be encouraging/supportive/assist/not to pushy/welcome/not too strong
- ‘new’ nametags
- Match new with regular for a bit
- Beginners lesson – what is the tone? What is focused on?
- Newcomer vs beginner language

- You may already do some of these and some may not fit with your community. But maybe there’s one or two new ideas worth trying!