

# SUMMER IS YOUR

# SECRET WEAPON



THE MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL OWNER'S COMPLETE  
GUIDE TO DOMINATING APRIL THROUGH SEPTEMBER

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*The Martial Arts School Owner's Complete Guide to  
Dominating April Through September*

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**Martial Arts Wealth Mastery**

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# **PART I**

## **THE MINDSET SHIFT**

## **CHAPTER 1: The Summer Lie That's Killing Your School**

I want you to do something for me right now. I want you to think about the last thing you said — or thought — when someone asked you how business is during the summer.

Did you say something like, "Well, summer's always a little slow"? Or maybe, "People go on vacation, so we just kind of coast until September"? Or the classic: "We focus on retention during the summer and ramp back up for fall."

If any of that sounds like you, I need you to hear this clearly: that thinking is killing your school. Not hurting it. Not slowing it down. Killing it.

Let me be blunt. The idea that "summer is slow" is the single most destructive myth in the martial arts industry. It's repeated so often, by so many people, that it's taken on the weight of gospel truth. School owners plan for it. They budget for it. They mentally check out because of it. And every single year, they watch their enrollment numbers slide from May through August and say, "See? Summer's slow. Just like I said."

Of course it's slow. You made it slow. You decided it was going to be slow, so you stopped marketing, stopped pushing, stopped creating events, stopped following up on leads, and then — surprise — nobody walked through your door. That's not a seasonal trend. That's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I've been in this industry for over four decades. I've owned schools, consulted for thousands of school owners across North America and beyond, and I've seen every excuse in the book. And I'm telling you from decades of hard data: April through September is not the slow season. It is the single greatest opportunity you have all year to grow your school. Bar none.

Here's the brutal truth that nobody in this industry wants to confront: summer is when parents are most actively looking for activities for their kids. Think about that for a second. School's out. Mom and Dad are staring down ten to twelve weeks of unstructured time. The kids are already driving them crazy by the second week of June. They're Googling "summer activities near me" and "kids martial arts" and "summer camps" at rates that dwarf what you see in January or September. The demand is there. It's screaming

at you. The question is whether you're going to answer the phone or let it ring.

Let me give you some numbers to chew on. Schools that implement the system I teach — the full system, not cherry-picked pieces of it — routinely add fifty to one hundred new students during the summer and back-to-school season. Not over a year. During a single stretch from roughly June through September. I've had schools add thirty students in a single month of July. July! The month everyone else takes off.

Now, contrast that with what most school owners do. They run a summer camp — maybe. They put up a social media post or two. They coast. And they lose fifteen, twenty, thirty students to summer attrition because families move, schedules change, or — and this is the one that should keep you up at night — because students simply lose momentum when your energy drops and your programming gets lazy.

So let me ask you a question that might sting: if you lose twenty students over the summer and only add five, what did your "slow season" actually cost you? At an average of \$150 per month per student, that's a net loss of fifteen active students, which is \$2,250 per month in recurring revenue. By September, you're climbing out of a hole instead of building from a peak. And you'll spend the entire fall just trying to get back to where you were in April.

That's not a seasonal dip. That's a business crisis you're choosing to participate in.

I had a school owner in Dallas — good guy, solid martial artist, loved his students. Every summer, he'd scale back. He'd cut his ad spend. He'd cancel his community events. He'd give his staff reduced hours. He told me, "Stephen, I use summer to recharge." When he came back in September, he was "recharged," all right — and staring at a school that had dropped from 280 active students to 220. Sixty students gone. He spent the next four months scrambling to recover, and by December he was still ten students short of where he'd been in April.

Now let me tell you about another school owner, this one in Phoenix. Same market dynamics — arguably worse, because in Phoenix it's 115 degrees in July and nobody wants to leave their house. But this owner did something radical: she treated summer like it was her prime season. She launched summer specials in late May. She ran a booth at every community event she could find. She did PE Teacher for the Day at three elementary schools before they let out. She launched a summer camp program that fed directly

into her regular enrollment pipeline. She had her team on the phones every single day following up with leads.

By the end of August, she had added sixty-seven new students. Not camp-only students. Enrolled, EFT-billing, committed members. She walked into September with the largest active student count her school had ever seen. Same city. Same summer. Same "slow season." Completely different result.

The difference wasn't talent. It wasn't location. It wasn't luck. It was mindset and execution.

So let's talk about what execution actually looks like, because that's what the rest of this book is about.

The foundation of summer dominance — the foundation of dominance in any season, frankly — is what I call the Marketing Parthenon. If you've heard me speak, you've heard me talk about this. The Parthenon in Athens has stood for 2,500 years. You know why? It doesn't rest on one pillar. It rests on dozens.

Your marketing should work the same way. If you're relying on one or two lead sources — Facebook ads and maybe a referral program — you're not building a Parthenon. You're building a tent. One gust of wind and the whole thing comes down. Facebook changes its algorithm? Your leads dry up overnight. Your referral program stalls because you haven't injected any new energy into it? Now you've got nothing.

You need twenty or more lead generation pillars running simultaneously. Twenty. I know that sounds like a lot. It should. Most school owners are running two or three and wondering why they can't grow. Here's a partial list of what should be active during your summer campaign: community events and festivals, school outreach programs, PE Teacher for the Day events, movie theater promotions, farmers market booths, daycare and preschool outreach, reactivation campaigns to former students and dead leads, referral programs with current families, social media advertising, Google advertising, direct mail campaigns, strategic alliances with complementary businesses, yard signs and bandit signs, car magnets and vehicle wraps, summer camp feeder programs, back-to-school orientation booths, after-school enrichment program setup, birthday party programs that convert, and targeted email marketing sequences.

That's twenty pillars right there, and I haven't even scratched the surface. The point isn't that you need to do all twenty perfectly from day one. The point is that you need to be thinking in terms of twenty, not two. Every

pillar you add creates another stream of leads flowing into your school. Some will produce five leads a month. Some will produce fifty. But collectively, they create a flood that no single-source strategy can match.

And here's what most school owners miss about the summer specifically: the conditions are better for almost every one of these pillars than they are during any other time of year.

Community events? There are more festivals, fairs, parades, farmers markets, and outdoor gatherings between May and September than in all other months combined. You can't swing a cat without hitting a community event in the summer. Every single one of them is an opportunity to set up a booth, collect leads, schedule introductory lessons, and put your school in front of hundreds or thousands of people.

School outreach? Yes, schools are letting out, but that's exactly when you should be hitting them — in April and May, before they close for summer. Get into the schools with your PE Teacher for the Day events. Hand out certificates. Build your summer camp list. The window is narrow, so you need to be aggressive, but the payoff is enormous.

Parent availability? This is the big one. During the school year, parents are juggling homework, after-school activities, sports practices, and a dozen other commitments. Their schedule is packed. But in the summer? They have breathing room. They have time to bring their kid in for an introductory lesson. They have time to sit down and talk to you about enrollment. They have time to actually make a decision instead of saying, "Let me think about it" because they're rushing to get to soccer practice.

Kid availability? Same thing, amplified. During the school year, you're competing with every other activity under the sun for a kid's after-school time. In the summer, the competition drops dramatically. Kids are bored. They're available. And parents are looking — actively looking — for something to fill that time.

The conditions are perfect. The demand is real. The only thing standing between you and your best summer ever is the story you've been telling yourself about what summer is supposed to look like.

So here's what I want you to do. I want you to take that story — "summer is slow," "people go on vacation," "we'll ramp back up in fall" — and I want you to throw it in the trash. Right now. It's a lie. It's a comfortable, convenient, industry-wide lie that gives you permission to coast. And coasting is just a polite word for declining.

This book is your blueprint for making summer your single best revenue period of the year. Not your survival period. Not your "hold steady" period. Your best period. The one where you add more students, generate more revenue, build more momentum, and set yourself up for a fall season that starts from a position of strength instead of desperation.

Every chapter that follows is a piece of that blueprint. I'm going to give you the marketing calendar, month by month. I'm going to show you how to fix your enrollment machine so it actually converts the leads you generate. I'm going to walk you through community events, school outreach, reactivation campaigns, summer camp strategies, and back-to-school blitzes. I'm going to give you the scripts, the systems, the timelines, and the tactics.

But none of it matters if you don't first kill the lie. So consider it dead. Summer is not slow. Summer is your secret weapon. Now let's go to work.

## **CHAPTER 2: The Summer Marketing Calendar That Prints Money (April-September Month by Month)**

If I gave you a treasure map and told you there was a chest full of gold buried in your backyard, what would you do? You'd grab a shovel and start digging. You wouldn't sit on your porch and wait for it to surface on its own. You wouldn't "think about it" for a few weeks. You'd start digging today.

That's what this chapter is. It's your treasure map. It's a month-by-month, week-by-week breakdown of exactly what you should be doing from April through September to make summer your biggest growth season of the year. I'm going to lay it out so specifically that you'll have no excuse — none — for not executing.

But before I get into the calendar, let me set one expectation: you should have something happening every single week. Not every month. Not "a few things here and there." Every week. If you look at your calendar for any given week between April and September and there isn't a marketing event, an outreach activity, a follow-up blitz, or a community presence scheduled, you're leaving money on the table. Period.

Here's the weekly rhythm I want you to internalize. This is your baseline — the heartbeat of your summer marketing operation:

Monday is your follow-up day. Every lead that came in over the weekend gets contacted. Phone calls, texts, emails — the whole sequence. If they came in on Saturday at 2 PM and you're calling them for the first time on Wednesday, you've already lost half of them. Monday. First thing.

Tuesday is school and community outreach. This is when you're making calls to schools, daycares, community centers, and event organizers. You're setting up PE Teacher for the Day visits. You're confirming booth space at upcoming festivals. You're building relationships with the people who control access to large groups of potential students.

Wednesday is your prep day. You're getting booth materials ready. You're printing flyers and certificates. You're reviewing your ad creative. You're making sure everything is locked and loaded for the weekend.

Thursday is ad review day. Pull your numbers. How are your Facebook ads performing? Your Google ads? What's your cost per lead? What's your show

rate for appointments? If something isn't working, you adjust it now — not next week.

Friday is logistics day. Confirm everything for the weekend. Who's manning the booth at the farmers market on Saturday? What time does the festival start on Sunday? Are the intro lesson slots filled for the weekend? Do we have enough swag and giveaway items?

Saturday and Sunday are execution days. Events, booths, intro lessons, community presence. This is where the rubber meets the road.

That's your weekly rhythm. Now let's layer in the monthly calendar.

### **APRIL: Plant the Seeds Before the Ground Thaws**

April is your setup month. Everything you do in April determines whether your summer is explosive or mediocre. This is not the month to be passive.

Your number one priority in April is school outreach. Schools are still in session, but they're winding down. Teachers are tired. Administrators are looking for easy wins to fill the last few weeks before summer break. This is your window to get PE Teacher for the Day events scheduled for May. If you wait until May to start making these calls, you're too late. The calendar is full. You needed to be calling in April.

Simultaneously, you're launching reactivation campaigns. Go into your database and pull every lead that inquired in the last eighteen months but never enrolled. Pull every former student who dropped out in the last two years. These people already raised their hand once. They already showed interest. A well-crafted reactivation sequence — phone call, text, email, direct mail piece — will bring a surprising number of them back in the door. I've seen schools reactivate thirty or forty leads in a single month just by systematically working through their dead lead list.

April is also when you finalize your summer camp programming. If you haven't already built your summer camp schedule, pricing, and marketing materials, you're behind. Summer camp isn't just a revenue generator — it's a feeder system for your regular enrollment pipeline. Every kid who comes through your camp should leave with an invitation to enroll. The camp is your top-of-funnel. Treat it that way.

Start seeding your summer special offer in your advertising. You don't have to launch it yet, but you should be building awareness. "Summer enrollment opens in May — limited spots available." Create anticipation. Create urgency.

## **MAY: Light the Fuse**

May is when things start to heat up, and I mean that literally if you're in the South. But I mean it figuratively for your marketing.

This is PE Teacher for the Day month. You should be in at least three to five schools during May, teaching a class, handing out certificates good for a free introductory lesson, and collecting parent contact information. Every certificate that goes home in a kid's backpack is a warm lead. The kids are excited. They show the certificate to Mom. Mom goes to your website or calls your school. Your team schedules the intro lesson. This is one of the highest-converting lead generation strategies in existence, and it costs you almost nothing except time.

May is also when you launch your summer camp list-building push. Run ads specifically promoting your summer camp. Post about it on social media daily. Send flyers home through the schools you're visiting. Email your current family base and ask for referrals. The goal is to fill your camps as early as possible so you can shift your focus to converting camp attendees into full-time students once summer starts.

End-of-school certificate campaigns go out now. Work with local schools to distribute "congratulations" certificates that include an offer for a free or discounted introductory class at your school. This is a volume play — you want hundreds of these in circulation.

If you're near a body of water, a park, or a downtown area where people gather for Memorial Day weekend, you should have a presence there. A booth, a demo team performance, a table with giveaways and a signup sheet. Memorial Day is the unofficial start of summer, and it's your chance to make a big first impression.

## **JUNE: Launch and Execute**

June is when you go full throttle. School's out. Parents are scrambling. Your summer special hits the market.

Your summer enrollment offer should be live and everywhere. A classic structure that works: six weeks of classes for \$97, includes a uniform. Or eight weeks for \$149. The specific numbers matter less than the psychology — it needs to feel like a no-brainer for a parent who's looking for something to do with their kid this summer. Make it easy to say yes.

Summer camp sessions begin this month. Every camp session is a conversion opportunity. On the last day of each camp week, you should be sitting down with parents and having a conversation about enrolling their

child in your regular program. Not a hard sell. A natural transition: "Your son had an amazing week. He's showing real aptitude. I'd love to see him continue — here's how our regular program works."

June is also when you launch your daycare and preschool outreach push. Daycares are desperately looking for enrichment activities during the summer. Offer to come in once a week and teach a thirty-minute martial arts class. It costs you an hour of time, and it puts you in front of twenty to thirty kids and their parents every single week. Some of those parents will enroll their kids. Some of those daycares will become long-term partnerships.

Here's one that most school owners completely ignore: movie theater promotions. Summer blockbusters start dropping in June. Families are going to the movies. Partner with your local movie theater to do a demo or hand out flyers before showings. Set up a table in the lobby. Sponsor a screening. Movie theaters are hungry for local business partnerships, and the foot traffic is massive.

### **JULY: Peak Season Within Peak Season**

July is the heart of summer, and if you've been executing since April, your pipeline should be full. This is not the time to ease up. This is the time to pour gasoline on the fire.

July 4th — or Canada Day if you're north of the border — is a tentpole event. Parades, fireworks, community gatherings. You should have a float in the parade. You should have a booth at the fireworks. You should have your demo team performing at the community picnic. This is a visibility play. Every person who sees your school's name, your team in uniform, your students breaking boards — that's a brand impression. Some of those impressions convert immediately. Others convert six months later when that parent finally decides to look into martial arts and remembers seeing you at the parade.

Peak summer camp season is in full swing. If you structured your camps right, you're running weekly sessions and converting a percentage of each cohort into regular enrollment. You should be tracking your camp-to-enrollment conversion rate. If it's below 20 percent, something is wrong with your conversion process, and we'll talk about how to fix that later.

Farmers markets are gold during July. Set up a booth every Saturday. Bring a couple of students to do a mini-demo. Hand out flyers. Collect contact information. Offer a free week of classes to anyone who signs up at the

booth. I've had school owners tell me they get fifteen to twenty solid leads from a single farmers market appearance. Do that every week for two months and do the math.

