

## Marketing and Recruiting

Last issue we related that research has shown square dancing to be one of the most “politically correct” social activities.

Further research has been funded by CALLERLAB and conducted by StarWorks, a well respected survey firm. Their conclusions are:

**IMAGE:** “Square dancing has an image problem in the general public, particularly among those in the targeted empty nester Baby Boomer age group. The target population sees square dancing as out of date, country oriented, for hicks and hillbillies, using old-fashioned music and patronized by senior citizens in fluffy dresses with big hair, big belts, and RV’s. Most people say they are familiar with square dancing, but their familiarity is with traditional square dancing, not with modern western square dancing. As a result, their image of square dancing is strongly influenced by the traditional square dancing and does not reflect the realities of modern western dance.”

**AWARENESS:** “Modern western square dancing does not have a high profile, even in cities where there is an active dance community. Non-dancers in these cities do not know about the dance activity in their city, nor would they know how to get in touch with the program if they wanted to. Few have seen any notices about dance classes, or knew where it was done. Several claimed that square dancing was a rural activity – not done in an urban environment where people have many alternatives for entertainment. As a result, people who might be enticed into square dancing have no idea how to get involved.”

There are several avenues to address these marketing challenges. CALLERLAB has developed a Marketing Plan to help address some of these challenges. The plan is now in the implementation stage. Included in the Plan are the development of a new logo, development of a new slogan and international web site, plus marketing strategies.

All Marketing Plans need dollars. It cannot be expected for the many National and International square dance organizations to fund these on their own. Much of the funding and promotion needs to be done on the “grass roots” level. All clubs and Federations are encouraged to look at marketing and funding. You can not expect someone else to do it. All viable businesses, large or small, set aside a minimum of 8% of their gross proceeds for marketing. When sales (read attendance) are down they spend more and work harder. What is your club, Federation doing for marketing?