

SHOWMANSHIP

GSI Caller School





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Showmanship is a highly individual and an extremely personal aspect of a performer's art. Many experts feel that it cannot be taught; only demonstrated.

What may be effective for one caller may not be effective for another. The subject cannot be reduced to a convenient formula that will work every time for every caller.

Callers demonstrate showmanship in a variety of ways. In almost every case, their efforts fall into one of three basic categories:

MUSICAL SHOWMANSHIP

CHOREOGRAPHIC SHOWMANSHIP

THEATRICAL SHOWMANSHIP



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All three categories of Showmanship start with simple preparation:

1. Pre Dance Preparation

- Communicate with club prior to the dance and arrive on time.
- Personal appearance – demeanor – presence - confidence.

2. At the dance.

- Establish and maintain rapport with dancers.
- Use of stage and equipment
- Choreography plan, get outs, and gimmicks.
- Singing call plan.

3. Leave them wanting more.

- Attend after party activity if possible.
- Be consistent with your own personality and style.
- Make every effort to include everyone in the “show.”
- Be genuine and unique.



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MUSICAL SHOWMANSHIP

Music is the most frequently employed showmanship device used by square dance callers. Callers who sing and harmonize well tend to display presentation talent easily in the on-stage work.

Singing calls are probably provide the greatest single opportunity for callers to inject showmanship. Look for ways to use the original character of the song to improve the theatrical aspect of the presentation.

Musical showmanship tools include:

- Vocal harmony
- Vocal devices such as tone sustaining, growling, falsetto, whispering, yodeling, etc.
- Talking delivery techniques if proper pitch is a problem. Learn to let music work for you.
- Special “opener” in a singing call musical arrangement. (and “closers”)
- Working with key change modulations.
- Special musical features in a recording such as silence or rhythm breaks, instrumental solos, hand claps, special sound effects....

While singing calls represent the most obvious opportunity for musical showmanship, these techniques may also be applied to patter music, especially with the alternative music available today. Varied vocal harmony is possible in order to achieve a more interesting performance. Care must be exercised that these uses are not carried to an extreme, lest it distract the dancers to the point where they are no longer able to dance or follow the calls.



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CHOREOGRAPHIC SHOWMANSHIP

Choreography that is different, unusual, surprising, unpredictable, flashy, and spectacular will be viewed by the dancers as showman like - even flamboyant.

GET OUTS - The most popular form of choreographic showmanship involves the use of modular Get Outs. Very effective if the final action or step is totally unexpected. At Home, Right & Left Grand, and Stir the Bucket Get Outs can be the most effective.

UNUSUAL CHOREOGRAPHIC CONCEPTS

- Fractionalizing (Circulate once-and-a-half; 1/2 Zoom.)
- Interruptions (on the third hand, one now/one later routines; etc).
- Choreography where some dancers do one call while others do a different call.

GIMMICKS - Progressive (Exploding) Squares, Hexagon Squares, Tandem Squares, Kaleidoscope Squares, Offset Squares, big call oldies like Grand Parade, Grand Spin, Asymmetric.

Two VERY Important rules for Choreographic Showmanship:

1. Know your material. Amateurs practice until they get it right.....Professionals practice until they can't get it wrong.
2. Remember that it's easy to call hard...hard to call easy and interesting. Dancers need to be successful or you will have zero showmanship effect.



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THEATRICAL SHOWMANSHIP

Like most performers square dance callers are apt to possess a strong sense of theater, an eye for drama, and a flair for the flamboyant.

It's important to develop a distinctive calling style all the while learning by studying and even employing the traits of other well established successful callers.

Frankenstein's Caller

Choreographic Creativity	Jerry Story
Choreographic Control	Randy Dougherty
Stage Presence	Gary Shoemake
Timing/Flow	Tom Miller
Humor	Tim Crawford
Personality	Marshall Flippo
Singing & Presentation	Tony Oxendine
Rhythm	Ken Bower
Musical Ear	Wade Driver
Flair & Appearance	Dee Dee Dougherty
Teaching	Jack Pladdys



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Other Showmanship points of interest:

- Appearance
- Attitude
- Be polite and courteous when you leave the stage.
- Be sensitive to what people say and how they feel.
- Take the time to talk to people and try to use their first name.
- If asked, be prepared to join in the "After-party".
- Pick your material carefully so as not to offend.
- Be yourself!
- Accentuate the Positive!
- Eliminate the Negative!
- Incite Excitement!
- Find YOUR inner ARTIST.

And remember.....

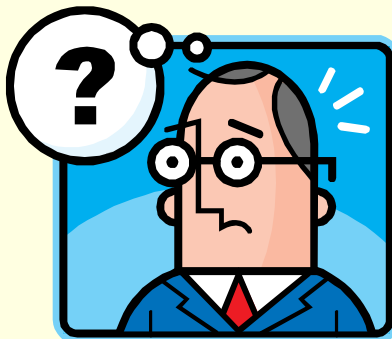
You can't burn out if you've never been on fire.

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QUESTIONS



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ANSWERS