

How to Use Lead Generation Methods to Grow Your School, Part 2

[Editor's Note: This is part 2 of a special "super-sized" Black Belt Marketing Report in three parts. Look for part three in the June Professional Package. Start to put these lead generation methods to work immediately every month and you'll generate a growing flow of leads through Back-To-School season and into the fall.]

Seven More No-Cost and Low-Cost Lead Generation Methods

By the time you read part 2 of this Black Belt Marketing Report, you should have already started, tested and/or implemented some of the first seven lead generation methods in part 1, presented in the April 2010 issue of *NAPMA NOW*.

You may even be experiencing positive results from those lead generation methods—and excited about what you've been able to do. Keep your energy on high and your attitude positive because part 2 presents seven more no-cost, low-cost lead generation methods that you can try this month. Continue to use those that have worked best from part 1, and add those from part 2 to drive your school growth to new heights.

It's amazing how the first positive results can motivate you to strive for more. As with much of the support that NAPMA provides its members, however, this Black Belt Marketing Report on lead generation is a partnership. NAPMA provides the proven methods that are working in martial arts schools just like yours; and you provide the time and the effort to make these methods work for you.

The seven lead generation methods in part 2 do require some expenditure, but proper planning and decision-making will help to keep the costs low. The last five can be grouped together, since they all can be used as direct marketing methods. Study these carefully to learn how to use flyers, postcards, door hangers and brochures in a multitude of ways to spread the costs among many lead generation opportunities, thus reducing your cost per lead.

The following lead generation methods are taken from NAPMA President Rob Colasanti's business teleconference, *Hitting Hard in the Martial Arts Business*. The text has been edited, but you can listen to the entire presentation by visiting the Pro Shop at napma.com and ordering the "Hitting Hard" audio CD.

[Editor's Note: Lead generation methods 1-7 were provided in the April Professional Package.]

8. Yellow Pages

You don't need the biggest ad in the Yellow Pages, but you should be listed. Bold, all-caps lettering or red lettering is often just as effective as a "display" ad with your logo and/or a photo—and it's much cheaper. Be careful about placing an ad in too many different sections of the Yellow Pages, as this will increase your cost quickly. Make a list of all the sections you could appear and then try different combinations every year to see which works best.

Your Yellow Page ad will generate leads, even if it is just a one-line message that directs prospects to your Web site. Remember, the Yellow Pages is more like a reference for consumers. You should expect the messages and images in your other lead generation methods to do the real job of communicating and motivating consumers to buy. The Yellow Pages is often where they find your phone number when they are ready to contact you.

9. Print Media Advertising

Placing ads in your local print media—local and community newspapers, a coupon book or Penny Saver-type publication—does generate leads, but you must use the medium correctly. A "mass advertising" media, such as print, requires repetition and regularity; so one ad in one publication every few months is not a wise strategy.

Print media advertising can be expensive, but it need not be, depending on a variety of factors, such as ad size, color or black and white, ad position, the publications' circulation, etc. You must be willing to test different ad messages, sizes, placements, publications and frequency to determine what combination is most effective and efficient for you.

Print media, as with all mass advertising media (radio, TV, billboard, etc.), is a good idea when it operates like an "investment," meaning that the dollars you spend are returned to you (plus some profits) from the new business they generate—and then you re-invest those dollars again and again.

One of the best ways to help you "invest" your print media budget efficiently and effectively is to ask other small businesses in your area which newspapers and other publications have worked for them. Ask those small businesses whose customers are part of the same target audience as yours. These could be any type of business that offers products and services to families: dry cleaner, car repair, bank, florist, shoe store, shoe repair, optometrist, hair and nail salons, day spas, daycare schools, etc.

NAPMA supports its members every month with a variety of print media ads on the *Media Master CD-ROM* that can be easily customized and sent to most publications as a digital file via email. That saves considerable time and money.

