

Does Your Martial Arts Leadership Program Have the Value and Prestige of a College Degree?

Your Highest Priority Should Be a G.O.L.D. Leadership Program with Impeccable Value

If your school is like most across the country, then you may already offer a G.O.L.D. or other leadership program that is considered your highest enrollment level. You probably charge much more for this program; and it should give your students an opportunity to excel above and beyond just the kicking and punching of their martial arts training.

Parents are looking for a program where their families (and especially their children) can learn real leadership skills to prepare them for the rest of their lives. If they don't find this in your school, then they will turn to other resources.

This G.O.L.D. Leadership Team Report will explore the real value of your martial arts leadership program, and include some proven ways to raise the value of your program to exceed the expectations of your school's parents and students.

It's All about Providing Value

Today's parents (and even adult students) will pay a higher sticker price for leadership education. It is that important. Your challenge is to make sure you deliver on your promises, so parents easily recognize the value of what they are paying.

Too many martial arts schools across the country offer leadership programs that just don't provide enough value to their students. They are charging a higher price, in many cases \$200-\$300 a month, and simply not providing enough value.



These leadership programs may only teach students how to perform warm-ups or bow in the class. Sometimes, a new weapon or uniform is included, but that is not leadership training.

If you can honestly describe your leadership program in the same terms, then parents must feel as if they didn't receive their moneys' worth from your program. Feeling cheated is definitely not a how you want parents talking about your school with other parents in your community.

As a martial arts instructor, you have a responsibility to provide more value to your students than you could ever receive in return.

If you charge \$200 per month for your leadership program, then you must provide \$400 - \$500 of value to your students, every month.

Your martial arts leadership education must create leaders through experiential-based leadership training, if you want to sustain constant school growth and create raving fans in your community. By providing more value than you expect in return, you will produce incredible Black Belt students and families that have nothing but good to say about your program.

The Costs and Benefits of a College Degree in Leadership

For a moment, focus on the value of a college degree.

BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The average yearly tuition for a four-year public college was \$5,836 in '06-'07.

You may have friends who have graduated with degrees in leadership/management and enjoy the benefits of their college education. The valuable skills they learned will be used for the rest of their lives – and to their advantage. Social skills, the ability to talk in front of groups and the ability to satisfy deadlines are all leadership tools with direct benefits.

The cost of their college educations can best be justified if they were placed in well paying jobs after school. The value of their educations can also be measured against others their age that are not eligible for the same higher-paying position.

If a student paid \$5,836 per year for his or her college education and was not hired for the higher-paying job, then he or she would feel cheated: the investment in education did not return the value.

Your martial arts students (and parents) are just as smart. They will compare the value of your leadership program to the cost and determine if your program is a good investment.

Are your students glad they paid the extra money and became a part of your leadership program, or do they feel like they are not receiving the value they were promised?

Is Your Leadership Program Providing Enough Value to Produce Raving Fans of Your School?

If you are charging \$200 per month for a leadership program, then ask yourself:

- “Would I pay \$2,400 per year for this level of education?”
- “Am I providing my students with \$4,800 of value every year?”
- “What more could I do to provide my students with more value?”

- “Are my students raving about the benefits of my current leadership education or are they just hanging out waiting for more?”
- “Could I implement a new program, so they could experience real leadership training?”

If your leadership program is not producing raving fans of your school, then you are not yet providing enough value.

Students (and parents) should be so excited to talk about what they are learning at your school that their referrals should be banging on the door to spend \$200 a month to receive \$400 a month of value. Parents will happily invest in your program when they perceive positive results.

“What Could I Do to Begin to Improve the Value of My Leadership Program?”

Just like your martial arts curriculum, you must have a plan. Create a syllabus and/or a set curriculum for your leadership program. This includes your staff members’ leadership development, since you should be providing them a valuable education, as well.

You must have a leadership development course that pertains to adults, one for children and one for your staff. It can be a similar course, but just taught with different content.

First, question your program from a student’s perspective.

- “What am I learning by being a part of the Leadership Program?”
- “What have I experienced since I started my leadership training?”
- “What can I take from my leadership education and apply to my schoolwork and other sports and activities?”
- “As a result of this program, do I consider myself a Leader?”

BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Next, ask yourself the same questions from a parent's perspective.

What were your answers? If you had a hard time adopting the perspectives of a student and parent, then create a survey for your G.O.L.D. Leadership Team (as well as your other students and parents). Ask them those same questions (and more) in the survey.

If they have a hard time answering these questions, then you will know that you are not providing enough value yet. If they can write two pages of answers in positive terms, then you have some powerful testimonials to use.

You could also interview your students and parents. Ask them:

- "I'm in the process of expanding our leadership program to provide you and your child with more value."
- "What are the most important benefits you've received from our leadership program?"
- "What leadership goals would like you (or your child) to accomplish in the future?"
- "What have you noticed in school or at home since your child enrolled in our leadership program?"

No doubt, you can think of more questions that may be directly related to your school and community, but be sure to ask questions that will generate some ideas to improve the value of your leadership program. Remember, your goal is to provide twice as much value as you are receiving in return.

"What Are Some Tools or Ideas That I Could Implement Today?"

The great thing about providing value is that it doesn't mean you have to spend more time on

the deck or with each student. You don't have to spend more money or work harder.

Providing more value simply means tweaking your curriculum. You will need to "cut the fat" and reveal the true worth of your program.

Leadership is learned through the experience of having a vision, setting a goal and pursuing that vision until others also see it, in real time.

A great place to start is to ask your students to write all of the random acts of kindness they perform each day. This is a simple goal that will assist others as well as teach leadership—that's experiential-based leadership training.

You could have them choose a community service project to accomplish together. It could be working with animals or maybe a food drive. This will, again, help make someone else's life a bit easier. That is experiential-based leadership training because you're teaching your students how to give others something of value.

Another idea is simply to have them set a goal to achieve, and have them work towards its completion. It could be something simple, such as doing the splits all three ways or completing 50 pushups without stopping.

The experience is everything. Leadership is learned through the experience of challenging yourself, meeting adversity and overcoming it to reach your goal.

When they complete these goals, they will be learning how to lead others. Every goal that they set should be completed with the understanding that it has helped someone else be a better person, as well.

They are learning leadership through the experience of pushing themselves beyond their previous limitations, and inspiring others with their leadership. This is all above and beyond traditional martial arts training, but is all tied together through tradition and integrity.

BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This type of leadership education can be even more powerful than a college education in many ways because leadership is the most sought-after skill on earth. Everyone requires a leader to inspire his or her life. A martial arts student can apply the leadership skills learned at your dojo to any job, assignment and area of his or her life. This is very valuable!

You can create this level of powerful, experience-based leadership development in your school.

The most satisfying thing you will ever experience as a martial arts instructor is to provide more value to someone than you receive and be thanked (and maybe a glowing testimonial or referral) in return.

Class Outline

- Before your class starts, develop and distribute a survey or interview your students and parents, so you can effectively judge the current value of your leadership program.
- Start your G.O.L.D. Leadership Team class by implementing some of the comments, suggestions and ideas from the survey and/or interviews.
- Some ideas may include random acts of kindness, community projects or individual goal setting beyond the next belt.
- Separate your leadership team into groups and brainstorm some ideas.
- Close the class by challenging your students to complete their new goal and submit a report to you.