

Back to School Marketing Strategy for Martial Arts Schools





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OVERVIEW

We have a lot of ground to cover today as we're moving into the back to school season and it's such a marvelous time for school owners to really put their foot on the gas and accelerate their marketing activity and marketing results for a lot of reasons and we're going to explore that pretty thoroughly today.

Each and every day we're on the phone interacting with martial art school owners and NAPMA members, everyday, all day and I'll share a unique perspective what's working, what's not working, and what we see martial arts school owners do especially this time of year to really accelerate their results

Certainly we've had lots and lots of success with this over the years and we have that broad based experience with, so we can really sort of show you the right direction and make sure that you don't get off track.

You know in a lot of cases what we see is school owners just struggle because frankly, they just keep repeating the same mistakes over and over again and lament their poor results. They don't really have a sounding board, they don't really have a system or a tool in place to surround themselves with other successful school owners who have sort of been there and done that, who have sort of made the mistakes that can now save them tons of money, time and effort.

THE MOST VALUABLE COMMODITY IN YOUR SCHOOL

One of the things that we talk about a lot at NAPMA is what can we do, what can we help school owners with, what can we have our packages, what can we have on the website, what resources can we invest in that will help save school owners time?

And the reason being is your time as a school owner is the most valuable commodity that you have, you can never replace it, once that minute is gone it will never be here again, it's gone forever, and we see in virtually every case of school owners who really struggle and ultimately fail, the one primary, common thread that they all share is, well let's say mostly share, is that they find themselves overwhelmed with tasks, duties and activities to do and trend towards focusing on those that have a lower return on their time, rather than a higher return.

The example that we always like to use is, the average martial arts school owner doesn't like selling very much. So they feel uncomfortable in a sales conference, they feel uncomfortable in that environment.

So if the choice is when they walk in the school at 11:00 or 12:00 and they have 2 tasks to do, they have task number one, I can call 25 of these leads that I have, kind of like cold calling, but they're kind of warm, or I can go to Office Depot and get paper because the copier is out of paper.

In all too many cases they trend towards the lower return activity, which is going to Office Depot and getting paper.

So it's extremely important that you have a really tight hold on exactly what you're doing with your day to day activities and how you're spending your time, and again that's one of the huge reasons for NAPMA to exist and one of the major benefits to its owners, to its members, is we're here to save you time.

We're here to make your life easier.

We're here to do a lot of labor for you and I'm sure you'll experience that through your NAPMA Maximum Impact membership all of the time saving benefits that we have to offer you.

BACK TO SCHOOL MARKETING: CONCEPTS

For today's purpose we're focusing mostly on back to school marketing and how to dramatically increase and multiply your results for back to school.

I wanted to start off with the 40,000 foot in the air perspective, a tried and true, a staple marketing concept, is **entering into the conversation that a person or prospect or potential student in our case, and/or their families, are already having in their mind.**

So let me say that again, it's a hugely leverage marketing philosophy to enter into the conversation that someone is already having in their mind.

For example, right now many would argue that the economy sucks, many would argue that it's a difficult economic time right now, so one of the things that we need to be constantly vigilant with is making sure that in our marketing activity, in our ads, and in our copy we're giving people permission, we're allowing them to have a conversation in their mind that it's okay to buy, even though the economy is difficult right now.

And in fact, that's extremely useful for us.

If we don't have that economic conversation it's sort of like the big pink elephant in the room. And whoever points out the big pink elephant first wins. And in our case we want to be pointing it out.

We want to be entering into the internal conversation that that person is already having answering the objections that they may be having with the marketing material.

How this applies to back to school is extremely important right now, even though there are difficult economic times, we've had many, many, many NAPMA school owners who have been following our summer success system are driving enormous leads, one of our members we were just talking to about this the other, generated 750 leads in June and July.

He was out in front of 750 potential students in just those 2 months.