Community festivals, movies in the park, concerts in the park — every one of these is a booth opportunity. You should be at all of them. If your city has a festival calendar, you should have it memorized.

### **AUGUST: The Back-to-School Gold Rush**

August is where fortunes are made. This is the month that separates the school owners who are serious from the ones who are just playing at it.

Back-to-school orientation events are the single most lead-dense opportunity of the entire year. Schools hold orientations for incoming students — usually kindergarteners and sometimes all grades. Parents are there, they're in "sign my kid up for activities" mode, and they're a captive audience.

I had a school owner set up a booth at a back-to-school orientation and walk away with eighty-five appointments in two hours. Eighty-five. In two hours. He didn't do anything magical. He had a table, some flyers, a signup sheet for a free introductory lesson, and a couple of students in uniform demonstrating basic techniques. Parents walked up, saw the kids in action, and signed up on the spot.

If you do nothing else in August, do this: get a booth at every back-to-school orientation event in your area. Call the schools now. Call the PTA. Call the district office. Whatever it takes. Get in there.

August is also when you start setting up your after-school enrichment programs. Many schools contract with outside providers to offer enrichment activities during the school year. You want to be one of those providers. The application process often starts in August for fall programs. Get your proposals in early. After-school enrichment programs put you in front of kids and parents on a weekly basis, inside the school building, with the school's implicit endorsement. The conversion potential is enormous.

Launch your back-to-school advertising campaign in August. The messaging shifts from "summer fun" to "discipline, focus, confidence for the new school year." Parents are already thinking about how to get their kids back into a structured routine. Position martial arts as the solution. Run ads on Facebook, Google, and Instagram with back-to-school messaging. Send direct mail to families in your target zip codes.

### **SEPTEMBER: Close the Loop, Build the Momentum**

September is your victory lap — but only if you've been executing since April. If you have, you're walking into fall with a full school and a pipeline that's still producing.

Labor Day is your last big summer event opportunity. Same playbook as Memorial Day and July 4th: booths, demos, visibility, lead capture. Don't let it pass without a presence.

Fall festival season begins in late September, and this carries you right into October and November. Start booking your booth space now. The lead generation doesn't stop just because the calendar says fall.

School enrichment programs start this month. If you set them up in August, you're now teaching weekly classes inside local schools. Each class is a marketing opportunity. Each student is a potential enrollee.

September is also prime time for referral events. Your current families are back in routine. Host a "bring a friend" week. Run a referral contest. Make it fun, make it rewarding, and watch your current families become your most effective marketing channel.

And here's the key to September: review your numbers. Look at where you were in April and where you are now. If you executed this calendar — really executed it, not half-heartedly participated in a few events — you should be looking at a net gain of fifty to one hundred students. Your revenue should be up. Your energy should be high. And you should be thinking about how to make next summer even bigger.

The calendar I just laid out isn't theoretical. It's not aspirational. It's what successful school owners do, every single year, to grow their businesses during the months that everyone else writes off. The treasure is in your backyard. I just handed you the map. Now grab a shovel.

## **CHAPTER 3: Fix Your Machine Before You Feed It Leads**

Let me tell you a story that's going to make some of you uncomfortable, because you're going to see yourself in it.

I had a school owner — I'll call him Mike, because I don't want to embarrass the guy — who came to one of my events and told me he was spending \$3,000 a month on Facebook advertising. Three thousand dollars. Every month. He was getting leads. In fact, over the previous month, he'd generated 147 leads from his ads. Sounds pretty good, right? 147 people raised their hand and said, "I'm interested in martial arts."

So I asked him, "Great. How many of those 147 did you actually contact?"

He paused. He looked at his phone. He hemmed and hawed. And then he said, "Well, I think we reached out to... probably most of them."

So we pulled his records. And do you know how many of those 147 leads his team had actually made contact with? Thirty-one. Thirty-one out of 147. He'd flushed over a hundred leads — leads he'd paid for — straight down the toilet because his follow-up system was broken. Or more accurately, because he didn't have a follow-up system at all.

Mike isn't unusual. Mike is typical. And that's terrifying.

Here's the point I need you to understand before we go any further in this book: it does not matter how many leads you generate if your enrollment machine is broken. Pouring more leads into a broken machine doesn't fix the machine. It just wastes more leads. You wouldn't pour water into a bucket with a hole in the bottom and then blame the faucet for the puddle on the floor. But that's exactly what most school owners do. They spend money on ads, they run events, they set up booths, and then they let leads slip through the cracks because their internal systems are garbage.

So before we talk about all the ways you're going to flood your school with leads this summer, we're going to fix the machine. We're going to plug the holes. We're going to tighten every bolt, replace every gasket, and make sure that when a lead comes in, it gets handled properly, every single time.

### **Track Everything. Every Night. No Exceptions.**

The first thing I'm going to tell you to do is the thing you're most likely to resist, because it's not sexy and it's not fun. But it's the foundation of everything else.

You need to track your numbers every single night. Not weekly. Not "when I get around to it." Every night, before you leave the school, you or your manager should be recording: how many leads came in today, how many appointments were scheduled, how many intro lessons were conducted, and how many enrollments were closed.

Those four numbers — leads, appointments, intros, enrollments — are the vital signs of your business. If you don't know them, you're flying blind. And if you're flying blind, it's only a matter of time before you hit a mountain.

Now, here's the part where people push back. They say, "Stephen, I have a CRM. It tracks all of this automatically." Maybe it does. But let me ask you this: when's the last time you actually looked at those numbers? When's the last time you sat down at the end of the day and reviewed what happened? If you're like most school owners, your CRM is a dumping ground for data that nobody ever reviews.

Here's what I want you to do instead. Get a clipboard. A physical, hold-it-in-your-hand clipboard. Put a tracking sheet on it. Every day, the person working the front desk records every lead that comes in, every appointment that gets set, every intro that happens, and every enrollment that closes. At the end of the day, you review it. You look at the numbers with your own eyes. You ask questions: Why did we get twelve leads but only schedule four appointments? What happened to the other eight? Why did three people come in for intros but nobody enrolled? What went wrong in the conversation?

This isn't about being old-fashioned. It's about being present. When you reconstruct your numbers from memory — or worse, from a CRM report you glance at once a week — you get garbage data. And garbage data leads to garbage decisions. The clipboard forces discipline. It forces awareness. And awareness is the first step to improvement.

### **Headcount and Family Count: Know the Difference**

While we're talking about tracking, let me address something that trips up a lot of school owners: the difference between headcount and family count.

Your headcount is the total number of individual students enrolled. Your family count is the number of families paying tuition. These are not the same number, and you need to track both.

Here's why: if you have 200 students but only 140 families, your revenue is concentrated in fewer paying accounts than you think. If ten families leave,

you might lose fifteen or twenty students. Understanding your family count gives you a much more accurate picture of your financial vulnerability.

Use the slash system on your tracking board. If you have a family with two kids enrolled, that's 2/1 — two students, one family. If you have a single adult student, that's 1/1. At the end of every month, you should know both numbers and how they've changed.

### **Tighten Your Intro-to-Enrollment Process**

Now let's talk about where most schools hemorrhage the most potential students: the introductory lesson process.

Most school owners run some version of a trial program. The prospect comes in, takes a class or two, and then hopefully enrolls. The problem is that "hopefully" is doing all the heavy lifting in that sentence. There's no system. There's no structure. There's no deliberate conversion process. The prospect wanders through a couple of classes, nobody sits them down for a real conversation, and they drift away.

Let me give you the framework that works, and then you can adapt it to your school.

For adult programs, test closing on lesson one. I know that sounds aggressive. It's not. If an adult walks into your school, takes a class, loves it, and is ready to commit, why on earth would you make them come back two more times before you let them give you money? That's not "building value." That's losing sales.

After the first class, sit down with the adult prospect. Ask them how they enjoyed it. Ask them what their goals are. And then present your enrollment options. If they're ready, enroll them. If they need another lesson to decide, schedule it. But don't assume everyone needs a two-week trial. Some people are ready on day one. Let them be ready.

For children's programs, the two-lesson enrollment process is your bread and butter. Here's how it works:

Lesson one is about the child. This is where you build rapport with the kid, show them a great time, teach them something cool, and get them excited about coming back. The parent watches from the viewing area. At the end of lesson one, you don't try to close. You schedule lesson two. And here's the critical part: you tell the parent, "For lesson two, I'd love to have both parents here so I can share what I observed about your child's learning style and how our program can help them." This is how you get both decision-makers in the room.

Lesson two is about the parents. The child takes another class — which they're now excited about because they had a blast at lesson one — and while the child is on the mat, you sit down with both parents. You share your observations about their child. You talk about the benefits of the program. You present your enrollment options. And you close.

This two-lesson structure solves the two biggest problems with enrollment: it ensures the child has a great experience before you ask for money, and it gets both decision-makers in the room at the same time. If you're trying to close a sale when one parent is there and the other is at home, you're fighting an uphill battle. The parent in front of you says, "I need to talk to my spouse." And you know what happens next. Nothing. They go home, life gets busy, and they never come back.

### **Pre-Qualify Every Prospect**

Speaking of spouses, let's talk about pre-qualification. This is one of the most overlooked steps in the enrollment process, and it will save you enormous amounts of wasted time.

Before you ever schedule an introductory lesson, your front desk team should be asking a few qualifying questions. Not invasive questions. Not interrogation questions. Simple, natural questions that ensure the person who shows up is actually in a position to make a decision.

Who will be bringing the child in for the lesson? Is there another parent or guardian who's involved in activity decisions for your child? The reason I ask is that I'd love to have both of you here so you can both see what your child experiences.

That's it. That's the pre-qualification. You're not asking about their income. You're not asking if they can afford it. You're simply ensuring that when the enrollment conversation happens, the person who can say yes is in the room.

You should also be subtly qualifying for logistics. Where do you live? How far is the drive to our school? What other activities is your child currently in? These questions tell you whether the prospect is geographically realistic and whether their schedule has room for martial arts. If someone lives forty-five minutes away and their kid is already in soccer, basketball, and piano, you might want to temper your expectations — or at least be aware of the obstacles you'll face during the enrollment conversation.

### **Track Where People Fall Out**

Once you've tightened your process, you need to track where people are dropping out of your pipeline. This is where the clipboard comes back into play.

Draw your pipeline as a funnel. At the top: leads. Next level: appointments scheduled. Next: appointments that showed up. Next: completed first intro lesson. Next: scheduled second intro lesson. Next: showed up for second intro. Bottom: enrolled.

Every level of that funnel has a drop-off rate. Your job is to know what those rates are and to systematically improve them.

If you're getting fifty leads a month but only scheduling thirty appointments, you have a contact and follow-up problem. Your team isn't reaching leads fast enough or isn't compelling enough on the phone.

If you're scheduling thirty appointments but only twenty show up, you have a confirmation problem. Are you sending reminder texts? Are you calling the day before? Are you making it easy and exciting for people to show up?

If twenty people show up for lesson one but only twelve schedule lesson two, you have a lesson one experience problem. Something about that first class isn't compelling enough to bring them back.

If twelve schedule lesson two but only eight show up, you're back to confirmation issues.

If eight show up for lesson two but only four enroll, you have a closing problem. Your enrollment conversation isn't strong enough, or you don't have both decision-makers in the room.

Every hole in the funnel has a specific fix. But you can't fix what you can't see, and you can't see what you don't measure.

### **The Paid Intro Bridge**

Let me give you a specific tactic for improving your enrollment conversion rate: the paid intro bridge.

Instead of offering completely free trial classes, charge a small fee for your introductory program. Something like \$29 or \$49 for two or three lessons plus a uniform. This does two things. First, it qualifies the prospect.

Someone who pays \$29 is more serious than someone who signed up for a free class on a whim. Second, it creates a financial bridge to enrollment.

Here's the script: "Your introductory program is \$49, which includes three private lessons and your uniform. If you decide to enroll in our regular

program at any point during or after your intro, we'll apply that \$49 toward your enrollment fee. So you're essentially getting your intro lessons for free — they just become part of your enrollment. And if you finalize your enrollment today, I'll also waive the registration fee, which saves you another \$50."

Do you see what's happening there? The intro fee applies toward enrollment, so the prospect doesn't feel like they're paying twice. And the "finalize today" discount creates urgency to make a decision now rather than "thinking about it" for two weeks.

### **Reframe Your Language**

One last thing before we move on, and this is subtle but powerful: change the language you use to describe your beginner program.

Stop calling it a "beginner class" or a "basic class" or a "trial program." Those words are weak. They sound temporary. They sound like something you try and then move on from.

Instead, call it your "Black Belt Qualification Class" or your "Black Belt Foundation Program." Now the prospect isn't signing up for a trial. They're qualifying for something. They're starting a journey. The language implies commitment, progression, and achievement — which is exactly the mindset you want your prospects in when they walk through the door.

The difference between a school that converts 30 percent of its intros and a school that converts 60 percent isn't magic. It's not charisma. It's not some secret sales technique. It's systems. It's discipline. It's tracking your numbers, tightening your process, pre-qualifying your prospects, getting both decision-makers in the room, and using language that frames your program as something worth committing to.

Fix your machine first. Then feed it leads. Because when your machine is running right and the summer lead flood starts pouring in, you won't just survive summer. You'll own it.

# **PART II**

## **LIVE EVENT DOMINATION**

## **CHAPTER 4: Live Event Marketing: Your Fastest Path to 100 Leads in a Day**

Let me ask you something. When was the last time you walked into a community event — a Fourth of July celebration, a farmers market, a "Taste of the Town" festival — and saw a martial arts school with a booth that actually had a line of people waiting to talk to them?

If your answer is "never," you're not alone. Most school owners either skip live events entirely or show up with a folding table, a stack of flyers, and a couple of bored instructors scrolling their phones behind a banner. Then they go home and tell themselves, "Events don't work for us."

Wrong. Events work beautifully. What doesn't work is showing up without a system, without energy, and without the single most important piece of equipment you will ever buy for marketing purposes.

I'm talking about the prize wheel.

### **The Prize Wheel Changes Everything**

Here's what I need you to do. Go online tonight and buy the biggest, loudest, most obnoxious LED-lit prize wheel you can find. I'm not talking about some flimsy little tabletop spinner you picked up at a party supply store. I'm talking about a full-size, floor-standing, light-up carnival wheel that makes noise when it spins and draws eyeballs from fifty yards away.

Bigger is better. Louder is better. More lights are better.

Why? Because a prize wheel does something that no banner, no flyer, no demo, and no amount of yelling into a microphone can do — it creates a crowd. Human beings are magnetically attracted to spinning wheels. Kids see it and drag their parents over. Adults see a line forming and their curiosity kicks in. The wheel creates its own gravity.

I had a school owner in Charlotte tell me he spent three summers doing events with a table and some brochures and averaged maybe fifteen leads per event. The first event after he bought a big LED wheel? Eighty-seven leads. Same event. Same location. Same time of year. The only difference was the wheel.

Now here's the critical part — buy a backup wheel. Buy two if you can afford it. Because if your wheel breaks at 11 AM on the Fourth of July and you've got six more hours of event ahead of you, your day is dead. I've seen

it happen. A pin snaps, the clicker fails, something jams — and suddenly you're back to being the sad table with the flyers. Protect yourself. Have a spare in the car.

