

## Brecksville Squares

Ohio

(January 2004)

What, Makes a Club Successful ??? –  
Good Question.

By: Dennis H. Deluga

A while ago our club was asked by the State Corporation to participate in a group discussion on what makes a club successful or not. Our president, Cheryl Storgaurd, then asked me if I'd like to give the presentation. See, good delegation skills.

Since I'm a relatively new member I first sought out some club history from our officers. The club was established in January of 1986 with 16 charter members. Well to make a long story very short it has grown some and we currently have approximately 140 members, with a scheduled 2 dances a month and a thriving new student program. Big Thanks to the charter members, my wife and I really enjoy square dancing and it wouldn't have been possible if they didn't do it. This growth was achieved at a time when ALL clubs, of every kind are experiencing hardships.

The next thing I did was suggested we survey our membership to see why they think our club is successful. Why do they choose to belong to Brecksville Squares? This was done at our next general meeting by a short general survey form. We felt there was enough of the membership present to give us good demographics. I also sought out some active members, not present to get their valued opinion.

I then compiled and categorized the survey results. The results are ranked by order of importance the membership placed on each category, with some indication of survey frequency. Major categories are followed by the activities our club participates in.

### LEADERSHIP: 80+ %

Officers - strong leaders that lead, teach and delegate

Committees - that are chaired by non-officers to help spread the load - many hands make light work

Special Task Assignments - on special occasion task are assigned to membership to take advantage of their vast and divers experiences and help the club.

Excellent Teachers - in all areas especially in the new student areas – we all can learn something from our fellow members.

### COMMUNICATION: 50 %

Yearly Membership Packets - of member information so individual members can contact each other directly plus other pertinent information.

Calling Chain - notify membership of some special occurrence that needs to be done quickly- each caller has no more than 6 members to call in their part of the chain.

Email Chain – same purpose as above - if desired, members can be on both the email and call chain if requested.

TipTopics / Linked Squares - club subscribes to both publication to keep our club in front of 2 federation memberships.

Yearly Printed Club Reports- each member who attends the club business meeting has access to a printed club report that accounts for the club finances also the secretaries report that summarizes club involvement for the past 6 months.

Club NewsLetter - produced several times a year it highlights coming events and membership news.

Club Website Page - where pertinent information about our club is posted.

Printed Flyers - on coming events (dances, raids etc.)

Sunshine Committee - let member know that even if they are down their friends are thinking of them. (the membership packet has their phone number and address).

#### OUTREACH: 40 %

Demonstrations - participate in demos (county fair, city home days, IX Center) any place they will let in.

Fundraiser / Charity events – several regularly scheduled events and some on spur of the moment – recently a fundraiser for Frank Gatrell, on a moments notice, was very successful with our memberships help.

Raids and Retrievals – the club has scheduled raids and retrievals and also members take it upon themselves to have an impromptu raids- nice going guys and gals.

Acceptance of Individuals and Clubs – we pride ourselves on making everyone welcome and we have benefited from that attitude.

Hospitality and Greeters – Our Hospitality and Greeters undoubtedly are some of the best in the federation and our visitors and members appreciate it.

Membership Participation – members see what the club does for them and will volunteer their help – members when asked rarely will turn us down.

#### INCLUSION: 30%

Friendliness – members expressed over and over that they felt very good when here – everyone is part our square dance family, if you want to be.

New Idea Expression – our members stated that they felt their comments and ideas were valued by the club and were not afraid to tell the good and the bad news.

Assignment – new members and student are given assignment to greeting and hospitality to include them and let them know that the club wants and needs their participation.

Appreciation – over and over members expressed that they felt their effort to help the club were expressed by membership and leadership. When was the last time you gave a thank you to those who do for you?

#### CRITICAL MASS: 25%

Number of Members – there is no doubt that a larger number of members allow the club to do more – this is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Number of Students– we recruit heavily every chance we get – there is follow up on contact – this has proven itself with a plethora of new members.

Variety and Excellence of Callers and Cuers – the membership has expressed its desire to have a variety of callers and cuers and the result is a large dance attendance.

Number of Angles – we get a good number of angels each year to assist the new students – this helps the student to form friendships and bonds – sometimes we have had 5 and 6 squares at a student lesson – invest in your children oops I mean students they are your lifeblood.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS: 10 – 15 %

New Years Dance

Teddy Bear Dance

Yearly Club Picnic / Meeting – a business and social event outside of the squared circle

Yearly Club Dinner / Meeting – a pleasant night out with a little bit of business thrown in

#### CONCLUSION;

Sorry to say there is no magic bullet to make a club successful. If there was, we would bottle it sell it and our club would have no financial worries. Our clubs are located in diverse areas we have city clubs, suburb clubs and rural clubs. What is important to one area may not matter in another. Have you tried to ask your membership what they are looking for? We have tried to express what our member ship thought was important to them. I hope it will help your club and give you food for thought. Maybe you will see these ideas and come up with some of your own or use some of ours, help yourself. In any event, inaction is NOT a good decision. Try out ideas and see what works for your club. If they don't work try others. In my opinion you can't blame a person for trying but you can blame someone if they don't try something. Doing it the same way it's been done for years may not be the best way, try something new or a new way, what could it hurt?

Sincerely Yours,  
Dennis H. Deluga