We have many, many cases like that, you know, I can't run down the list, but hundreds of cases of people who took summer very seriously and who followed our summer marketing strategies, went out into the community and created these relationships where they were able to accumulate huge numbers of leads, huge numbers of warm prospects.

And this is really what NAPMA is all about.

The martial arts industry is a very fragmented industry and your sort of like an island all to yourself, you're all out there by yourself and you really don't have a lot of people you can bounce ideas off of, you don't have a lot of expertise surrounding you as far as operating a business in many cases where they can save you a lot of money, time and energy by helping you avoid mistakes and by helping you maximize opportunities that you do take advantage of.

So that's really what we're talking about. So again, as that applies to back to school now we have a brilliant opportunity to enter that conversation that a person is already having in their mind.

DEFINE THE IDEAL CUSTOMER (STUDENT AND FAMILY)

Number one we have to define exactly who our ideal customers is.

And this is where we're kind of getting into some really strategic marketing philosophy.

If I'm a family oriented school then my ideal customer is probably something like the mom of a 9 year old, or the mom of an 8 year old, something like that. That's probably the bull's eye customer.

If I explore that customer more and more, then I start learning about that customer. That mom of a 9 year old, or that mom of an 8 year old probably drives the Lexus, or the higher end Toyota, the Avalon or something like that, probably it's not the one who drives the Honda Civic, it's probably the one who drives a pretty nice car.

You really have to explore exactly who this person is: where does she shop, where does she do business, what other businesses do they have relationships with, where do they go on the weekends, all those sort of things.

IDENTIFY AND SOLVE THEIR PROBLEM!

You NEED to have a really clear picture of exactly who this customer is, who this ideal prospective customer is. The conversation that this person is having right now and the reason that makes all this summer marketing activity we're going to be talking about today work so well, is because **right now they have a problem, and we have a solution to their problem.**

One of my new guilty pleasures, in fact he lived over here in Tampa, but one of my new guilty pleasures is that new television show, kind of reality-esque type show called Pitch Men, and it's about Billy Mays and Sully, his partner.

Sully is the guy from England and Billy is the guy who does all the infomercials with the real dark black beard and, the OxyClean guy, and it's this hysterical show, it basically shows how they make these commercials and how they pick the products that they will build commercials for.

And here are their main criteria for choosing a product to sell on TV:

They have these open cattle calls where they'll have dozens and dozens of inventors come in and sort of pitch them their widget, their thing that they've built. And the questions that Sully and Billy Mays are always trying to answer are **does this product solve a common problem, does it solve something that is a problem in your day to day life; and does it solve a problem that someone really wants to solve right now?**

Is this a painful problem?

And the more painful the problem is, the more excited they get about the product, because people are interested in solving that problem and they're willing to go do something to solve it.

They're willing to get their credit card out and walk over to the phone and dial the number and order.

If they're not willing to do that then the product doesn't work.

If it doesn't solve a significant enough problem and if it isn't enough pain, if it's not a painful enough problem, or a motivating enough benefit for them to get up off the couch, go over to their purse, go over to their wallet, get out the credit card, go over to the phone, remember the number that they saw, dial it and talk to the telemarketer.

If it's not worth that much effort then the product is worthless.

We need to be thinking the same way.

I think in all too many cases martial arts school owners take the wrong perspective of their business and they think about their business from their own selfish outlook and they say well I like to teach this style.

I like to teach this form of martial art, that's my product, like it or don't like it, enroll or don't enroll.

In reality, what's more useful for you to think like a customer, for you to **think like your best potential customer**, your best prospect, and think to yourself what problem does this solve?

What problem does studying in your school solve?

Or what benefit will they give me?

And that's how you have to be speaking to your prospects, you have to be speaking to them in terms of what problem you can solve or what benefit you can deliver to them.

Our product is extremely important and valuable to the community.

That's why it's frustrating each and every day when we talk to school owners who have 25 students, 30 students, 50 students and the reason that's frustrating isn't because they're happy with 50 students, it's because they want to have 200 students, they want to have 300 students, but they don't value their own service yet.