## **What Goes on the Wheel**

Your prize options need to accomplish one thing: get people into your school. Every single prize should require the winner to come to your location to redeem it. Let me say that again because this is where most people screw it up.

Every prize is redeemed at the school. Not at the booth. Not by mail. At the school.

Here's what I put on the wheel:

- Two free weeks of classes
- A free month of classes
- A free uniform
- A free private lesson
- A pizza party for the family
- A birthday party package
- A small tangible item — a keychain, a water bottle, something branded

Now, about that last one — the tangible item. You do NOT hand it out at the booth. When someone lands on that prize, you smile and say, "Awesome! You won our branded water bottle! We'll have it ready for you when you come in for your free introductory lesson. Let's get that scheduled." The tangible prize is bait to get them through your door, not a giveaway that lets them walk away satisfied.

Every single prize category funnels to an appointment. That's the system.

## **The Booth Process: Form First, Spin Second, Appointment Immediately**

Here's exactly how this works, step by step, and if you deviate from this process you will cut your results in half.

Step one: Before anyone touches that wheel, they fill out a lead form. Name, phone number, email, child's name and age if applicable. No form, no spin. Period. People will try to skip it. Kids will reach for the wheel. Parents will say, "Can't he just spin it?" Your answer is always friendly but firm:

"Absolutely! We just need to grab your info real quick so we can get your prize to you. Takes ten seconds."

Step two: They spin the wheel. Make it exciting. Cheer. Clap. Let the kids get into it. This is theater, and you are the ringmaster.

Step three: The moment the wheel stops, before the excitement fades, before they have time to start thinking about leaving — you set the appointment. "Congratulations! You won two free weeks! Let's get you scheduled. What works better for you, Tuesday evening or Saturday morning?"

That transition from spin to appointment needs to be seamless. No pause. No "we'll call you." No handing them a card. You book it right there, right then.

## **The Tentative Appointment Script**

Now, inevitably, someone is going to say, "I need to check my schedule" or "I need to talk to my spouse" or "I'm not sure when we're free." This is where most booth workers fold. They say "No problem!" and hand the person a flyer, and that lead is gone forever.

Here's what you say instead:

"Totally understand! Tell you what — let me pencil you in for Tuesday at 5:30. That way you've got a spot reserved. If you need to adjust it, just give us a call and we'll move it around. But at least you're on the calendar. Sound good?"

This is the tentative appointment, and it is gold. You're not asking for a commitment. You're not being pushy. You're being helpful — you're "reserving their spot." Most people will agree to a tentative appointment because it feels low-pressure. And here's the thing: a tentative appointment converts at a dramatically higher rate than "I'll call you back."

Your goal at any live event should be 80 to 90 percent or higher of the people who spin the wheel setting an appointment before they walk away. If you're below that, your script needs work, your energy is too low, or you're letting people off the hook too easily.

## **The Real Bottleneck: Show-Up Rate**

Let me be blunt about something. Setting appointments at events is the easy part. A spinning wheel, some prizes, an enthusiastic staff member — you'll book appointments all day long. The hard part is getting people to actually show up.

This is where most school owners completely drop the ball. They come home from an event with a hundred appointments and feel like heroes. Then Monday rolls around and eight people show up. Eight out of a hundred. And the owner throws up his hands and says events are a waste of time.

The event wasn't the problem. Your follow-up was the problem. Or more accurately, your lack of follow-up.

Here is the follow-up sequence that actually works:

First, within 24 hours of the event, someone from your school — ideally the head instructor or the owner — calls every single lead personally. Not a text. Not an email. A phone call. "Hey, this is Stephen from Oliver's Martial Arts. We met at the festival yesterday — your son Jake spun the wheel and won two free weeks! I just wanted to confirm we've got you down for Tuesday at 5:30. We're really looking forward to meeting Jake."

Second, the day before the appointment, call again to confirm. "Just a quick call to confirm you and Jake are all set for tomorrow at 5:30. We've got his uniform ready and the instructor is excited to meet him."

Third, send a text confirmation the morning of the appointment.

Fourth, send a calendar invite to their email address immediately after the event. People live and die by their phone calendars. If it's not on the calendar, it doesn't exist.

Fifth, send a confirmation email with directions, parking info, what to wear, what to expect.

And sixth — this is the one that separates the professionals from the amateurs — mail them something physical. A handwritten note card. An info packet. A testimonial mailer with photos of happy kids in class. Put it in an envelope with a real stamp, not a meter mark, and get it in the mail the day after the event so it arrives before their appointment.

Why does physical mail matter? Because many of the people you think are "no-shows" are really just delayed shows. They didn't come Tuesday, but they didn't throw away the postcard. It's on their fridge. And three weeks

later when they're thinking about what to do with the kids, they see it and call. I've tracked this over decades. Physical mail from event leads generates responses weeks and sometimes months after the event. Digital-only follow-up does not.

## **Building Your Live Event Calendar**

Here's where I see the biggest strategic mistake. A school owner does one event, gets decent results, and then doesn't do another one for two months. One event is not a strategy. One event is a toe in the water.

You need to line up a whole bunch of them. Not one or two — I'm talking about an event nearly every weekend from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Here's your target list:

Memorial Day celebrations and parades. Fourth of July events — every town has one. If you're in Canada, Canada Day, July 1st. Labor Day festivals. Farmers markets — these run weekly all summer in most areas, and you can often get a standing booth. Movies in the park nights. Shopping center movie nights and family events. Concert series in the park. "Taste of" events — Taste of the Town, Taste of Chicago, whatever your local version is. Community festivals, street fairs, church carnivals, neighborhood block parties. Back-to-school events in August.

Sit down right now and make a list of every single public event happening in your area between April and September. Call the organizers. Get your booth reserved. If there's a fee, pay it — a \$200 booth fee that generates eighty leads is the best money you'll spend all year.

## **Staffing and Execution**

Who works the booth matters enormously. You need your highest-energy, most outgoing instructors. Not your quiet, introverted black belt who'd rather be in the back room doing forms. You need the person who will make eye contact with strangers, wave kids over, engage parents in conversation, and keep the energy at a ten all day long.

Bring student volunteers in their uniforms. Nothing draws attention like a group of focused kids in crisp white uniforms with their belts on. Have them do a short demo every hour — board breaks are fantastic crowd magnets. The sound of a board cracking makes heads turn from three booths away.

And here's a practical tip: bring water, bring snacks, bring a canopy for shade, and bring chairs for breaks. Your team is going to be on their feet for six to eight hours in the summer heat. If they're dehydrated, hungry, and miserable by 2 PM, your lead quality is going to crater. Take care of your people so they can take care of your prospects.

One hundred leads in a day is not a fantasy number. It's a realistic target for a well-executed event with a great wheel, a tight process, and high-energy staff. I've had school owners consistently hit that number and even exceed it. But it requires doing it right — every detail, every time.

The summer event season is sitting right in front of you. The only question is whether you're going to grab it or watch it go by while you complain about summer being slow.

## **CHAPTER 5: Movie Theater Promotions: The Blockbuster Strategy Nobody's Using**

I'm going to share something with you that most martial arts school owners have never even considered, and the few who have tried it are keeping very quiet about it because they don't want competition.

Movie theater promotions.

Now, before you start thinking about the last martial arts movie that came out and when the next one might be, stop. That's the wrong way to think about this entirely, and it's the reason most people who hear "movie theater marketing" immediately dismiss it as irrelevant.

You are not waiting for a martial arts movie. You are not looking for a Karate Kid reboot or the next kung fu film. You are targeting traffic. Raw, dense, predictable, family-heavy foot traffic. And there is no place in America that concentrates more of your ideal prospects in one building on one weekend than a major multiplex during a blockbuster opening.

### **Why Movie Theaters Are Marketing Gold**

Think about what happens on opening weekend of a major Marvel movie. Or a new Pixar film. Or the latest Star Wars installment. Thousands of people — families with kids, young adults, couples — show up at one location over a two- or three-day period. They arrive early. They stand in line. They wait in the lobby. They've got time to kill and they're in a good mood because they're about to be entertained.

That lobby is your opportunity. You've got a captive audience of exactly the demographic you want, in exactly the mood you want them in, with exactly the amount of idle time you need to engage them.

And almost nobody is doing it.

I had a school owner in suburban Dallas who figured this out about six years ago. He set up his booth — prize wheel and all — at every single major blockbuster opening from May through August. Every Marvel movie, every animated film, every big action release. He hit about twelve opening weekends that summer. He enrolled over forty new students directly from those theater events, and those are just the ones who enrolled during the summer. More trickled in through the fall from leads he'd collected.

Forty-plus students from standing in a movie theater lobby with a prize wheel. That's more than most school owners enroll in an entire summer from all their marketing combined. And his total cost? Booth fees, prizes, and staff time. We're talking maybe two thousand dollars all in for a return of well over forty thousand in lifetime student value.

## **Target Traffic, Not Topic**

Let me be crystal clear about movie selection because this is where people get confused.

You are not matching the movie to martial arts. You are matching the movie to audience size and audience type.

For a kids and family program: Target every major family release. Animated films, Pixar, Disney, superhero movies that skew younger. When the next big animated sequel comes out, that lobby is wall-to-wall with parents and kids ages four to twelve. That is your exact prospect.

For adult fitness kickboxing or MMA programs: Target the big action movies, superhero films that pull eighteen-to-thirty-five-year-olds, major franchise releases. The audience skews younger adult, they're interested in action and physicality, and they're in entertainment mode — which means they're receptive to something that sounds fun and active.

For summer 2026, you should already be looking at the calendar. There are going to be superhero sequels, major animated family films, action blockbusters, and franchise installments that will pack theaters from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The specific titles will announce and shift, but the pattern is predictable: every two to three weeks, a new major release drives massive opening-weekend traffic. Your job is to be there when it happens.

## **Choose Your Theaters Carefully**

This is not the time for your quaint little independent cinema downtown with three screens and a coffee bar. You want the biggest, busiest multiplex in your area. I'm talking AMC, Regal, Cinemark — the 16-plex, the 24-plex, the massive theaters with stadium seating and IMAX screens that draw from a twenty-mile radius.

Why? Traffic density. A small theater might have three hundred people come through on opening weekend. A major multiplex will have three

thousand or more. You're investing your time, your staff, and your energy into being there — you want to be where the volume is.

If you have multiple large theaters in your area, pick the one closest to your school first. Geography matters for conversion. A lead who lives five minutes from your school is worth ten times more than one who lives forty-five minutes away.

## **How to Approach the Theater Manager**

Here's the part that intimidates most people, and it shouldn't. Theater managers are not hard to get to, and most of them are very open to this kind of partnership. Here's why: you're offering them something for free. You're adding entertainment value to their lobby experience. You're not asking them for money — you're asking for floor space.

Walk in during a weekday — not on a busy weekend — and ask to speak with the general manager. When you get them, here's your pitch:

"I'm the owner of [Your School Name], a martial arts school right here in the area. We do community outreach events with a big prize wheel that's a huge hit with families — kids love it. We'd love to set up in your lobby during some of the big opening weekends this summer. It adds a fun element for your guests, and we handle everything — setup, teardown, staffing. All we need is a corner of your lobby and permission to engage with guests. We're happy to give your staff free lesson passes to share with customers too."

Most managers will say yes immediately or tell you they need to check with corporate. If they need corporate approval, ask for the regional manager's contact info and follow up directly. Be persistent but professional.

Some theaters will charge a small fee. Pay it. Some will want you to give their employees free memberships or lessons. Do it. The cost of access to that traffic is a fraction of what you'd pay for equivalent reach through any other marketing channel.

## **Setting Up Your Booth**

Your theater booth setup is a scaled-down version of your outdoor event setup, adapted for an indoor lobby environment. Here's what you need:

Your prize wheel. Obviously. This is the anchor. Position it where people can see it from the entrance and from the concession line.

A small table for your lead forms and materials. Keep it clean and branded — a tablecloth with your logo, a few photos of classes, your lead capture forms.

Two to three sharp, uniformed staff members. Not five people tripping over each other in a cramped lobby. Two or three who are outgoing, professional, and great with families.

A banner or pop-up display behind the booth. Something that says who you are, shows happy kids in action, and has your logo and phone number in large print.

That's it. You don't need a full demonstration team doing flying kicks between the concession stand and theater three. You need a wheel, a table, a banner, and people who know how to engage.

## **Converting Theater Leads**

Here's something important to understand: theater leads are different from festival leads, and you need to adjust your approach.

At a community festival, people are in browse mode. They're walking around looking at booths, tasting food, watching performances. They expect to be engaged by vendors. They're somewhat prepared for it.

At a movie theater, people are in entertainment mode. They came to see a movie, not to shop for activities. They're on their way to or from a film, possibly carrying popcorn, definitely with a shorter attention window. You have to be faster, lighter, and more fun.

Your engagement script needs to be breezy: "Hey! Want to spin the big wheel? Takes ten seconds and you win a prize — everyone wins!" That's it. Don't launch into a pitch about your curriculum or your instructor credentials. Get them to the wheel, get the form filled out, let them spin, book the appointment, and let them go enjoy their movie. The whole interaction should take sixty to ninety seconds.

The appointment-setting script is the same as your outdoor events, but you may find the tentative appointment approach is even more critical here. People at theaters are especially likely to say "I'm not sure, we just came to see a movie." The tentative pencil-in approach — "Let me just hold a spot for you, totally flexible" — works beautifully because it matches their casual mindset.

Your follow-up sequence after the event is identical to what I outlined in the previous chapter. Phone call within 24 hours, confirmation call the day before, text morning of, calendar invite, confirmation email, physical mail piece. The leads are collected the same way; they just need to be worked the same way.

## **The Opening Weekend Rhythm**

Here's how a school owner who truly commits to this strategy operates during the summer:

You look at the movie release calendar in March. You identify every major blockbuster opening between May and September. You contact your theater and lock in permission for each of those weekends. Then, every two to three weeks, you're in that lobby from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon.

Friday evening: Set up around 5 PM, work the 6, 7, and 8 PM showings. Families coming to evening shows are your primary target.

Saturday: All day. Morning and matinee shows pull families with younger kids. Afternoon and evening shows pull older kids and young adults.

Sunday: Matinee through early evening.

You rotate your staff so nobody burns out. You bring fresh energy each shift. And you track every single lead, every appointment set, every show, every enrollment.

The school owner I mentioned in Dallas? He didn't stumble into forty-plus enrollments. He was systematic. He was there every major opening weekend. He tracked his numbers religiously. And he trained his staff on the exact process — form, spin, book, follow up. No deviations, no shortcuts.

Movie theaters are the single most underutilized marketing venue in the martial arts industry. The traffic is massive, the audience is perfect, the cost is minimal, and the competition is virtually zero. If you're not doing this, you're leaving students and revenue on the table every single summer.

## **CHAPTER 6: Summer Camps and Daycare Goldmine**

If I told you there was a marketing channel where someone else has already gathered thirty to fifty of your ideal prospects into one room, pre-sorted by age, and all you have to do is show up and teach a fun thirty-minute class — would you be interested?

Of course you would. That's exactly what summer camps and daycares offer you, and the vast majority of martial arts school owners are completely ignoring this goldmine.

Every summer, across every city and suburb in North America, thousands of camps and daycare programs are scrambling to fill their activity calendars. They need field trips. They need guest instructors. They need something — anything — to keep kids engaged, active, and off screens for a few hours. And here you are, a martial arts school owner, sitting three miles away with exactly what they need, wondering why enrollment is slow in June.

