

# WHAT IS YOUR MISSION?

## Square Dancing can learn from successful businesses.

*By Jeff Garbutt and John Brant*

Do we really know what we are trying to achieve? Or are we just aimlessly trying to do our best for Square Dancing?

Many organizations have faced very similar questions about their existence:

- \* Why do they exist ? (Mission statement)
- \* What is the ultimate goal they wish to achieve? (Vision statement), and
- \* How do we inspire everyone towards that goal? (Passion statement).

Can we use the same concepts in our quest to promote square dancing? We believe so!

### MISSION STATEMENT

Mission statements tell us what an organization does, and why they exist. But more than that - they should inspire the people within that organization to work towards their mission.

In the case of a local caller's association it's main reason for existence may be to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and skills between callers for the overall good of square dancing. So the mission statement would be something like "to assist our callers to better serve the square dance community".

One problem with Square Dance clubs is they all try to be alike in the same area. We are all trying to appeal to the same market. This is why most clubs are Plus clubs with a high age average in America. Maybe we should start thinking about creating "niche" clubs that appeal to different types of dancers.

Some clubs have specialties but really have not thought about it in those terms. Club leaders should think about what they want their club to be and actually write a Mission Statement.

One example of a Mission Statement that could be used by a club that books the top callers is, "We will book the best callers available and continue to maintain the rent on best hall so we will be considered the premier club in the area".

Another small town club may not be able to afford the top callers and are in an area that does not draw dancers from other areas. Their speciality would be appealing to the community. Their Mission Statement would be, "We will promote our club to be a friendly "country" club that will appeal to the average citizen.

We will dance at a level that will allow all dancers to enjoy the evening." These are only two examples.

It is important for businesses to focus on what their core business is by using mission statements. Mission Statements could also help Square Dancing Clubs.

### VISION

Vision statements are quite simply a view of how we would like things to be. In our case it could be something as simple as: "A world in which square dancing is seen as the most popular past-time."

### PASSION STATEMENTS:

The term "passion statement" is quite new, but passion statements have been around for a long time. They are essentially "mission statements" that really say something - and are used to not only inspire the members of an organization - but to encourage customers to use a product or service. For example the old classic - "American Express Card - don't go anywhere without it".

A petroleum company in Australia advertises: "Go well -go Shell". And Coca-Cola used to have "things go better with Coca-Cola".

These are statements that work on our sub-conscious and make us want to use that product.

The idea, of course, is to produce some excitement. If an ad agency came up with the passion statement of "drink Coke", they would be fired.

So we should think about how poor marketing it is to say "learn to Square Dance".

We could jazz it up a bit by saying things such as these:

"Square Dancing is Fun & friendship set to music",

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"Square Dancing is cool", and "Square Dancing - the dance the world has been doing for generations" to use some examples.

Maybe if the image of Square Dancing was different more people would want to do it even though they really wouldn't know why they prefer to do it over other activities.

It would be like Coke or Pepsi convincing people their drink is better even though many can not tell the difference in a blind test.

If we could just find a really good passion statement that catches everyone's attention - we might just peak their curiosity a bit about Square Dancing.

In this modern world of the media, image is everything. All businesses and activities live and die with it.

### WHY BOTHER?

Why should we bother to work on any of these you say.

We are not a large corporation - we are just a hobby. It would be nice if none of us had to think about Square Dance organizing and promotion, but unfortunately someone has to keep the hobby going.

With no promoting or organization the dance form probably would not have lasted as long as it has.

We dancers need to start thinking about Square Dancing as a business or we will go the same route as most poorly run businesses do - that is out of business.

Well do you really care about this hobby? Wouldn't you like to see it grow and become popular ?

Don't you think it would be useful for us to work out exactly what we are trying to achieve (mission)? And what we want the world to be like in five, ten, fifty or even one hundred years time?

Wouldn't you like to see Square Dancing as being a major part of that future (vision)?

We do - and so should everyone who cares about square dancing.

Of course these statements on their own won't do anything.

We also need action, training, planning, promotion, opportunity, good leaders, members and other resources - all the things that business needs to be successful.

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