They think that all they're teaching is kicking and punching and they're not really convinced themselves, they haven't convinced themselves yet that their product is the solution to so many problems and so many benefits.

We have to think like Billy and Sully do.

We have to think, right now it's the back to school season, it's July and school starts in three and a half to four weeks, if I'm that perfect prospect, if I'm the mom of a 9 year old who is driving in her Lexus, and she's got the kids in the car, and she's driving around town, she's thinking in her mind, okay, these guys are going back to school in three weeks, four weeks, what are the problems that she's trying to solve?

Well, she's probably trying to solve, getting them all their school supplies, we've got to get them all the stuff that they're going to need for school.

She's also thinking that we're getting back to schedule,

- What activities are we going to participate in this year?
- What are we going to do?
- What are we going to do after school?
- Are we going to look at doing gymnastics or dance or cheerleading or whatever the case may be?

So right now that's what the market is feeling, that's what they're thinking.

So there's this big vibrating mass of energy out there, and this is what the energy is doing, it's thinking oh my gosh school is coming up, I'm a little bit freaked out, I need to get my thoughts together, I need to get my plan together, what am I going to do? W

hat are we going to do this year?

And that's why all of your summer media, any type of marketing media that you're going to be using during the summer time to attract those prospects typically work better now, better during this season of the year, than any other time of the year.

HOW DO WE PENETRATE THAT PART OF THE MARKET?

So now, how do we go penetrate that market? We've got 4 or 5 really high power, high value strategies for you for that today.

FARMING:

Number one is this process we call farming and we use direct mail, email, voice broadcasting and fax to a lesser degree, long form mail and short form direct mail as well to farm your list.

So what that means is anybody you've ever come in contact with over the last 3 or 4 months, or frankly over the last couple of years, you should have in a big database somewhere - whether it's an Excel spreadsheet or some more robust data manipulation tool or software, you absolutely must have all their contact information in an organized place somewhere.

So if you don't have that in place you've got to fix it **immediately** and if it means you just use an Excel spreadsheet that's fine as a start that's absolutely fine.

But what you have to have is control over the data of every prospect that's ever walked into your school, who have ever come to a birthday party or a pizza party, or who have ever walked in the door and asked you what lessons were all about, anybody who ever responded to an ad in the past, anybody.

If you participated in the NAPMA summer success process you probably have, on the low end, 200, on the high end, 750 is the biggest number I've heard so far, there probably are people out there who did better than that, but anywhere from 200 to 750 new leads that are in your database, now those are very fruitful and a very fertile ground to hoe by using direct mail, email marketing and/or even calling, just basically walking through your database and having the program director call everybody.

So in direct mail farming, farming is basically you take your list and you slice and dice that list up based on either affinity, or geography, or what you perceive the demographic to be - some schools have specific pockets of geography that they like to target with their direct mail, etc. - and then we put them on a mail sequence where we start with a big long form letter, then we follow up with a postcard, and follow up with another postcard, follow up with another postcard.

And the reason that strategy is so much more effective than just a single one time blast - see here's the mistake that we see school owners do all the time is they go buy a list and they go buy 5,000 postcards, and they mail them all at

once, and never mail them again. And they wonder why they only got 1% percent response rate.

They only got maybe, I don't know, 30 or 40 calls, that turned into 3 or 4 enrollments.

In reality, here's why that doesn't work: when you woke up this morning and you got out of bed and, your feet hit the floor and you walked across the bedroom floor, you weren't thinking to yourself boy I can't wait to go to my mailbox and open it up and see who wants to send me something in there. Right? That's not how that works. And when you went to get your mail you weren't thinking about, okay I can't wait to get through this mail and see what I can go buy.

You're not thinking that way.

What you were thinking was I've got 8 million things to do today and only time to do 1 million. That's how human beings live. They don't exist waiting for your offer to plop on their desk.