Let me be blunt: if you're not actively prospecting camps and daycares every single summer, you are ignoring the easiest source of qualified, pre-assembled, age-appropriate leads available to you. Bar none.

### **Build Your Prospecting List**

Before you can work this channel, you need to know who's out there. And I promise you, there are more camps and programs in your area than you think. Most school owners can rattle off one or two, maybe the YMCA day camp and the church down the street. That's scratching the surface.

Here's your complete prospecting list. Sit down this week and build it out:

Church youth groups and Bible camps. Every church with a youth program runs some kind of summer activity. Many of them have formal week-long camps. Contact every church within a ten-mile radius of your school.

Scout troops — Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts. They need badge activities and special events all summer long. A martial arts session fits perfectly into a merit badge or activity day.

Recreation center programs. Your city or county rec department almost certainly runs summer day camps. These are often large programs with a hundred or more kids, and the program directors are always looking for special activity providers.

Daycare summer programs. Every licensed daycare that serves school-age kids has to figure out what to do with them for ten weeks of summer. They go from a structured school day to needing full-day programming, and most daycares are desperate for enrichment activities.

Camps without facilities that bus kids around. This is a huge category that most people miss. Many summer programs don't have their own activity space — they operate out of churches, community centers, or school buildings and bus kids to different activities throughout the week. You are a perfect stop on their bus route.

Elementary-school-based camps. Many school districts rent their facilities to camp operators during the summer. Find out which schools in your area have summer programs running in them.

Sports camps — soccer, basketball, baseball camps all have down-time blocks and rainy-day alternatives they need to fill.

College-run camps. Universities with education and recreation programs often run summer camps for community kids.

Tech and programming camps. STEM camps, coding camps, robotics camps — these programs are full of kids who sit all day and desperately need a physical activity break. The parents of these kids are often affluent and very willing to invest in their children's activities.

And don't forget to check your local parent websites and community boards. Most areas have online directories listing every summer activity option. Your local newspaper probably runs a summer activity insert in May. These are your research tools — use them to find every camp and program operating in your area, then contact every single one.

## **The Offer That Gets You In the Door**

Here's what you're proposing to each camp operator: You will come to their location and teach a free, thirty-to-forty-five-minute martial arts class for their campers. You bring everything — an instructor, any equipment needed, permission slips, and a special offer for the kids to take home.

That's it. It's free. It's fun. It fills a slot in their activity calendar. And it gives the kids something active, structured, and exciting to do.

Why does this work so well? Because camp operators are often stretched thin and genuinely want a break. Think about it from their perspective. They've got thirty-five kids, it's week four of summer, the kids are restless,

the same four counselors are running out of ideas, and somebody calls offering to show up and lead an engaging physical activity for free? Most of them will say yes before you finish the sentence.

When you make the call, position it exactly like this: "We're offering complimentary martial arts activity sessions for summer programs in the area. It's a thirty-minute class that teaches basic self-defense, focus, and discipline — the kids absolutely love it. There's no cost and no obligation. We handle everything. All we ask is that we can send home an information packet for the parents. Do you have a day that would work?"

Notice what's in that pitch: it's free, it's easy for them, it's beneficial for the kids, and the only thing you're asking for is the ability to send information home. That's a very easy yes.

## **Working the Leads While the Kids Are There**

This is where the real magic happens, and it's where most school owners who actually do camp visits leave enormous amounts of money on the table.

Most people show up, teach a fun class, hand out some flyers, and leave. That's amateur hour. Here's the professional approach:

Before the visit, get the participant list from the camp operator. You need names and, ideally, parent contact information. Many camps have this on file and will share it if you ask, especially if you frame it around the permission slips. "We want to make sure every family is comfortable with their child participating, so could we send home permission slips in advance or get parent contact info to confirm?"

Have permission slips that double as lead capture forms. The permission slip should include parent name, phone number, email, child's name and age, and a checkbox for "Yes, I'd like more information about martial arts classes." You're collecting contact information under the completely legitimate umbrella of getting parental permission for the activity.

Now here's the aggressive play: while you are at the camp teaching the class, have someone back at your school calling and texting the parents. "Hi, this is Sarah from [Your School]. Your son Tyler is doing an awesome martial arts class with us right now at Camp Sunshine — he's having a blast! We'd love to invite him to continue with two free weeks of classes plus a free uniform. Can I get him scheduled for a time this week?"

Think about the psychology of that call. The parent knows their kid is literally doing martial arts at that exact moment. The kid is going to come home excited about it. And here's someone offering to continue that experience for free. The timing is perfect, the emotional trigger is live, and the barrier to saying yes is almost nonexistent.

After the class, use the child's positive experience as your follow-up trigger for the next several days. "Tyler couldn't stop talking about the martial arts class at camp today. We'd love to have him come try a full class this week..." That message — delivered by phone, text, and email — converts at a significantly higher rate than cold outreach because it's anchored to a real, positive experience the child already had.

## **Running Your Own Summer Camps**

Now let's talk about the flip side of this equation. In addition to visiting other people's camps, you should be running your own.

Your own summer camps serve two purposes: they're a profit center on their own, and they're an enrollment conversion machine.

There are several formats that work:

Martial arts day camps. Full-day programs, typically 9 AM to 3 PM, running Monday through Friday for one or two weeks at a time. These include martial arts training, games, character development activities, and fun. Price these at \$200 to \$350 per week depending on your market. Parents need childcare during the summer, and a martial arts day camp is far more appealing than parking their kid at a generic daycare.

Week-long specialty camps. Ninja camp. Self-defense camp. Little Warriors camp for ages four to six. Leadership camp for teens. These are shorter — maybe three hours per day for five days — and priced at \$150 to \$250 per week. They attract kids who might not commit to a full day camp but are interested in the themed experience.

Single-day camps and clinics. A Saturday "Anti-Bullying Workshop" or a "Board Breaking Bonanza" day. These are three to four hours, priced at \$49 to \$99, and serve as a low-barrier entry point to get new kids in your door.

Here's the critical piece that most school owners miss: every single camp attendee should receive an enrollment offer. Every one. Your camp is not just a camp — it is a conversion event.

On the last day of camp, you sit down with every parent at pickup time and make the offer. "Tyler had an amazing week. He really showed some natural talent, and the instructors loved working with him. We'd love to have him continue as a regular student. If you enroll today, we'll waive the registration fee and apply this week's camp tuition toward his first month. Can we get him started?"

You should be converting 20 to 30 percent of camp attendees into regular students. If you run camps with twenty kids per session and you run six sessions over the summer, that's 120 camp attendees and 24 to 36 new enrollments — just from your own camps. Add that to the enrollments you're generating from visiting other people's camps, and you're looking at a summer that builds your school instead of draining it.

## **The Daycare Relationship**

Daycares deserve special attention because they operate year-round, which means the relationship you build this summer pays dividends every month going forward.

The key to working with daycares is positioning martial arts as enrichment, not competition. Daycare operators are not going to help you market an activity that pulls kids away from their program. But they will enthusiastically support an enrichment offering that makes their program more attractive to parents.

Here's how you frame it: "We offer on-site martial arts enrichment classes for daycare programs. Once a week, our instructor comes to your facility and teaches a thirty-minute class for your kids. It's a structured physical activity that teaches focus, respect, and coordination. Parents love it because it adds value to what you're already offering. There's no cost to your program — parents pay us directly for the enrichment add-on."

This model works beautifully. The daycare gets to advertise "martial arts enrichment" as part of their programming without any additional cost or effort. Parents get a convenient activity their child can do during daycare hours. And you get a recurring weekly class that serves as a continuous lead generation pipeline.

Every child in that enrichment class who isn't a regular student at your school is a prospect. Their parents are already paying for martial arts — the step from a once-a-week daycare enrichment class to full enrollment at your

school is a very short one. And you have weekly contact with the child and regular touchpoints with the parent to nurture that transition.

## **The School That Built the Machine**

I want to tell you about a school owner in suburban Atlanta who decided to make camps and daycares his primary summer strategy. He didn't do it halfway. In March, he sat down and built a list of every camp, daycare, rec program, church youth group, and summer program within a fifteen-mile radius of his school. He ended up with a list of forty-seven organizations.

He contacted every single one. He offered free martial arts activity sessions to all of them. He followed the exact process I've laid out — permission slips as lead forms, calling parents during the class, follow-up sequences triggered by the child's experience.

Fifteen of those organizations said yes to having him come teach. He visited each one at least once, some of them two or three times over the course of the summer. He also built relationships with eight daycares and started weekly enrichment classes at five of them by August.

He ran his own three-week day camp program and two specialty camp weeks at his school.

The result? Over sixty new student enrollments between June and August. Sixty. His school grew more that summer than it had in the previous two years combined. And the daycare enrichment classes he started continued through the fall and into the next year, generating a steady stream of three to five new enrollments per month on autopilot.

The total marketing spend for this entire strategy? Almost nothing. Gas money, a few reams of paper for permission slips and flyers, and a small amount of instructor time. The ROI was astronomical.

Here's the brutal truth: those camps and daycares are there every single summer, packed with your ideal prospects, and most of them would love to have you come teach their kids. The only reason you're not getting those students is that you haven't picked up the phone.

This isn't complicated. It isn't expensive. It isn't risky. It's just work — the kind of systematic, persistent, relationship-building work that most school owners are too lazy or too unfocused to do consistently. And that's exactly why it works so well for the ones who do it.

The camps are filling up right now. The daycares have their summer calendars open. The phone is sitting right there. What are you waiting for?

# **PART III**

## **SCHOOL & DATABASE STRATEGIES**

## **CHAPTER 7: School Outreach: PE Teacher for the Day, Enrichment, and Back-to-School Nights**

Let me ask you something that might sting a little: How many elementary, middle, and private schools are within a ten-mile radius of your martial arts school?

Go ahead, think about it. Five? Ten? Twenty?

Now tell me — how many of those schools know who you are? How many of those principals have your cell phone number? How many of those PE teachers have watched you command a gymnasium full of 300 kids and thought, "We need this person back next year"?

If the answer is "not many," you're leaving an absolute fortune on the table. And I don't say that lightly. School outreach — done correctly — is one of the single most powerful lead generation strategies available to any martial arts school owner. Period. Full stop. Nothing else even comes close on a cost-per-lead basis.

But here's the brutal truth: most school owners either aren't doing it at all, or they're doing it so badly they might as well not bother. They show up, do a little demo, hand out some flyers that end up in the trash before the kids get to the parking lot, and then wonder why the phone doesn't ring.

That's not school outreach. That's a waste of your afternoon.

Let me show you how to do this right — and more importantly, how to do it **RIGHT NOW**, in April and May, before every teacher and administrator in your area mentally checks out for the summer.

### **Contact Every School NOW — Not Later, NOW**

Here's something most school owners don't understand about the education world: by the middle of May, most administrators are mentally done.

They're thinking about summer break, staffing for next year, end-of-year testing. If you call a principal on August 15th asking to come in and do a presentation, you're going to get a polite "we'll think about it" — which is administrator-speak for "no."

But if you call in April? Early May? You catch them while they're still in planning mode. They're still looking for ways to fill those last few weeks of school. They're still responsive. They're still saying yes.

So here is your homework, and I mean this week: make a list of every single public school, private school, charter school, and parochial school within your market area. Every. Single. One. Then start calling. Start with the ones you already have a relationship with, and work outward from there.

Your goal is simple: get on the calendar for a PE Teacher for the Day visit before school ends, AND get on the calendar for back-to-school events in August and September. You're planting seeds for two harvests at once.

## **PE Teacher for the Day — The RIGHT Way**

Now, let me be blunt about something. PE Teacher for the Day is not a demo. It's not a show. It's not entertainment. If you go into a school and treat this like a chance to show off your flying kicks and board breaks, you've already lost.

PE Teacher for the Day is a lead generation event. Say that out loud. Write it on your bathroom mirror. Tattoo it on your forearm if you have to. Every single thing you do — from the moment you contact the school to the follow-up calls three days later — should be engineered to capture qualified leads and convert them into appointments at your school.

Here's how the system works, step by step.

### **Step One: The Permission Slip**

Before you ever set foot in that gymnasium, you need permission slips going home with every student in every class you're going to teach. This is non-negotiable. The permission slip is not some bureaucratic formality — it IS the lead generation mechanism.

Your permission slip needs to include:

- Parent's full name
- Child's full name and grade
- Mailing address
- Email address
- Phone number
- A checkbox that says: "Yes, I give permission for [Your School Name] to contact me about their programs"

- An offer: "Your child is invited to 2 FREE weeks of martial arts classes plus a FREE uniform — no obligation"

That checkbox is everything. It separates your hot leads from your warm leads and determines exactly how aggressively you can follow up.

Work with the teacher or front office to send these home at least three to five days before your visit. The teacher announces it in class: "We have a special guest coming on Friday — a martial arts expert who's going to teach us about self-defense, focus, and anti-bullying. Please have your parents fill out this form and bring it back."

### **Step Two: Collect and Sort**

On the day of your visit, collect every permission slip before you start teaching. Have an assistant or staff member organizing them while you're in front of the kids. Sort them into two piles: those who checked "yes" to being contacted, and those who didn't.

Here's your benchmark: if you're getting 80% of the permission slips returned, you're doing well. That means the teacher did their job promoting it. Of those returned, if roughly half indicate interest by checking that contact box, you're in strong shape. That's a solid response rate.

Think about those numbers. You teach four classes of 25 kids each — that's 100 students. Eighty permission slips come back. Forty of them checked "yes, contact me." That's 40 hot leads from a single school visit. What would 40 qualified leads cost you on Facebook? On Google? You just got them for the cost of printing permission slips and an hour of your time.

### **Step Three: The Presentation Itself**

Now, what you actually teach matters — but not for the reason you think. You're not there to recruit kids on the gym floor. You're there to create an experience so positive that when Mom gets a phone call that evening, she already knows what it's about because her kid came home buzzing.

Teach self-defense. Teach confidence. Teach focus and discipline. Teach anti-bullying strategies — how to use your voice, how to stand tall, how to walk away, how to get help. Do NOT teach kids to "punch them in the nose." I shouldn't have to say this, but I've seen school owners blow up a perfectly good school relationship by teaching eight-year-olds to throw elbows. The principal will never invite you back, and frankly, you'd deserve it.

Frame everything around the language schools care about: conflict resolution, respect for teachers and parents, focus and attention in the

classroom, building confidence. These are the words that make principals and teachers your biggest fans.

### **Step Four: The Follow-Up**

This is where most school owners completely fall apart. They do the visit, they feel good about it, and then the permission slips sit in a pile on their desk for two weeks. By then, the momentum is gone. The kid has forgotten your name. The parent has no idea what you're talking about.

Your follow-up happens the SAME DAY. That evening. Here's the protocol:

For everyone who checked "yes" to contact: call them and text them immediately. That night. "Hi, this is Stephen from Oliver's Martial Arts. I had an amazing time working with your son Tyler today at Lincoln Elementary. He was one of the standout kids in the group. I'd love to get him in for his two free weeks — can we set up a time this week?"

For those who returned the slip but did NOT check the contact box: you can still reach them, just through less intrusive channels. Email them. Send a direct mail piece — a postcard with the offer and a photo from the event. You respect their boundary, but you don't just throw the lead away.

For the parents who didn't return a slip at all: you don't have their information, and that's fine. That's why you work to get that return rate as high as possible.