10. Direct Mail

Despite the rising cost of printing and postage, direct mail is still a strong lead generation method. Your mailbox wouldn't be filled with direct mail from major companies if it didn't work. Direct mail is also a lead generation method that should operate as an "investment." The old business adage is true: You must spend money to make money; but, if you do it wisely, then you should recoup your investment, so you can put it to work again.

Jay Abraham, the well respected and highly paid marketing consultant, refers to direct mail as a ten-thousand-person sales department. You can only effectively make a sales presentation to one prospect at a time, but direct mail can communicate with thousands of prospects, simultaneously.

Direct mail professionals teach that there are three primary elements to the effective use of direct mail: the quality of the list, the message and the packaging. The importance of the last two is almost negligible compared to the quality of your list. Nothing will destroy a direct mail campaign faster than a bad list; so don't even think about implementing a direct mail lead generation method until you have developed a great list of prospects.

Your local bookstore is filled with books on how to develop direct mail lists and all the other fine points of this lead generation method. There are also seminars you can attend, and you can find much information on the Internet.

NAPMA supports the use of direct marketing, which is why every NAPMA Professional Package includes direct mail pieces, including an advertising bag flyer and a four-postcard series.

The following four lead generation methods can be used in multiple ways, including direct mail.

11. Flyers

Flyers are one of the least expensive methods to attract new students with powerful images and benefit statements. A few hundred flyers cost pennies apiece and could generate thousands of dollars in revenue through the "training life" of just one student. If you are still using black and white flyers, then "invest" a little extra in color flyers, occasionally, to test how many more leads are generated with color. You can slowly work your way to all colored flyers, thus maximizing the benefit of this lead generation method. Companies such as FedEx Office, Sir Speedy and similar local quick-print services are now able to provide color flyers at affordable rates.

Flyers should be distributed to students regularly for internal promotions and at all events and presentations outside the school. They can also be a direct mail piece, included in an advertising bag flyer, and distributed to homes and apartments throughout your immediate neighborhood and surrounding community. (Every NAPMA Professional Package includes at least one flyer in its marketing campaigns.)

12. Postcards

Postcards are probably the lowest cost method of direct mail because the cards are inexpensive, compared to more elaborate direct mail pieces, and you pay the least amount of postage. There are many vendors on the Internet that will print your postcards, manage your mailing list and mail your postcards, all at an affordable price, freeing you to spend more time with students and staff.

NAPMA marketing campaigns include a series of four postcards with a consistent theme and complementary messages, so you can mail one per week or every other week. Direct mail campaigns, especially postcards, require that the same list of prospects receives more than one card and message to be effective. One card sent to one list once is virtually a waste of money.

13. Door Hangers/Advertising Bag Flyers

This lead generation method can be very low cost, especially if you have a staff, G.O.L.D. Team or older students to distribute door hangers or advertising bag flyers throughout the residential neighborhoods near your school.

NAPMA includes an advertising bag flyer in every monthly marketing campaign with suggested Internet vendors from which you can purchase the bags for only pennies apiece. Advertising bags can be more effective than door hangers because you can place several pieces in an advertising bag: a flyer, a guest pass, testimonials, your newsletter, etc.

14. Brochures

Brochures are very versatile lead generators. They can be a direct mail piece, mailed in an envelope or stuffed in an advertising bag. You should also distribute them during demonstrations, academic school presentations/talks, seminars and mall events. Display one in a clear, plastic point-of-purchase stand at your front counter with a stack of them for quick and easy distribution to all visitors.

As you use these various lead generation methods to increase your enrollments and revenues, you'll have the budget to test color brochures. Color does make a difference! You'll notice that few of the direct mail pieces you receive at home are black and white.

The NAPMA Web site Pro Shop and Instructor Catalog offer a number of professionally designed brochures to market general martial arts training, your preschool program and fitness kickboxing.

Conclusion

It's important to review the primary parts of a good lead generation system again. Staying focused on these three points will help you maximize the number of leads each method generates.

- A consistent and constant use of lead generation methods.
- Multiple lead generation methods operating simultaneously (The Parthenon Principle).
- Testing various methods to determine which work best for your school.