But what can happen is this, I get a letter, it's creative enough, or it's sneaky enough, or it's overtly compelling enough that I open it up and I look at it

It speaks to what's in my mind already. And I look at the thing and it says here's an opportunity to this, this, this and this. Well that's kind of interesting.

Maybe this is something I might want to look into, and then you set it down on the desk and you walk away to go do your 8 million things that day, and by the time you come back there are 5 other sheets of paper stacked on top of that thing, and now it's out of sight out of mind.

Then a week and a half later, two weeks later, another postcard arrives, or another letter arrives that reminds you of what you saw before, and you say, well that's interesting I was talking about this last week and I thought that perhaps it was something I'd look into and then I lost the thing, I'm not sure where it was at, okay I'm going to call these guys.

And then you set it down over next to the phone and you go about your 8 million things that day, and then by that time the wife throws the thing away, and then you know it makes it into the trashcan rather than you calling them, and then the third post card arrives and they say, you know what, I've been meaning to call these guys, I'm calling them right now.

Sometimes that's what we can create and if we just do the one time big blast of 5,000 postcards that's good, but you know, it misses a lot of opportunity.

So that's like strategy point number two.

Strategy point number three is, so given my druthers; I would rather send 1,000 postcards 3 times, than 3,000 once.

I'd rather have a bigger impact on those 1,000 prospects. So that, the overarching process here is, back to school time direct mail is going to be more and more effective than any other time of the year.

So we certainly need to get into their mailboxes.

And we certainly need to be telling them the story of how we can solve their problem.

Mrs. Jones, I know what you must be feeling right now.

You're driving around town trying to figure out exactly what you're going to do for Johnny this year for the school year.

You are concerned, because in this difficult economy, savvy, caring parents like you, are carefully selecting 1 or perhaps 2 key activities, rather than getting involved in 4 or 5 as usual....

What are you going to do to help him with his focus skills and his study skills outside the classroom?

What is it that you're going to do to help him stay active instead of sitting in front of the television and playing video games all school year?

These are the problems that Mrs. Jones really wants to solve, and we have a great solution to those problems. But all too often, I see in martial arts school owner's advertising that it talks about their style and their lineage and how many tournaments they've won, see none of that stuff has anything to do with the problem Mrs. Jones is trying to solve this year.

So it's much more effective to use the strategy of speaking to the challenges, speaking to what they want to accomplish.

If your database is sophisticated enough to track what that student wants it's even more effective. So if you have a segment of your list of people who are interested in focus building skills, another segment who is interested in self defense, another segment who is interested in self confidence, another one who

is interested in self esteem, then you can go speak to that list in the language that they would respond to.

The language of the benefit that they've already told you they were interested in accomplishing. And these are the types of things that we talk a lot about in our Maximum Impact teleconferences and on our Maximum Impact DVD's is how to really maximize these opportunities.

RESOURCE:

You'll find customizable, Direct Mail Campaign Templates in your "Members Website".

You can select the demographic criteria you want to mail to, upload your own list, or any combination!

POWERFUL Members Resource!

Our Print on Demand service, you can go customize your own postcards, put in your own offer, your own logo, your own location, your own headline, whatever you want, and you don't have to learn software, it's all very fill in the form, hit submit and it's done, it's pretty cool, it shows you a little online proof and everything too, but not only can you upload your own list, but you can also have them pull the list for you.

You can define your criteria, you can say I want to mail this postcard to everyone within a 3 mile radius who has children in their household 4 to 12, who makes over \$60,000 a year, who whatever, lives in single family homes, who drive whatever.

You can add whatever criteria to your list that you want to.

So in reality you can slice and dice that cold list, the list of people who are not prospects yet as tightly as you want to. So you can define any criteria that you want and/or you can do any combination of the two.