## **Turning Weak School Relationships Into Strong Ones**

Now, I know what some of you are thinking: "Stephen, my school won't let me hand out flyers. They won't let me do a PE Teacher for the Day. They barely let me set up a table at field day."

Fine. I hear you. But here's what I want you to understand: every relationship has levels, and your job is to move up.

If you're currently the "vendor who helps at field day" — great, you have a foot in the door. Use that relationship. Don't ask to hand out flyers. Ask smarter questions:

"Hey, do you have a back-to-school orientation night in August? I'd love to set up a booth and offer free trial classes for new families."

"Do you do any end-of-year recognition assemblies? I'd love to sponsor certificates for students with outstanding attendance or grades."

"I know bullying is a big concern for schools right now. Would you be open to me doing a separate anti-bullying presentation? No selling, just education."

"Have you ever considered an after-school enrichment program? I could put together a proposal for the fall."

See what you're doing? You're not asking to sell. You're asking to serve. And every time you serve, you move one step closer to being the school's go-to resource — the person they call when they need a speaker for Red Ribbon Week, the person they recommend when a parent asks about activities for their child.

Frame PE Teacher for the Day the same way. You're not asking to come in and recruit students. You're offering a program on anti-bullying, conflict resolution, focus, confidence, and respect for authority. Those are educational outcomes. That's a language principals understand and value.

Move from vendor to trusted resource. It doesn't happen overnight, but it happens faster than you think if you're consistent and you genuinely add value.

## **After-School Enrichment for Fall**

While you've got the attention of the school's administration in April and May, plant the seed for a fall after-school enrichment program. This is a massive opportunity that almost nobody in our industry is leveraging.

Here's how to structure it: propose a program that runs twice per week for three weeks. Six sessions total. The school provides the space (their gym or cafeteria), you provide the instruction. Parents pay a small fee — maybe \$49 or \$79 for the full program — and the school can even take a cut if that helps seal the deal.

But here's the genius of it: you build homework assignments and character development into the program. The kids have a worksheet to take home about respect, or goal-setting, or conflict resolution. Now you're not just a martial arts guy — you're an educational partner. The school loves it because it checks their character education box. The parents love it because their kid is getting structured activity after school. And you love it because every single one of those families is now in your enrollment pipeline.

At the end of the three weeks, you invite every family to your school for a "graduation" ceremony. Mom and Dad walk in, see your facility, meet your staff, and you make the offer: "Tyler's been doing great. We'd love to have him continue. Here's our enrollment special for enrichment families."

I had a school owner in Charlotte who ran this exact program at three elementary schools one fall. He enrolled 28 students directly from the enrichment programs. Twenty-eight students who never would have walked through his door otherwise.

## **Back-to-School Orientation Booths**

This is one of the highest-value lead generation events you can participate in, and it costs you nothing but time and a folding table.

Every school — elementary, middle, and many high schools — has some version of a back-to-school night, orientation day, or meet-the-teacher event in late August or early September. Parents are there. They're in "what activities should my kid do this year" mode. They're walking around, meeting teachers, picking up supply lists, and checking out tables set up by local organizations.

You need to be at that table.

But here's the catch: you need to get on the calendar NOW. In April and May. Because by the time August rolls around, the slots are full, the coordinator has gone on vacation, and you're out of luck.

Call the school. Ask for whoever coordinates back-to-school events. Say: "I run [Your School Name] martial arts and I'd love to set up a booth at your back-to-school orientation. We offer character development, anti-bullying education, and fitness programs for kids. Can I get on the list for August?"

Then show up with a purpose. Don't just sit behind a table with a stack of brochures. Set up a mini-demo area. Have an iPad for immediate appointment scheduling. Run a drawing for a free birthday party or free month of classes — anything to capture contact information. Have a specific offer: "Sign up tonight and your child gets two free weeks plus a free uniform."

I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that these events can be goldmines. I've personally seen — and I've had school owners report back to me — results like 85 appointments booked in two hours at a single back-to-school event. Eighty-five. In two hours. That's not a typo. When you have 400

parents walking past your table and you've got an energetic team with a compelling offer, the numbers are real.

Now, are you going to close all 85? Of course not. But if you close even a third of them, that's nearly 30 new students from one evening. What's the lifetime value of 30 students? Do the math. Then tell me you're too busy to set up a folding table at a school.

## **End-of-School Certificates**

Here's a quick win you can execute right now, in May, with minimal effort.

Contact every school you have a relationship with and offer to sponsor "Good Grades" and "Good Attendance" certificates. You print them. Your logo is on them. The school distributes them at an end-of-year ceremony or in the last week of school.

The certificate says something like: "Congratulations to [Student Name] for outstanding [grades/attendance] this school year! As a reward, [Student Name] is invited to 2 FREE weeks of martial arts training at [Your School], including a FREE uniform. Call [number] or visit [website] to schedule your first class."

The school gets to recognize kids for academic achievement — which they love. You get a branded certificate going home with every high-achieving student in the school — which you love. The parent sees a credible endorsement (the school gave this to my child) attached to a compelling offer. Everybody wins.

## **Charitable Fundraiser Flyers**

One more school channel you should be leveraging: fundraiser flyer distribution.

Most schools regularly send home flyers for local businesses that include a charitable component. You create a flyer that offers a special — maybe a two-week trial for \$29 — and a portion of every enrollment goes back to the school's PTA or a specific program.

The school distributes the flyers because it benefits them financially. You get your offer in front of every family in the school. And you've got a charitable angle that makes the whole thing feel good rather than salesy.

It's not going to generate the same volume as PE Teacher for the Day or a back-to-school booth. But it's one more touch point. One more way to stay in front of those families. And in marketing, frequency matters. The more times a parent sees your name connected to their child's school, the more trust you build.

## **The Bottom Line**

School outreach is not optional. It's not a "nice to have." If you are a martial arts school within range of even a handful of schools and you're NOT running these programs, you are voluntarily surrendering the single best source of affordable, high-quality leads in your market.

Get on the phone this week. Contact every school. Get on every calendar. Print permission slips. Plan your fall enrichment. Reserve your back-to-school booth.

Your competitors won't. That's why this works.

## CHAPTER 8: The Reactivation Goldmine: Your Database Is Sitting on a Fortune

You know what drives me absolutely crazy? When a school owner tells me they need more leads and they're spending three, four, five thousand dollars a month on Facebook ads and Google ads — and meanwhile they're sitting on a database of 500, 1,000, sometimes 2,000 or more names of people who have ALREADY raised their hand and said "I'm interested in martial arts."

These people filled out a form on your website. They responded to a Facebook ad. They walked through your front door for an introductory lesson. They enrolled their kid and trained for six months before life got in the way. They are warm. They already know who you are. They've already expressed interest. And you're ignoring them while you chase cold traffic online.

Let me be blunt: your database is a goldmine, and you are stepping over it every single day to go dig in the dirt somewhere else.

This chapter is going to show you exactly how to mine that gold. And if you do what I'm about to tell you, you can realistically add 30 to 50 students to your school this summer without spending a dime on advertising.

### Step One: Pull Every Non-Active Name

The first thing you need to do is get organized. Pull every single non-active prospect and former student from your database. Every one. I don't care if the lead is from 2019. I don't care if the person came in for one trial lesson and never came back. I don't care if the student dropped out two years ago because they "got busy." Pull them all.

Here's what you're looking for:

**Website leads** — people who filled out a form on your website but never came in for a lesson. Every one of those names is someone who was interested enough to give you their contact information. That's not nothing.

**Facebook and Instagram leads** — same thing. They clicked your ad. They filled out the form. They raised their hand. Then... nothing happened. Or maybe you called once, didn't reach them, and gave up. That lead isn't dead. It's dormant.

**Intro no-sales** — people who actually came in, took an introductory lesson, and for whatever reason didn't enroll. Maybe the timing was wrong. Maybe

they weren't sold properly. Maybe they just needed to think about it and nobody followed up. These are some of your BEST reactivation targets because they've already experienced your school.

**Former students** — people who were enrolled, were training, and then stopped. They moved. They got injured. Their kid started soccer. They had a baby. Life happened. But they already know the value of what you offer. They already had a relationship with you. In many cases, they WANT to come back — they just need a reason and an invitation.

**Dropouts** — I separate these from former students because dropouts often left for a reason. Maybe they were unhappy. Maybe they felt ignored. Maybe the billing was confusing. You need to handle these more carefully, but they're still worth reaching out to. Some of them left for reasons that had nothing to do with you, and they'd come back in a heartbeat if you asked.

Compile every name into one master list. If your software can segment these — and most CRM systems can — do it. If you have to export to a spreadsheet and sort manually, do that. But get the list built.

## Step Two: Segment Your List

Not every name on your list should get the same message. A former student who trained for two years needs a different approach than someone who filled out a Facebook lead form and never responded to a call.

Here's how I segment:

**Former students (win-back):** These people already know you, trust you (hopefully), and understand the value. Your message to them is: "We miss you. Things have gotten even better since you were here. Here's a special offer to come back." You can be personal with these. Reference their training history. Mention their instructor by name. Remind them what they loved about training.

**Intro no-shows (re-invite):** These people expressed interest but never made it through the door. Your message is: "I know life gets busy, but I didn't want you to miss out. We've got a special summer program and I'm holding a spot for you." Make it easy. Remove the friction. Give them a specific date and time to come in.

**Interested-but-never-visited (fresh offer):** Website leads, Facebook leads, people who called and asked questions but never booked. Your

message is a fresh offer. Don't reference the fact that they ghosted you six months ago. Just hit them with something compelling: "Summer Special: 6 Weeks for \$97, Includes a Free Uniform. Limited spots available."

**Former students who left unhappy (careful win-back):** Tread lightly here, but don't skip them entirely. A personal call from the school owner — "Hey, I know things didn't end perfectly. I've made some changes and I'd love to have you back. Can I make it right?" — can work wonders. I've seen students who left angry come back and become the school's biggest advocates because someone took the time to call and genuinely listen.

## Step Three: The Summer Campaign

Now you run a specific, aggressive, time-bound summer campaign to this list. Not a "hey, just checking in" email. A real campaign with a real offer and real urgency.

Here are offers that work:

- **3-Week Summer Trial: \$49, includes uniform.** Low commitment, low risk. Gets them in the door.
- **6-Week Summer Special: \$97, includes uniform.** Slightly higher commitment, better for former students who already know the value.
- **"Summer Shape-Up" for adults: 6 weeks for \$97.** Reactivate those adult leads and former students who let their membership lapse.
- **Back-to-School Prep: Enroll now, start anytime before September.** Creates urgency while offering flexibility.

The specific offer matters less than the specificity. Don't say "special summer pricing." Say "\$97 for 6 weeks including a free uniform — enrollment closes June 15th." Give them a number. Give them a deadline. Make it concrete.

## Step Four: Don't Let Them Drift — Convert Fast

Here's where the money is made or lost. When someone from your reactivation campaign walks through the door for their first or second lesson, you do NOT let them just "try it out for a few weeks and see how it goes."

You convert them. On the first lesson or the second lesson. You sit them down, you go through the enrollment process, and you offer a "finalize today" discount.

"Listen, I'm glad you're enjoying the classes. Here's what I'd love to do — if we can get the paperwork taken care of today, I can extend your summer special rate into a full enrollment and waive the registration fee. That saves you \$150. But I can only hold that offer through today."

Is that aggressive? Yes. Does it work? Absolutely. Because if you let them drift through three or four or six trial lessons without asking for the sale, they'll drift right back out the door. The reactivation campaign gets them in. Your enrollment process locks them in. Don't skip the second part.

## **Step Five: The Math That Should Keep You Up at Night**

Let's do some simple math that should make you feel either very excited or very frustrated, depending on whether you've been doing this.

Let's say you have 500 non-active names in your database. That's a conservative number for any school that's been open more than two or three years. If you run an aggressive reactivation campaign — the kind I'm describing here — a 10% conversion rate is realistic. Very realistic. I've seen higher.

Ten percent of 500 is 50 students.

Fifty new students. For almost zero advertising spend. Your cost is staff time for calls and texts, maybe a few hundred dollars in postage for direct mail, and whatever your email platform charges (which is probably nothing extra).

What are 50 students worth to you? If your average tuition is \$150 per month and your average retention is 18 months, each student is worth \$2,700 in lifetime revenue. Fifty students times \$2,700 is \$135,000 in lifetime revenue.

One hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars. Sitting in your database. Gathering dust.

Still think you need to spend more on Facebook ads?

## **Step Six: Multi-Channel Reactivation**

Now, let me be crystal clear about something: you don't just send one email and call it a campaign. That's not a campaign. That's a whisper into the

void. A real reactivation campaign is multi-channel, high-frequency, and relentless.

Here is the priority order for your communication channels, from most effective to least:

1. **Live outbound phone calls.** Nothing beats a real human voice. "Hi, this is Mike from Oliver's Martial Arts. I'm calling because we've got a special summer program and I wanted to personally invite you back." This is number one for a reason. Pick up the phone.
2. **Text messaging.** Almost everyone reads texts. "Hey [Name], it's Stephen at Oliver's MA. We're running a summer special — 6 weeks for \$97 with a free uniform. Want me to save you a spot?" Short, direct, conversational.
3. **Direct mail.** Yes, physical mail. Postcards, letters, and for your best prospects, robust packages. A postcard with a bold offer and a deadline. A letter that tells a story about a student who came back and transformed their life. A lumpy mail package with a mini martial arts belt and an invitation. Direct mail gets opened. It sits on the kitchen counter. It works.
4. **Automated voicemail drops.** Technology lets you drop a voicemail directly into someone's inbox without their phone ever ringing. Use it. "Hey, this is Stephen. Quick message — we've got a limited summer program and I'm holding a spot for your family. Call me back at..."
5. **Email.** Yes, email is number five, not number one. Most school owners start and end with email, which is exactly why their reactivation campaigns fail. Email is easy to ignore. It's one channel in a multi-channel strategy, not the whole strategy. But it does work in volume.
6. **Custom audience retargeting on Facebook.** Upload your email list to Facebook, create a custom audience, and run ads specifically to those people. They'll see your summer offer in their News Feed. This is incredibly cost-effective because you're targeting people who already know you.
7. **Retargeting via uploaded email list on Google.** Same concept, different platform. Upload your list to Google Ads and run display ads to those people across the web.
8. **Retargeting via pixel on Facebook.** If you've got a Facebook pixel on your website (and you should), anyone who's visited your site will see your retargeting ads. Layer this on top of your email list targeting.
9. **Retargeting via HTML code on Google.** Google's display network retargeting. Anyone who's visited your website sees your ads as they browse other sites.

You're surrounding them. They get a call, then a text, then a postcard shows up, then they see your ad on Facebook, then they get an email, then another postcard, then they see you on Google. It's not harassment — it's marketing. And it works because people need multiple touch points before they take action. The research says seven to twelve. Most school owners give up after one or two.

## Step Seven: Frequency Matters

How often should you be hitting this list? More often than you think.

- **Direct mail:** At least two to three pieces per month. Postcards are cheap. Letters are effective. Mix it up.
- **Email:** Once or twice a day during the active campaign phase. Yes, per day. You'll get unsubscribes. That's fine. The people who unsubscribe weren't going to buy anyway. The people who stay on the list are seeing your offer repeatedly, and some of them will act.
- **Retargeting ads:** Ongoing. Set them up and let them run. They're cheap and they keep you visible.
- **Calls and texts:** More frequently during the initial contact period — daily attempts for the first week or two, then scale back to once or twice a month for ongoing nurture.

