

Increasing Sales with a Professional Enrollment Presentation Binder or PowerPoint Presentation, Part 1

Part one of this Black Belt Management Report presents the benefits of a presentation binder and how its use will increase the consistency, professionalism and success of your enrollment conferences. Suggested enrollment qualifying questions are included.

In an ideal world, the enrollment conference is simply the “sold” stamp on an excellent introductory course, which is where most of the selling takes place and, in many cases, without the prospect being aware that he is being sold. When the intro process works like it should, you’re able to address the prospective student’s needs; entice him with the many benefits of your school like so many dazzling jewels; and overcome all commitment and tuition objections with motivational philosophy (and some good, old-fashioned common sense).

It’s wonderful when the introductory lesson closes the sale and enrollment simply becomes an issue of, “To whom do I write the check?” In the real world, however, many martial arts school owners and/or their enrollment directors still need to learn the sales skills and techniques to transform cool or lukewarm prospects into new, enthusiastic and paying students during the enrollment conference. A critical tool of the effective and successful enrollment conference is a professional Enrollment Presentation Binder.

Benefits of an Enrollment Presentation Binder

1. Provides for a consistent presentation, regardless of who is conducting the enrollment conference.

Your enrollment director may not always be able to make an enrollment presentation because of illness, vacation or other duties. The binder assures that a substitute or inexperienced salesperson will quickly

comprehend the important points of the enrollment process and present them consistently to maximize the number of successful enrollments.

The more people on your staff, who are able to conduct successful enrollment conferences, according to the standardized procedures and steps, the more enrollments you’re able to close in a given period of time.

You can also be assured of consistent and successful enrollments, even when you must conduct an increased number of them in a short period of time, due to an influx of prospects generated from a special mall show or back-to-school or holiday enrollment campaigns.

2. Serves as a checklist to address all objections thoroughly.

A successful enrollment requires that specific information and statements be presented, emphasized, restated and re-emphasized at critical points during the conference. An excellent enrollment process will also include various techniques and strategies, some psychological, some motivational. These ensure students and parents will be “guided” to the point of sale ready to buy because all of their objections have been addressed with a thorough presentation of your program’s benefits. The enrollment binder helps to assure you that none of the steps or points of the process is being overlooked or disregarded.

3. Increases prospects’ interest and emphasizes important points, with the addition of graphics and photos.

A visual representation of an idea, concept or important point in your enrollment process often increases the prospect’s understanding, acceptance and agreement. Graphics and photos that trigger

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emotional responses from parents and drive a student's desire to participate in an activity portrayed in a photo do more to close a sale than anything you might say. (Part two of this Black Belt Management Report will recommend the kinds of graphics and photos to use in your binder.)

4. Enhances your professional image

Prospects will recognize the enrollment binder as a symbol of your professionalism, your attention to detail and preparation for the meeting. Although you may be able to make a spontaneous presentation (especially after conducting scores of enrollment conference), do not fall into that trap. Always use the enrollment binder and use it as if it was the first time. Your interaction with the binder generates interest and enthusiasm in the prospect. You always need that, regardless of how many times you've conducted an enrollment conference.

Recommended Qualifying Questions: The Essence of Your Presentation

The purpose of qualifying questions is to reveal any possible obstacles to enrollment before asking for the sale. Each question addresses a key factor in a successful enrollment and provides each prospective student (and their parents) with the opportunity to express his or her interests or concerns. The questions also help you qualify the student for an existing program at your school or the need to develop a custom program to guarantee a sale.

The recommended questions are listed below. You want to be sure you and your staff are thoroughly familiar with them and how they fit into your presentation before you add them to your binder and start to use them, and that takes some preparation time. Part 2 of this Report will provide details on how to use your enrollment presentation binder, including these qualifying questions.

Please read and study the questions, share them with your staff and, if necessary, customize them to

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your curriculum and programs. You may discover that you need additional questions for your school's particular enrollment process. You want to make sure everyone has a thorough understanding of the questions because they are really the essence of your presentation. Graphics, photos and other elements support and enhance the process, but how prospects answer the questions and you address objections are what will maximize sales.

Schedule practice sessions with your staff. Everyone should memorize the questions and the standard responses. Role-playing drills will prepare your staff members for unusual answers, teaching them a choice of flexible responses.

Each of the qualifying questions listed below includes an explanation of the salesperson's objectives and how to address objections and qualify the student, in terms of program, schedule, commitment, ability to pay, etc.

Question 1: Do you plan to be a long-term resident of our community or will you be moving soon?

The objective of the salesperson's question is to determine whether the prospect's residency plans may affect the length of the contract. The primary goal is to close a sale. If the student/family plan to live in the community permanently, then you know you have the opportunity to sign them for a 12-month contract. Conversely, if the student answers that his residency plans are unclear or he is definitely moving in less than a year, then you may offer him a three-month program, for example. Be sure that the prospect knows that a short-term program is easily converted to a longer curriculum, if his plans change. Now, you're prepared to overcome the residency obstacle because your curriculum is flexible enough to sell virtually every prospect a program.

Question 2: Are you able and willing to commit to a long-term program of instruction, with required attendance and practice?