Let's say I choose to do 5,000 postcards and I'm going to do 2 drops of 2,500, but I only have 1,500 names on my own list. You can go upload your 1,500 names, have them pull 1,000 names that meet the criteria that you want. Again, 2 parent families who own their own home, who have children in the

household 4 to 12, who live within a 2 mile radius, 1 mile radius, 3 mile radius, whatever you want, or that live in this specific zip code.

So if you have nice subdivisions around you and you want to specifically target those subdivisions you can target that postal range, any of those types of things that you want to do, or the carrier route, or the zip code or whatever you want. It's very robust. Or any combination of the two, so they can merge the two lists together, purge out the duplicates and send out the duplicates to them.

It's extremely powerful.

FINDING THE HERD

So marketing philosophy number two, is finding the herd.

And I tell this story all the time, and I tell it a lot, so you're likely to hear it a lot. I talk about the bears and when the bears are feeding and the salmon are running.

So you've got the one bear who is kind of an aggressive bear and he tromps right out into the middle of the stream while the salmon are running up stream, and he gets hip deep in the water and he snatches all the salmon he cares to eat as they swim by him.



The bear is just standing there hip deep in the water and whenever he wants to, he can just reach out and grab a salmon and eat him up. So he gets fat and happy and he's all ready for winter.

And then you've got another kind of bear that is kind of afraid to get his toe wet and he doesn't want to, or the current is too rough, so he kind of stands over on the shore and yeah, every now and then kind of a sickly, slow swimming salmon kind of swims toward the shore and the bear can grab him and eat a salmon every now and then.

But you have to decide which bear you want to be.

Do you want to be the bear who stands like in the middle of the stream and scoops up all the salmon he wants?

Or do you want to be the bear that stands on the shore?

And in the martial arts schools it's about the same thing. You want to find where the salmon are running, and then you want to go stand hip deep in the water right in front of them and sort of corral and herd as many of you can into your funnel, into your marketing funnel, into your school funnel.

Obviously one of the huge opportunities that we have, if we're marketing into the family market, and again if we're not marketing into the family market this can be translated into the adult market, into the tai chi market, into any market these principles are universal.

We have members from you name the association, you name the style, we have member schools. Eric Sbarge, one of our Inner Circle members is a soft stylist, he teaches kung fu and tai chi, mostly tai chi and he's running an \$800,000 to \$850,000 a year school plus or minus, very successful single location. We have schools who are Tai boxing schools or ju-jitsu schools, you name it, so all these principles are universal, you just have to apply them to your specific market.

So think about where your salmon are running.

Where are the big herds of your salmon?

Of course if we're in the family market the elementary schools are a huge opportunity for us and they have several hundred per school of our potential prospects.

So the challenge that school owners have typically is how do I approach them? How do I get in the door?

How do I create a relationship that's productive?

And we've got a great solution for that. NAPMA has actually partnered with the largest school supply retailer it's called EZ School Supplies.com and what EZ School Supplies and NAPMA have built for you is basically a done for you school supply drive that benefits our local elementary school.

EZ School Supplies has several hundred distribution centers across America and what happens is at the end of the school year they have partnerships with elementary schools and at the end of the school year the parents get this supply list of the supplies they're going to need next year and they can go to the website or they can fill out the form and fax it back, and EZ School Supplies will put together all the supplies for them, ship them a box with all the supplies they're going to need in it, plus they donate 10% of the purchase back to the local elementary school.

Well we've created the exact same relationship with our martial arts schools with our NAPMA member schools and EZ School Supplies.

So what we have the ability to do now is you can set up your profile, you can conduct a school supply drive that benefit's a local school. Let's say you do a school supply drive in your school and you have, it's a 2 tiered process, but you have either tier number one you have your students bringing school supplies into your school that you're doing to donate to the local elementary schools to help students who may not have them, or may not be able to afford them.

Imagine how this relationship could be built as you're walking into the local elementary school in August with \$500, or \$1,000 or \$5,000 worth of school supplies and you have a chance to meet the principal and say...