And don't just hammer them with offers. Mix in value. Send an email about how martial arts builds character in kids. Share a testimonial from a parent whose child's grades improved after starting training. Post a video of a student earning their black belt. Educate them on the value of what you offer — character development, confidence, discipline, fitness — and then follow it with the offer.

The pattern is: value, value, offer. Value, value, offer. Build the case, then make the ask.

## Step Eight: Seasonal Offers Keep It Fresh

Don't run the same offer for six months straight. Rotate seasonal offers to create urgency and novelty:

- **May/June:** "Summer Kickoff Special — 6 Weeks for \$97"
- **July:** "Beat the Summer Slump — 3-Week Intensive, \$49"
- **August:** "Back-to-School Special — Enroll Now, Get September Free"
- **September:** "Fall Into Fitness — New Student Special"

Each new offer gives you a reason to reach out again. "Hey, I know I've reached out before, but we just launched a brand new back-to-school program and I didn't want you to miss it."

## **The Proof Is in the Results**

I had a school owner in Tampa who had been in business for about seven years. Good school, decent retention, but he was stuck at about 180 students and spending \$4,000 a month on advertising trying to grow. When I looked at his database, he had over 1,200 non-active names. Twelve hundred. Former students, old leads, intro no-shows — years of accumulated contacts that were just sitting there.

We ran an aggressive six-week reactivation campaign using the exact system I just described. Calls, texts, direct mail, email, retargeting. He enrolled 35 students in six weeks. Thirty-five. His total hard cost for the campaign was under \$800 — mostly postage and a small retargeting ad budget.

Thirty-five students at \$150 per month average tuition. That's \$5,250 per month in new recurring revenue. Over \$63,000 per year. From a list he was ignoring.

He canceled \$2,000 of his monthly ad spend the following month because he didn't need it. His school hit 220 students by September.

That's what's sitting in your database. Are you going to keep ignoring it?

## **The Bottom Line**

Your database isn't a list of failures. It's a list of opportunities. Every name on that list is someone who, at some point, was interested enough in martial arts to raise their hand. Life got in the way. Timing wasn't right. The follow-up wasn't there. But the interest didn't die — it just went dormant.

Your job this summer is to wake it up. Pull the list. Segment it. Build the campaign. Hit every channel. Follow up relentlessly. Convert fast. And watch the students roll in while your competitors are crying about "summer slowdown."

There is no summer slowdown. There's only a summer slow-effort. Fix the effort, fix the results.

## **CHAPTER 9: Referrals, Buddy Events, and Family Enrollments: Your Free Student Machine**

If you're spending money on advertising but you're not running a systematic referral program, you've got it completely backwards. Advertising is the gas pedal. Referrals are the engine. You can step on the gas all day long, but without an engine, you're not going anywhere.

Let me be blunt: if you have 100 or more actively training students in your school right now, you have what I call "critical mass" for referral systems. That's enough students — enough families, enough social circles, enough word-of-mouth potential — to generate a steady, reliable stream of new enrollments without spending a dime on advertising.

But here's where most school owners get it wrong: they think referrals just happen. They think if they run a great school and teach great classes, their students will naturally tell their friends and those friends will walk through the door.

That is fantasy-land thinking. Referrals don't happen. Referrals are engineered. They're built into your systems, your events, your enrollment process, and your daily conversations. If you're waiting for referrals to come to you, you'll be waiting forever.

This chapter is your blueprint for turning every single student and family in your school into a lead generation machine.

### **Buddy Events: The Engine of Your Referral System**

You should be hosting at least two significant "buddy events" per month. Not one. Two. Minimum. These are events specifically designed to get your current students to bring friends and family members into your school — people who would never have walked through your door on their own.

Here's why buddy events work so well: they remove the two biggest barriers to trying martial arts. The first barrier is fear of the unknown — "I don't know what to expect, so I'm not going." When a friend invites you, that fear drops dramatically. The second barrier is inertia — "I've been meaning to look into it, but I just haven't gotten around to it." When there's a specific event on a specific date and your child's best friend is begging you to come, inertia loses.

Here are the types of buddy events you should be rotating through your calendar:

**Bring a Friend Week:** Once per quarter — or even once per month if you can pull it off — declare a "Bring a Friend Week." Every student is encouraged to bring a friend to class. Make it an event. Put up signs. Send home flyers. Have instructors announce it in every class for two weeks leading up to it. Create a contest: the student who brings the most friends wins a prize. The friend gets a free class plus a special offer to enroll.

**Pizza Parties for New Belt Graduates:** When a new student earns their first belt — and this should happen within four to six weeks of enrollment — throw a pizza party. But here's the key: the student must invite at least three friends who don't currently train at your school. The friends come, eat pizza, watch the belt ceremony, and then you offer them a free trial class. It's celebration plus lead generation.

**Parent-Child Seminars:** Once a month, run a special "Parent-Child Self-Defense Seminar" or "Family Fitness Day." Mom or Dad trains alongside their kid for an hour. This serves double duty — it gets the parent on the mat (which is your pathway to family enrollment, which I'll cover in a minute), and the family is encouraged to bring another family.

**Family Fun Days:** Quarterly, host a bigger event — a Family Fun Day with a cookout, demonstrations, games, and open mat time for visitors. This is your party. This is your showcase. Every student's family is invited, and every student is told to bring at least one family they know from school, sports, church, or the neighborhood.

**Birthday Parties:** If you're not offering birthday parties, you're missing one of the easiest referral opportunities in the business. But here's my twist: schedule the birthday party during the enrollment process. When a new family enrolls, ask: "When is Tyler's birthday? We host amazing martial arts birthday parties right here at the school. Let's get that on the calendar." Now you have 10 to 15 kids — Tyler's friends — coming into your school, having a blast, and going home with a free trial offer. I've seen single birthday parties generate four or five enrollments.

**Belt Graduation Guest Requirements:** For the first two or three belt graduations, require — not suggest, require — each student to invite at least two to three friends or family members who are not currently enrolled. "Tyler's yellow belt graduation is next Saturday at 2 PM. He's required to invite at least two guests to watch him earn his belt. Please let us know who's coming so we can save seats." Those guests see the ceremony, see

the confidence in the students, feel the energy of the school, and leave with an enrollment offer.

## **Family Enrollments: Your Biggest Untapped Revenue Source**

Here's a number that might shock you: in a well-run martial arts school, you should be enrolling at least 50% of parents alongside their children. At least half.

Most school owners hear that and think I've lost my mind. "Stephen, parents don't want to do martial arts. They just want their kids to do it." Wrong. Parents DO want to do martial arts — they just don't know it yet. Or they think it's not for them. Or nobody has ever asked them.

Let me say that again: nobody has ever asked them.

How many times has a parent enrolled their child in your school and you said, "That's great, Tyler starts on Monday"? And that was it. You never once said, "What about you? Have you ever thought about training?"

Here's how to fix that immediately.

**Require Both Parents to Take Introductory Lessons.** I know that word — "require" — makes some of you nervous. Get over it. During your enrollment process, when a family comes in for their introductory lesson, both parents should participate. Not watch. Participate. "Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, we find that families who train together get the most out of our program. Both of you will be doing the introductory lesson with Tyler today."

Most parents will go along with it. Some will resist. For the ones who resist, pivot: "I totally understand. But let me ask you this — Tyler is going to be learning self-defense, discipline, and confidence. Don't you think it would help him if you understood what he's learning? And honestly, it's a great workout."

Once a parent is on the mat, once they've thrown a few kicks, once they've felt what it's like to learn something new and have an instructor say "great job" — they're hooked. Not all of them. But a lot of them. Way more than you'd think.

**Eliminate "Kids Classes" from Your Vocabulary.** This is a mindset shift that matters. If your school is perceived as a "kids' martial arts school," parents will never see themselves as potential students. Rename your

program structure. You don't have "Kids Classes." You have "Family Martial Arts Programs." You have "Adult and Family Classes." You have class times that are designed for parents to train while their kids train — or better yet, alongside their kids.

**Use the 2-for-1 Family Tuition Structure.** Here's a pricing strategy that drives family enrollments through the roof: two family members at full price equals the entire family enrolled. "Mr. Johnson, Tyler's tuition is \$179 a month. Your tuition would also be \$179 a month. But here's the best part — if both of you enroll, your entire family can train. If Mrs. Johnson wants to join, if Tyler's sister wants to try it, they're all included at no additional cost."

Now you've gone from one enrollment at \$179 to two enrollments at \$358 — and you've given them a compelling reason to get the whole family involved. Your revenue per family doubles.

**Ask at EVERY New Enrollment.** This is so simple it's embarrassing that I have to say it. At every single new enrollment — every one — ask the question: "Is anyone else in the family interested in training?"

Not "would anyone else be interested?" That's too easy to say no to. "IS anyone else interested?" Assumes the answer might be yes. "Tyler's dad looked like he was really enjoying the lesson today. Is he interested in starting a program too?"

Here's a simple script that works:

"Congratulations on enrolling Tyler. He's going to love it here. Quick question — is anyone else in the family interested in training? A lot of our families train together and it becomes this amazing shared experience. We have programs for adults, teens, and younger kids. And with our family plan, adding a second family member is the same price, and then the entire family can train at no extra charge. Should we set up an introductory lesson for anyone else?"

You will be stunned at how often the answer is yes. Not every time. But 30%, 40%, sometimes 50% of the time, there IS someone else in the family who's been thinking about it. You just have to ask.

## Engineering Referrals — Not Waiting for Them

Most school owners have a "referral program" that consists of a small sign on the front desk that says "Refer a Friend, Get a Free Month!" And then they wonder why nobody refers.

That's not a referral system. That's a suggestion. Here's how you engineer referrals so they actually happen.

**Make the Ask Specific and Immediate.** Don't say, "If you know anyone who might be interested, send them our way." That's vague and forgettable. Say: "Mrs. Johnson, who is Tyler's best friend at school? Great — does Jake do any martial arts? No? Would you be willing to invite Jake to our Bring a Friend Day next Saturday? I'll save him a spot."

See the difference? You named the event. You named the friend. You asked for a specific action. That generates results.

### **VIP Conversations: Setting Appointments Face-to-Face in the Community.**

This is advanced-level referral work, but it's incredibly powerful. Train your staff — and yourself — to have what I call "VIP conversations" everywhere you go. At the grocery store, at church, at your kid's soccer game, at the neighborhood cookout.

The VIP conversation goes like this: "Hey, what do your kids do for activities? Oh, that's great. Have they ever tried martial arts? No? You know, we run a program specifically designed for kids Tyler's age — it focuses on confidence, discipline, and fitness. I'd love to have him come try a class. Here, let me give you my card — can I grab your number and text you the details?"

You're not being pushy. You're being a professional who believes in what they offer. You're not waiting for people to find you. You're going to find them. And you're setting appointments — not handing out cards and hoping for the best.

Every enrolled student should be worth 1.5 to 2 additional enrollments over their lifetime in your school. That means if you enroll one student, your referral systems should produce, on average, one to two more students connected to that original enrollment. One comes from the family — a parent or sibling. One comes from a friend at school, a buddy event, or a word-of-mouth referral.

If you're not hitting that ratio, your referral system is broken. Or more likely, it doesn't exist.

**Create a Referral Rewards Program That Actually Motivates.** A free month of tuition is fine, but it's not exciting. Consider tiered referral rewards:

- 1 referral who enrolls: free month of tuition
- 3 referrals who enroll: free testing fees for a year
- 5 referrals who enroll: free private lesson package
- 10 referrals who enroll: free year of tuition

Put a tracker on the wall. Make it visible. Celebrate it publicly. When Mrs. Johnson refers her third family, announce it in class. "Everyone, Mrs. Johnson just earned her family free testing fees for the entire year by helping us welcome three new families to our school. Let's give her a round of applause." Now every other parent in that room is thinking, "I could do that."

**Systematic Follow-Up on Every Referral.** When a student or parent gives you a name — any name — you follow up within 24 hours. Call them. Text them. "Hi, I'm Stephen from Oliver's Martial Arts. Tyler Johnson's mom mentioned that Jake might enjoy our program. We'd love to have him try a free class. Can we set something up for this week?"

Speed matters. The referral is warmest the moment it's given. Every day you wait, it cools. Within 24 hours. No exceptions.

## **Putting It All Together**

Let me paint the picture of what this looks like when all the pieces are running.

You've got 150 students. You're running two buddy events per month — a Bring a Friend Day and a pizza party for new belt graduates. You're hosting birthday parties most weekends. You're requiring guests at belt graduations. You're asking about family enrollment at every single new enrollment. You've got a VIP conversation culture where your staff is setting appointments in the community. You've got a tiered referral rewards program that motivates your families to spread the word.

What happens? You start enrolling 15 to 20 new students per month from referrals alone. No ad spend. No marketing budget. Just the natural,

engineered output of a system that turns every student into a lead generation machine.

I had a school owner in Denver — 200 students, spent maybe \$1,500 a month on advertising. We built out this exact referral system. Within four months, his referral enrollments were averaging 18 per month. He dropped his ad spend to \$500. His total enrollment hit 275 by the end of the year.

Eighteen students a month. From his own students. For free.

## **The Bottom Line**

Referrals are not luck. They're not random. They're not something you hope for. They're something you build. You build them into your events. You build them into your enrollment process. You build them into your daily conversations. You build them into your culture.

If you've got 100 or more students and you're not generating at least 10 referral enrollments per month, you don't have a marketing problem — you have a systems problem. Fix the systems, and the referrals will come.

Your current students are the single greatest marketing asset you own. They're more powerful than any Facebook ad, any Google campaign, any direct mail piece. Because when a friend tells a friend, "You've got to try this place," that carries more weight than any advertisement you could ever create.

Stop waiting for it to happen. Start making it happen.

# **PART IV**

## **DIGITAL & GRASSROOTS MARKETING**

## **CHAPTER 10: Summer Digital Advertising: Facebook, Instagram, and Google Ads That Actually Work**

Let me tell you the most expensive mistake I see martial arts school owners make with digital advertising. It's not picking the wrong platform. It's not writing bad ad copy. It's not even targeting the wrong audience.

It's the "set it and forget it" death spiral.

Here's how it goes. You launch a Facebook campaign in April. First two weeks, you're on fire. Cost per lead is \$15. Leads are pouring in. You're feeling like a genius. You high-five your front desk person, maybe treat yourself to a nice dinner. Life is good.

Then you stop paying attention.

You get busy with classes. You've got belt tests coming up. A couple of instructors call in sick. Your AC unit breaks. You know — life. And that campaign just keeps running in the background. Nobody's checking it. Nobody's refreshing the creative. Nobody's monitoring the metrics.

Six weeks later, you finally log into your ads manager and your cost per lead has crept from \$15 to \$42. Then \$58. Then \$67. You've been hemorrhaging money for weeks and didn't even notice. That campaign that was generating leads at \$15 a pop is now costing you four times that amount, and the lead quality has dropped off a cliff because the same people in your area have seen the same ad forty-seven times.

I call this "advertising on autopilot," and it will destroy your marketing budget faster than anything else I know.

### **The Agency Horror Story You Need to Hear**

I had a school owner — let's call him Dave — in the suburbs outside Atlanta. Dave was doing what a lot of owners do. He hired a marketing agency to handle his Facebook and Instagram ads. He was paying them \$1,500 a month in management fees plus \$5,000 a month in ad spend. That's \$6,500 a month walking out the door.