The objective of this question is to test your expectations of the student's commitment to the length of the training as well as the required attendance and practice. (See Questions #3 and #5, which address attendance and practice, specifically.)

Emphasize that you have made a commitment on behalf of the school to provide a complete training program and motivate the student to attend and practice, regularly. You expect an equal commitment from him (and his parents).

Ask the prospect (and his parents) to agree with you that the value of the program is more than the curriculum; it is achieving a special goal and making good on a promise to complete the challenge. The tuition is worth the opportunity to prove you are a person that remains committed and doesn't lose interest and quit.

Question 3: Will your schedule permit you to attend two required classes every week? Are there any activities or events that might interrupt your regular class attendance?

The objective of this question is to qualify the prospect, according to the required class schedule. The salesperson should also listen carefully to the student's responses and observe his body language for positive signs that he is able and willing to attend class, regularly.

It is recommended that you review your class schedule with the prospect before the introductory lessons. Review it again following the lessons to establish a schedule; and ask the prospect to re-confirm his ability and willingness to be at class every week.

Of course, if the prospect's prior commitments/schedule is an obstacle to his regular attendance or even enrolling in the class, then there aren't many options available; the enrollment conference is terminated. One possible option for the prospect to consider is private lessons that are scheduled when he is available. If a prospect seems to reach for that option, but hesitates, then you must test his commitment and desire to become a martial artist and sell him on the unique benefits of private lessons.

Question 4: Do you have any physical challenges that might limit your class participation? Are you prone to any specific kinds of injuries?

The objective of this question is two-fold: to place the prospect in a program that matches his physical

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limitations and emphasize that the safety and security of each student is always your first consideration. For instance, a student with a questionable medical condition should probably only enroll in a three-month program to assure everyone that he is able to participate fully, without injuring himself or adversely affecting his condition. You also want to be sure that children, who are especially small or large for their ages, are not placed in classes with mismatched students. As in the previous questions, you always want to provide the prospect with an option to overcome an obstacle or objection. You don't want them to think that they're caught on a "dead-end street" with no paths to their goal of becoming a martial artist or Black Belt.

Question 5: Does your child have a place and the time to practice at home what he or she learned in class? For example, we require young students to practice a minimum of ten minutes everyday at home.

The objective of this question is to emphasize the importance of home practice and how it benefits all parties concerned. For you, the school owner, home practice is one of the keys to retention. Students who practice improve and advance, and that motivates students and parents to remain in your program. Parents who are enthusiastic and willing to provide space and time for home practice are demonstrating their level of commitment, which is also a positive sign of retention. Establishing the importance of home practice in the minds of students and parents from the very beginning creates a habit that requires little or no policing by you. Students accept home practice as an extension of their class lessons and proof of their commitment to the program.

You want to know now, during the enrollment conference, that the parent is too busy to create a home practice space and schedule for his child and motivate him to practice. There are a few options available to you. The other parent may have more time to help organize home practice. The student may have an older sibling who is able to help. The student may be able to practice with another student who is a friend or lives nearby.

Question 6: Do you understand that our school isn't a "gym," but an "educational facility" with a philosophy that focuses on developing a positive mental attitude, respect and self-discipline?

The objective of this question is to emphasize the difference between your school and physical, athletic and/or health-related activities. Don't denigrate these activities during your presentation because they do offer many benefits; however, you must explain clearly that they only offer limited benefits when compared to the martial arts. Emphasize martial arts' thousand-year tradition and influence; how self-defense training have saved lives; that Black Belt is an achievement that is recognized throughout one's life; and the character-building lessons, especially for children, that are taught within a disciplined environment.

Be sure the prospect (and parents) understand that martial arts instructors must commit to many years, even decades, of training and professional development to qualify as teachers at your school. The opportunity to learn from such dedicated instructors (who also happen to be exceptional role models) is worth much more than the tuition.

Question 7: Are there any specific goals you would like the school to help you accomplish during the next six months to a year, such as weight loss, increased cardio capacity, self-defense, etc.

The objective of this question is to provide the prospect with the opportunity to create, or augment, your curriculum, so it serves his needs. Make him believe you are listening and responding to what he is saying. Most martial arts programs are quite structured, which may be unfamiliar or challenging to many prospects. This is an occasion to assure the student that he won't be shoved into a pre-conceived mold, that your programs have many training options.

Question 8: Are you able to budget comfortably \$149 to \$199 (insert your price range) for tuition each month? Most students pay their tuitions monthly; however, there are other options.

The objective of this question is to close the sale. It is the culmination of the entire enrollment process. If your presentation has been thorough and enthusiastic

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and the student has had a positive and successful experience during the introductory lessons, then as many as nine out of ten prospects will agree to your tuition.

Of course, you must be very observant during this question and discussion because the prospect's reactions and body language will tell you much about his acceptance of the tuition and payment arrangements.

Once again, your programs and tuition schedule should have the flexibility to provide options to those few prospects that will hesitate to answer this question, or even answer "No."

Finally, review the payment plan options with the prospect (and his parents), once you've addressed any tuition and payment concerns or objections,

Look for part 2 in an upcoming Member Package. It will provide specific information about preparing, assembling and using your enrollment presentation binder.