Dear Mr. Principal we understand that there are probably some students in your school who simply couldn't afford the school supplies that they really needed to have a successful school year and we know how stressful that can be on them, and we know how much of a self esteem crusher that could be so we really just wanted to reach out and help. And if you could either identify them or not, but here is 7 big boxes of school supplies that we would love to just donate to your school.

How easy would it be to use that new found relationship to find out all of the carnivals and activities and PTA presidents and every detail about that school that might be useful to you?

Strategy number two is the same, but it actually financially benefit's the school. So you could have your students buy the school supplies that they're going to buy anyway from EZ School Supplies, so you can give them the forms that they're going to need, and they can go buy all the school supplies that they're going to need for their school. EZ School Supplies will pack them up and ship them straight to your students, plus they'll donate 10% of that to the fund that you select, which would benefit the local elementary schools.

Instead of walking in to visit the principal with a big box of school supplies, or several big boxes of school supplies, you can walk in to visit the principal with a big check.

Either way, again this speaks back to two principles: number one is where are the big herds of my potential prospects; number two is how do I enter into the

conversation that someone's already having in their mind? And if I'm a principal right now, probably I'm a little concerned about some of those students in my school who may have to go without, who I'm probably going to have to take money out of my own pocket or teachers are going to take money out of their own pocket to go and buy notebooks for these guys and stuff like that. Because this is the world we live in.

This is what has to happen sometimes. So we can solve a significant problem for school administrators during this season of the year. So again this is a huge opportunity to create massive marketing traction for the rest of the school year by building those relationships with the local elementary schools.

Again, let's review the 2 philosophies that we're implementing today.

- Number one is finding the big herd of salmon and going to stand in front of them.
- And number two is getting into the conversation that the salmon for lack of a better definition, that the prospect is already having in their mind.

PROVIDING A "REASON" TO VISIT YOU

So if I'm that mom of a 9 year old and I'm freaked out about what it is that I'm going to do to help Johnny have a better school year, then we solve that problem in our martial arts schools, and how can we use that as a lead generator?

One of the things that we recommend to all of our school owners is you should have a very robust activity calendar in your school.

And again, if we're farming that direct mail list, one of the messages that we should be farming with is inviting those people, **inviting those prospects to all of those special activities that we'll be having in our school.**

One of these special activities should be some type of a concentration course or a focus course, some sort of a program, a special seminar, perhaps a couple of classes, maybe just a class on a Saturday or Friday night or something like that, that really helps the students learn about how to focus better in school.

And of course we're really good at that in martial arts, right?

We all claim to teach focus and self confidence in our martial arts schools. This is our chance to prove it to the community at large.

This strategy is hugely successful.

You can invite them in as free benefit, or a free seminar. We supply you with press releases and all sorts of material that you can use to promote this thing. And really what you're going to do is you're going to bring in a bunch of prospects and you're basically going to treat them just like a first intro.

You may also integrate some specific school messaging.

If we're going to use the 4 laws of concentration: focusing our eyes, focusing our ears, focusing our mind, and focusing our body.

What does an unfocused body look like?

And you have them just kind of lay on the floor, you know. So that's a simplistic example of what you can do in the class.

And then ask,, what does a really focused body look like?

And you have them show you that. And you say okay, what if you're sitting in your desk at school, what does an unfocused body look like? And you have them kind of slump over their arm, you know how it is.

So it's extremely important again that we apply both of these principles.

Principle one is finding the big herd of salmon.

So where can we go market this thing and the elementary schools are a great place, churches and daycares, anywhere that there are big lists of our prospects.

Second is how do I solve a problem?

How do I get into the conversation that they're already having in their mind? And you know, probably at least half of the parents in your area are thinking about is there an easy solution, or is there a solution to helping my son or daughter do better in school this year?

The third big bullet point for today would be to have some type of a focus or concentration course inside your school as a lead generator.