Now, Dave figured he was in good hands. The agency had a nice website, a smooth sales pitch, and they sent him a fancy PDF report once a month that

was full of impressions and reach numbers and all kinds of metrics that made it look like things were going great.

Here's the brutal truth about what was actually happening.

For six straight weeks, Dave's cost per lead had ballooned to over \$120. In that entire six-week stretch, he generated a grand total of eleven leads. Eleven. At a cost per lead north of \$120 each, plus the \$1,500 management fee on top of it.

And the agency never flagged it. Not once. They never called Dave and said, "Hey, something's wrong, we need to adjust." They never paused the underperforming ad sets. They never swapped out the creative. They just kept billing him and letting the money burn.

When Dave finally came to one of our events and showed me his numbers, I almost fell out of my chair. He'd spent over \$16,000 in that six-week period and had eleven leads to show for it. That's nearly \$1,500 per lead. For a martial arts school. Where the average enrollment might be worth \$2,000 to \$3,000 in the first year.

The math doesn't work. It can never work at those numbers.

Now, I'm not saying all agencies are bad. But I am saying this: nobody will care about your money as much as you do. Whether you run your own ads or hire someone to do it, you need to understand the numbers, check them regularly, and have clear benchmarks for what's acceptable and what's not.

## Summer-Specific Ad Hooks That Actually Convert

Summer is a different animal when it comes to advertising. The psychology of your prospects shifts. Parents aren't thinking about after-school activities — they're thinking about what to do with their kids for ten to twelve weeks when school is out.

You need to speak directly to that mindset. Here are the hooks that work:

**"Summer Special — Limited Spots Available."** Urgency plus exclusivity. Parents are making summer plans right now. They're signing kids up for swim lessons, soccer camps, art classes. If you're not in the conversation, you're invisible.

**"Keep Kids Active This Summer."** This hits the fear every parent has — their kid turning into a couch potato for three months, glued to screens, eating junk food, staying up until 2 AM playing video games. Position martial arts as the antidote to the summer slump.

**"Beat the Summer Slide."** This one is gold, especially for parents of elementary-age kids. Teachers talk about the "summer slide" — kids losing academic progress over the summer. Martial arts builds discipline, focus, and structure. You're not just a physical activity. You're keeping their brain sharp too.

**"Build Confidence Before School Starts."** This works beautifully in late July and August. Every parent worries about their kid going back to school, especially if they're starting a new school, dealing with bullying, or just socially awkward. Confidence before the first day of school? That's a message that resonates.

Use these hooks in your headlines, your video scripts, your ad copy. Rotate them throughout the summer. Don't run the same message for three straight months.

## **Facebook and Instagram: How to Set Up Campaigns That Work**

Let me be blunt: if you're still manually picking audiences based on what you think your ideal customer looks like, you're leaving money on the table.

Meta's Advantage+ campaigns have changed the game. The artificial intelligence behind Facebook and Instagram's ad delivery system is, frankly, smarter than your assumptions about who your customer is. I've seen school owners constrain their audiences to "women aged 28-42 within 5 miles who are interested in parenting and fitness" and wonder why their costs are through the roof.

Here's why: you've told the algorithm to only look at a tiny sliver of the population. You've handcuffed the AI that's been trained on billions of data points about who actually converts. When you open up the audience and let Advantage+ do its thing, the system finds people you never would have thought to target — and they convert.

Does this mean you run completely wide open with zero targeting? No. Keep your geographic targeting tight — you're a local business. But beyond that, give the AI room to work. Use broad audiences. Load up multiple creative assets — different images, different videos, different headlines, different body copy. Let the system test and optimize.

The key mistake is constraining audiences too much. The AI is smarter than your assumptions. Let it work.

Here's what a solid summer campaign structure looks like:

- **Campaign 1:** Advantage+ with 4-6 creative variations, broad local targeting, summer offer
- **Campaign 2:** Video views campaign to build warm audiences (class footage, student testimonials, instructor tips)
- **Campaign 3:** Retargeting campaign (more on this in a minute)

Run all three simultaneously. They feed each other.

## Automated Rules: Your Safety Net Against the Death Spiral

Remember that death spiral I talked about at the beginning of this chapter? Here's how you prevent it. Set up automated rules in your ads manager. This takes five minutes and can save you thousands of dollars.

**Rule 1:** If cost per lead exceeds \$35 for 48 consecutive hours, automatically pause that ad set. This is your circuit breaker. When an ad set stops performing, the system shuts it off before it burns through your budget.

**Rule 2:** If cost per lead is under \$20 after \$100 in spend, automatically increase the budget by 20%. When something's working, pour gas on it. Don't let a winning ad set sit there at \$10 a day when it could be running at \$50 a day and still delivering cheap leads.

**Rule 3:** If frequency exceeds 3.5, pause the ad set. Frequency means the average person in your audience has seen your ad 3.5 times. After that point, performance drops off dramatically. You need fresh creative.

These three rules alone will prevent 90% of the budget waste I see in martial arts school advertising. Set them up today. Right now. Before you forget.

## Google Search: Capturing High-Intent Buyers

Facebook and Instagram are interruption marketing. You're putting your ad in front of someone who was scrolling through pictures of their friend's vacation. They weren't looking for martial arts classes. You interrupted them.

Google Search is the opposite. Someone types "karate near me" into Google — they are actively looking for what you sell. These are the hottest leads in the world. They've already decided they want martial arts. They're just deciding where.

Your Google Search campaign should target these high-intent local keywords:

- "karate near me"
- "martial arts [your city]"
- "taekwondo classes [your city]"
- "kids martial arts [your city]"
- "summer activities for kids [your city]"
- "summer camps near me"
- "kids self defense classes"
- "martial arts for beginners"

Bid aggressively on these terms during the summer. Yes, the cost per click is higher than Facebook. But the intent is dramatically higher. A lead from Google Search who typed "martial arts classes near me" is ten times more likely to walk through your door than someone who clicked a Facebook ad while they were half-watching Netflix.

Make sure your landing page matches the search intent. If someone searches "summer activities for kids," don't send them to your generic homepage. Send them to a page about your summer program with a clear offer and a simple form.

## **Retargeting: The Follow-Up Machine**

Here's a stat that should keep you up at night: 97% of people who visit your website for the first time leave without taking action. They looked, they browsed, and they left.

But they were interested. They were curious enough to click. And now, with retargeting, you can stay in front of them until they're ready to act.

Set up retargeting audiences for:

- Anyone who visited your website in the last 30 days
- Anyone who engaged with your social media pages
- Anyone who watched 50% or more of your video ads
- Anyone who started but didn't complete your lead form

Serve these warm audiences a stronger call to action. They've already shown interest. Now give them a reason to act. A limited-time offer. A testimonial video from a parent. A "spots filling up" message. A direct phone number to call.

Retargeting campaigns typically deliver leads at 30-50% lower cost than cold campaigns because you're talking to people who already know who you are.

## Budget Reality Check

What should you be spending? For a single-location martial arts school during the summer season, I recommend \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month in ad spend across Facebook, Instagram, and Google. Split it roughly 60/40 — 60% on Meta platforms, 40% on Google.

If that sounds like a lot, let me ask you this: what's an enrolled student worth to you? If your average student stays 18 months and pays \$175 a month, that's \$3,150 in lifetime revenue. If your cost to acquire that student through advertising is \$100 to \$200, that's a 15-to-1 return on investment. Show me another investment that delivers those kinds of returns.

The schools that dominate summer aren't the ones with the biggest budgets. They're the ones who spend consistently, monitor their numbers, and optimize relentlessly.

## Daily Organic Social: The Free Marketing You're Probably Neglecting

Paid advertising is only half the equation. Your organic social media presence — the stuff you post for free — is what builds trust, credibility, and community. It's what turns a cold lead into a warm prospect before they ever see your ad.

Post daily. Or at minimum, five to six times per week. Here's your content rotation:

**Monday:** Student win — a photo or video of a student earning a stripe, breaking a board, nailing a technique for the first time. Tag the student (with parent permission). Parents share these posts like crazy.

**Tuesday:** Class footage — a short clip of an energetic, fun class. Show the experience. Let people see what it's actually like to be in your school.

**Wednesday:** Instructor tip — one of your instructors gives a 30-second tip about focus, discipline, or a technique. This positions your team as experts.

**Thursday:** Character development — tie a life skill to a summer theme. "This summer, we're building leaders, not just martial artists."

**Friday:** Testimonial — a parent quote, a video review, a screenshot of a Google review. Social proof sells.

**Saturday:** Event promotion or community content — promote your upcoming events, show behind-the-scenes moments, celebrate your school culture.

Every single post should tie back to summer themes when possible. Summer camps, staying active, beating boredom, building confidence for back-to-school. Make it seasonal. Make it relevant to what's on parents' minds right now.

## Your Digital Marketing Scoreboard

You can't manage what you don't measure. Here are the key metrics you should be tracking weekly:

- **Cost Per Lead (CPL):** Target \$15-\$30. If you're consistently above \$35, something needs to change.
- **Cost Per Enrollment (CPE):** Target \$75-\$200. This is the number that actually matters. A \$30 CPL means nothing if none of those leads enroll.
- **Click-Through Rate (CTR):** Target 1.5% or higher on Facebook, 3% + on Google Search. Low CTR means your ad or your targeting is off.
- **Conversion Rate:** What percentage of people who click actually submit a lead form? Target 15-25% on your landing pages.
- **Lead Volume:** Target 50 or more qualified leads per month from digital channels.

Check these numbers every single week. Not once a month. Not when you "get around to it." Every week. Set a recurring calendar appointment if you have to.

Digital advertising works. It works incredibly well for martial arts schools during the summer. But only if you're paying attention, testing new creative, monitoring your metrics, and making adjustments in real time. Set it and forget it is not a strategy. It's a recipe for throwing money in a dumpster and lighting it on fire.

## CHAPTER 11: Grassroots and Guerrilla Marketing: The Stuff That Still Works

I'm going to let you in on a secret that most "digital marketing gurus" won't tell you, because it doesn't make them any money.

The most reliable, consistent, highest-ROI marketing for a local martial arts school isn't Facebook ads. It isn't Google. It isn't some fancy funnel with seventeen steps and a chatbot.

It's grassroots. Boots on the ground. Handshakes and flyers and showing up where people are.

Now, before you roll your eyes and think I'm some dinosaur who doesn't understand the internet — go back and read Chapter 10. I'm a huge believer in digital advertising. But here's the thing: the schools that absolutely crush it, the ones doing \$50,000, \$80,000, \$100,000 months, they're doing both. They're running digital campaigns AND they're out in the community every single week.

Grassroots marketing is your insurance policy against algorithm changes, rising ad costs, and platform outages. It's the marketing that works no matter what Mark Zuckerberg decides to do with his platform next Tuesday.

Let me be blunt: if your entire marketing plan depends on one channel, you're one algorithm update away from disaster.

### Your Storefront Is a Billboard — Use It Like One

Let's start with the thing right in front of your face. Literally. Your storefront.

Drive by your school right now. Or better yet, have a friend drive by and take photos. What do they see? Is it obvious that a martial arts school is there? Is there a compelling reason to stop and walk in? Or does it look like every other dead storefront in the shopping center?

Here's your storefront marketing checklist. If you're not doing all of these, you're leaving enrollments on the table every single day:

**8.5x11 Flyer Holder on Your Front Door.** You know those clear plastic holders that real estate agents put on "For Sale" signs? Get one. Mount it on or right next to your front door. Fill it with a flyer that has your current offer, phone number, website, and QR code. People walk by your school at

all hours — early morning, late at night, weekends when you're closed. Give them something to grab. Refill it daily.

**Inflatable "Kicker" or Tube Man.** Yes, one of those big inflatable wavy guys. You've seen them at car dealerships. They work because they create movement and draw attention. Put one in front of your school during business hours. Is it classy? No. Does it get noticed? Absolutely. And in marketing, getting noticed is step one.

**A-Frame Signs on the Sidewalk.** Get two or three A-frame signs. Put them on the sidewalk in front of your school and at the entrances to your shopping center. Bright colors. Big text. Current offer. "SUMMER SPECIAL — TRY A FREE CLASS." Change them seasonally.

**Complete Signage with Every Contact Method.** Your main sign should include your phone number, website URL, a QR code, and a text short code. Not just your school name and logo. Give people multiple ways to reach you, right there on the sign. Make it easy.

**Window Clings.** Put large, professional window clings on every window facing the parking lot or street. Smiling students. Testimonials. "Rated #1 Martial Arts School" if you've got the reviews to back it up. These turn your windows into a 24/7 advertisement.

**Seasonal Banners.** Get a rotating banner system. Summer banner from May through July. Back-to-school banner in August. Fall banner in September. Keep it fresh. Keep it relevant. When people see the same sign for three years, they stop seeing it entirely.

**TVs in the Windows.** This one is a game-changer. Mount a TV or large monitor in your window facing outward. Run a loop of your best class footage, student testimonials, and promotional slides 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. People walking by, people sitting in the parking lot, people waiting for the pizza place next door — they're all watching your TV. I've had school owners tell me this single tactic brought in three to five new walk-ins per month.

**Front Door Open.** When the weather allows it, prop your front door open. An open door is an invitation. A closed door is a barrier. People are ten times more likely to walk into a business with an open door. Set up a table on the sidewalk in front of your school. Make it look like an event. Have an instructor out there. Create energy and activity that draws people in.

**Ring Doorbell with Signage.** Put a Ring doorbell or video intercom on your front door with a sign that says "Ring for Information" or "Press for a

Free Class." This lets people who stop by when you're between classes or during off-hours connect with you instantly.

**VIP Seating Area.** If you're in a shopping center with a sidewalk, put a couple of chairs, a small table, and some branded materials out front. Create a presence. Own that space. When your instructors are between classes, they should be out there engaging with people walking by.

## **Rack Cards: 250+ Locations, Serviced Regularly**

Rack cards are those small, professionally printed cards — typically 4x9 inches — that sit in display holders at local businesses. And they still work. Beautifully.

Your goal: 250 or more rack card locations throughout your market area. Coffee shops. Restaurants. Pediatrician's offices. Dentist waiting rooms. Hair salons. Dry cleaners. Dance studios. Tutoring centers. Anywhere parents sit and wait.

Here's the key that most people miss: you have to service these locations every four to six weeks. Go back, check the holder, refill cards, remove any that are damaged or outdated. If you drop off cards once and never go back, within three weeks they'll be buried behind someone else's cards, knocked over, or thrown away.

Assign this to a team member. Make it part of their weekly routine. Every week, they hit 40-50 locations. In six weeks, they've cycled through all 250+. Then they start over.

## **Charitable Fundraiser Flyers**

This is one of my favorite guerrilla tactics because it's a win for everyone involved.

Create a charitable fundraiser flyer — something like "Earn a Free Month of Martial Arts and Help Support [Local Charity]." Partner with pizza shops and local merchants to put your flyers on their pizza boxes, in their bags, on their counters. The merchant looks good because they're supporting a charity. You get exposure to their customers. The charity gets support. Everybody wins.

I've seen single pizza box campaigns generate 15 to 20 leads in a month. For virtually zero cost beyond printing the flyers.

## Bandit Signs: Ugly But Effective

Let me be honest with you: bandit signs — those corrugated plastic signs you stick in the ground at intersections and on roadsides — are not pretty. They're not sophisticated. Your designer will hate them.

They work.

