



SQUARE DANCING AT A CROSSROADS:

WHAT CLUBS MUST CHANGE TO GROW MEMBERSHIP

KEY FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH MIKE SEASTROM, HUNTER KELLER, JUSTIN RUSSELL, ALLAN HURST, MICHAEL SATTLER, AND THE LANG FAMILY

The interviews revealed remarkable agreement: square dancing does not have a product problem—it has a presentation and accessibility problem.

Clubs already offer many of the things people want most today: friendship, community, fun, physical activity, mental engagement, safety, and belonging. Yet many clubs unintentionally create barriers through outdated messaging, unnecessary requirements, and traditions that make newcomers feel like outsiders.

People may come for the dancing, but they stay for the relationships. As Mike Seastrom put it, the calls are the bricks, but social connection is the mortar.

What People Are Looking For

Contrary to common assumptions, younger generations are not rejecting square dancing because it is old-fashioned. They are searching for:

- Friendship and community
- A sense of belonging
- Fun experiences
- Safe social environments
- Physical activity
- Multi-generational interaction
- Authentic human connection

The Lang family repeatedly emphasized that community—not choreography—was the greatest attraction. Several interviewees also noted that loneliness and social isolation are increasing in society, creating an opportunity for square dancing to meet a growing need.

The Strengths Clubs Already Have

Interviewees consistently identified four major strengths:

Community

Many clubs provide what people increasingly struggle to find: a social home, support network, and lasting friendships.

Fun

New dancers often discover that square dancing is far more enjoyable than they expected. Laughter, movement, teamwork, and music were recurring themes.

Multi-Generational Relationships

Younger dancers valued connections with older dancers and appreciated being part of a larger community.

Safe, Sober Social Activity

Square dancing offers a welcoming social environment without alcohol pressure, filling a need many other activities do not.