Put out 50 to 100 bandit signs throughout your market area. Bright yellow or lime green background. Big, bold text: "SUMMER MARTIAL ARTS SPECIAL" with your phone number and website. Place them at busy intersections, near schools, near shopping centers, near your competitors.

They will get taken down. Some will blow away. Some will get stolen. That's the game. Budget for it. Replenish them every two to three weeks. The cost is minimal — you can get them printed for \$3 to \$5 each. If a hundred signs at \$5 each generates even one enrollment, you've made your money back ten times over.

Check your local ordinances. Some municipalities have rules about temporary signage. Know the rules and play within them — or at least understand the risks.

## Flyers: Distributed CONSTANTLY

Flyers should be going out of your school every single day. Not once a week. Not when you feel like it. Every day.

**Doorhangers** in residential neighborhoods within a three-mile radius of your school. Target neighborhoods with young families. Five hundred doorhangers can be distributed in about two hours by one person.

**Post-it-note style flyers** on car windshields at shopping centers, grocery stores, movie theaters, sporting events. Yes, some people will throw them away. Some people will call you. That's the math. You need volume.

**Door-to-door in commercial areas.** Walk into every business within a half-mile of your school. Introduce yourself. Leave a stack of flyers. Ask if you can put up a poster. Build relationships.

The key principle here is CONSTANT distribution. Not a one-time blitz. This is an ongoing, never-ending activity. Every week, flyers go out. Every week.

## **VIP Conversations: The Most Underused Tactic**

Here's something that scares most school owners: walking up to a stranger and starting a conversation about martial arts.

Get over it.

VIP conversations — face-to-face interactions in the community where you set an appointment — are the highest-converting lead source that exists. Nothing else is close. A lead from a face-to-face conversation converts to an enrollment at two to three times the rate of any digital lead.

Go where parents are. Youth sporting events. Parks. Community pools. Shopping centers. Farmers markets. Set up a table if you can, but even without one, just start talking to people.

The script is simple: "Hi, I'm [name] from [school]. We've got a special summer program for kids starting next week. Has your child ever tried martial arts? ... Great, let me set up a free introductory class for them. What day works better, Tuesday or Thursday?"

That's it. No hard sell. No lengthy pitch. Just a conversation and an appointment.

## **Targeting Groups, Not Individuals**

Let me share what I call the "host-parasite" logic, and don't get hung up on the name — it's a marketing concept, not a character judgment.

The idea is simple: instead of trying to reach people one at a time, get in front of dense clusters of your ideal prospects all at once.

A volleyball team has 15 kids and 30 parents. A cheer squad has 20 kids and 40 parents. A women's tennis league has 25 members. A church youth group has 50 families.

Instead of handing out flyers to random people at the grocery store — one person at a time — go to the volleyball team's practice, introduce yourself to the coach, and offer a free team self-defense workshop. Now you're in front of 15 families at once.

Target groups. Not random individuals.

For your adult programs, think about this: high school orientation events where incoming freshmen and their parents are gathered. College orientation week booths. Sorority self-defense and fitness workshops. Set up

a table near the campus bookstore, gym, cafeteria, or dorms during the first week of classes.

Go where people already are, in groups, and make your offer.

## **Direct Mail: Not Dead, Just Different**

Direct mail still works. I know, I know — "nobody reads their mail anymore." Except they do. Especially when your mailpiece stands out from the stack of bills and credit card offers.

Postcards to targeted neighborhoods — families with children aged 4 to 14 within a five-mile radius. You can buy these lists from data providers for pennies per name.

For higher-value prospects, send a robust package — a letter, a brochure, a testimonial sheet, and a special offer, all in a lumpy envelope that begs to be opened.

Direct mail response rates are lower than they were 20 years ago, but the competition in the mailbox has also dropped dramatically. There's actually less noise in the physical mailbox than in the email inbox these days.

## **Your Online Reputation: 50+ Five-Star Reviews**

Here's a non-negotiable: you need 50 or more five-star Google reviews. Not twenty. Not thirty. Fifty-plus.

When a parent searches "martial arts near me" and sees your school with 147 reviews at 4.9 stars next to your competitor with 12 reviews at 4.2 stars, who do you think they're calling first?

Your Google reviews are the single most important factor in your local search ranking and your prospect's decision-making process. Make getting reviews a systematic part of your operation:

- Ask every parent after their child earns a belt or stripe
- Ask after every positive comment a parent makes about the program
- Send automated review requests via email and text after milestone events
- Make it easy — send them a direct link to your Google review page
- Respond to every review, positive or negative, within 24 hours

And while you're at it, make sure your Google Business Profile is fully optimized. Current photos. Updated hours. Services listed. Posts published

weekly. This is free marketing from the most powerful search engine on earth. Treat it like the asset it is.

Optimize your Yelp profile too. And any other local directory where your school appears. Consistent name, address, and phone number across every listing. Incorrect or inconsistent information kills your local search rankings.

Grassroots marketing isn't glamorous. It's not sexy. Nobody's going to invite you to speak at a marketing conference about putting flyers on pizza boxes. But it works. It's worked for thirty years and it'll work for thirty more. The schools that dominate their markets do this stuff relentlessly, week in and week out, regardless of what's happening with their digital campaigns.

The question isn't whether this stuff works. The question is whether you're willing to do it.

## **CHAPTER 12: The Speed-to-Lead Follow-Up System That Doubles Your Enrollments**

I want you to imagine something. A parent — let's call her Sarah — is sitting on her couch at 9:30 on a Tuesday night. The kids are finally asleep. She's scrolling through Facebook on her phone. She sees your ad: "Summer Martial Arts Special — Build Your Child's Confidence This Summer." She thinks about her son, who's been getting pushed around at school and spending way too much time on his iPad. She clicks the ad. She fills out the form. Name, phone number, email.

Sarah just raised her hand and said, "I'm interested."

Now what happens?

In most martial arts schools, here's what happens: absolutely nothing. At least not until tomorrow. Or the next day. Sarah's lead form sits in a dashboard that nobody checks until the owner gets around to it, usually sometime between teaching classes and paying bills. Meanwhile, Sarah — motivated, interested, ready to act — has moved on with her life. She's already forgotten your school's name. And if she was serious enough to fill out one form, she probably filled out two or three others. The first school to call her wins.

Here's the brutal data that should make you sick to your stomach: leads contacted within five minutes are 21 times more likely to convert than leads contacted after 30 minutes.

Twenty-one times.

Not twice as likely. Not five times. Twenty-one times more likely. That means if you wait even half an hour to respond to a lead, you've already lost 95% of the battle.

Let me tell you about Rick.

### **The Rick Problem**

Rick owned a school in suburban Texas. Good school. Clean facility. Solid instructors. He was doing a lot of things right. He was even spending \$3,000 a month on Facebook advertising, which was generating a healthy volume of leads.

Last month, Rick generated 147 leads from his Facebook campaigns. One hundred and forty-seven parents who raised their hands and said, "I'm interested in martial arts for my child."

How many of those 147 leads did Rick or his team actually speak to?

Thirty-one.

Rick spoke to 31 out of 147 leads. That means 116 people expressed interest in his school and never heard from a human being. Or they heard from someone 48 hours later, when a bored front desk person got around to working through a stack of printed-out lead forms.

Rick came to me frustrated. "Stephen, Facebook ads don't work. I'm spending \$3,000 a month and I'm barely getting any enrollments."

I pulled up his numbers. I showed him the 147 leads. His jaw dropped. He had no idea there were that many. His front desk person was only checking the lead notifications once a day — if that — and was cherry-picking the ones that seemed "most likely to enroll."

Rick didn't have a lead generation problem. He had a lead follow-up problem.

And I'll bet everything I own that you do too.

## The Multi-Channel Speed-to-Lead System

Here's the system that fixes this. It's not complicated. It just requires commitment and, ideally, some automation to make it sustainable.

The moment a lead comes in — the very moment — three things need to happen:

### **Step 1: Text Message (Within 60 Seconds)**

Text is first because it's the fastest channel and the one most likely to get a response. An automated text should fire immediately:

"Hi Sarah! Thanks for your interest in [School Name]. We'd love to get [child's name] started with a free introductory class. What day works best — we have openings Tuesday at 4:30 and Thursday at 5:00? Reply here or call us at [phone number]. — Coach Mike"

Notice: this text is personal. It uses her name. It has a specific offer. It gives her two options. And it comes from a real person, not a generic business number.

## Step 2: Email (Within 2-3 Minutes)

An automated email fires right behind the text. This email includes:

- A warm greeting
- Brief description of what to expect at the introductory class
- Your address with a map link
- A photo of your facility or a smiling class
- A direct link to schedule their appointment
- Your phone number

## Step 3: Phone Call (Within 5 Minutes)

This is where most schools completely fall apart. Someone — a real human being — needs to pick up the phone and call this lead within five minutes of the form submission. Not five hours. Not the next morning. Five minutes.

"Hi Sarah, this is Coach Mike from [School Name]. I just saw you were interested in our summer program — that's great! I'd love to get your son set up for an introductory class this week. Do you have just a quick minute?"

The sole purpose of this call is to SET THE INTRODUCTORY APPOINTMENT. That's it. You are not selling the program on the phone. You are not explaining your curriculum. You are not going through pricing. You are setting a date and time for them to come in.

Let me say that again because it's that important: the sole purpose of the initial contact is to set the intro appointment. Nothing more.

## The Script That Works

Use a proven script. Don't wing it. Don't let your 19-year-old front desk person improvise a different pitch every time.

Here's the framework:

**Opening:** "Hi [name], this is [your name] from [school]. Thanks so much for reaching out about our summer program!"

**Quick qualifier:** "Just to make sure I'm giving you the right information — how old is your child, and have they done any martial arts before?"

**Set the appointment:** "Perfect. We have a special introductory class that's designed for kids exactly like [child's name]. It's a lot of fun — they'll learn some basic moves, meet our instructors, and you'll get to see everything we

do. I have openings on [day] at [time] and [day] at [time]. Which one works better for you?"

**Confirm:** "Great, I've got you down for [day] at [time]. You'll want to wear comfortable clothes — gym clothes are perfect. We're located at [address]. I'll send you a text with all the details."

**Close:** "We're really looking forward to meeting [child's name]. See you [day]!"

That's the call. Two to three minutes. Friendly, professional, appointment set.

## The Confirmation Sequence That Gets Them to Show Up

Setting the appointment is only half the battle. Getting them to actually show up is the other half.

Without a confirmation sequence, your show rate will hover around 50-60%. With a solid confirmation sequence, you can push that to 80-90%. Here's the sequence:

**Immediately after booking:** Send a text and email confirming the appointment. Include: date, time, address with map link, what to wear, what to expect, and a reminder of the offer ("Remember, this introductory class is completely free — our gift to you!").

**24 hours before:** Send a reminder text and email. "Hi Sarah, just a friendly reminder that [child's name] has an introductory class tomorrow at [time]. We're really looking forward to meeting you both! Reply YES to confirm."

**Morning of:** Send a text. "Good morning Sarah! We're excited to see [child's name] today at [time]. Remember to wear comfortable clothes. See you soon!"

**2-3 hours before:** A personal phone call. "Hi Sarah, this is Coach Mike. Just calling to make sure you're all set for today at [time]. Do you need directions or have any last-minute questions? ... Great, see you then!"

Is this aggressive? Yes. Does it feel like a lot? Yes. Does it work? You bet it does.

Every single touchpoint reduces the no-show rate. Every one. Parents are busy. They forget. Things come up. Kids throw tantrums. Your job is to stay top-of-mind and make it as easy as possible for them to follow through.

## After the Intro: The Follow-Up Doesn't Stop

Let's say the family comes in, does the introductory class, and doesn't enroll that day. Maybe they want to "think about it." Maybe they need to "talk to their spouse." Maybe the timing isn't right.

This is not the end. This is the beginning of a nurture sequence.

**Immediately after the intro:** Send a thank-you text and email. "It was great meeting you and [child's name] today! [Child's name] did an amazing job — you should be really proud. If you have any questions about getting started, just reply here or call me directly at [number]."

**Day 2:** Send a value-driven email — maybe a video of a student testimonial or an article about the benefits of martial arts for children.

**Day 4:** Send a text: "Hi Sarah, just checking in! [Child's name] made a great impression on our instructors. We'd love to have them back. We're holding a spot in our summer program — want me to reserve it?"

**Day 7:** Phone call. "Hi Sarah, it's Coach Mike. Just wanted to follow up and see if you had any questions after [child's name]'s class last week."

**Day 14:** Send a seasonal offer. "Sarah, our summer program is filling up fast. I wanted to make sure you knew about our Summer Special — [offer details]. Let me know if you'd like to grab one of the remaining spots!"

Continue nurturing with value-driven content, testimonials, event invitations, and seasonal offers for 60 to 90 days. People buy on their timeline, not yours. Your job is to stay in front of them until they're ready.

## Automation: Your Follow-Up Engine

Now, if you're reading all of this and thinking, "There's no way I can do all that manually for every single lead," you're right. You can't. Not sustainably. Not at the volume you need to operate at.

This is where a CRM — Customer Relationship Management system — becomes essential. At Martial Arts Wealth Mastery, we use and recommend Wealth Mastery Connect, which is built on the Go High Level platform and customized specifically for martial arts schools.

Here's what the right CRM does for you:

**Auto-captures leads** from Facebook, Instagram, Google, your website, and landing pages. No more leads falling through the cracks because someone forgot to check the notifications.

**Triggers immediate welcome texts and emails** the moment a lead comes in. That 60-second text response? Automated. That follow-up email? Automated. You're not depending on a human being to be fast enough.

**Schedules follow-up sequences** automatically. The 24-hour reminder, the morning-of text, the post-intro thank-you, the 14-day seasonal offer — all triggered automatically based on where the lead is in the pipeline.

**Tracks status** so you can see at a glance: how many new leads came in today, how many have appointments set, how many showed up, how many enrolled, how many need follow-up.

But here's the thing — and this is critical — even with automation, you need to personalize. Use their name. Reference their child's name. Mention something specific from the introductory class if they came in. Automation handles the timing and the delivery. The human touch handles the connection.

The best system combines automated speed with personal warmth. The robot makes sure no lead is forgotten. The human makes sure every lead feels valued.

## **The Numbers You Need to Hit**

Let me give you the benchmarks:

**Speed to contact:** Under 5 minutes. If you can't do it in 5 minutes, get automation in place to handle the first touch immediately.

**Contact rate:** You should be speaking to 80%+ of your leads within 48 hours. If Rick had spoken to 80% of his 147 leads instead of 31, he would have connected with 118 people. Even at a modest 30% appointment-set rate, that's 35 appointments instead of the 10 he was getting.

**Show rate:** 80-90% with an excellent confirmation sequence. If you're below 70%, your confirmation process is broken.

**Close rate:** 50-75% from well-taught introductory lessons. If you're below 50%, the problem is in your intro lesson and enrollment presentation, not your marketing.

**Follow-up after no-enrollment:** 30-60 day nurture sequence, minimum. Some of your best enrollments will come from leads who said "not right now" and came back six weeks later because you stayed in touch.

Let me do the math for you. If you generate 100 leads in a month, and you contact 80 of them within 5 minutes, and 60% set an appointment, and 85% of those show up, and 60% of those enroll, you get:

100 leads → 80 contacted → 48 appointments → 41 show up → 25 enrollments.

Twenty-five enrollments from 100 leads. At \$175 per month, that's \$4,375 in new monthly recurring revenue. From one month of leads.

Now imagine if, like Rick, you only contact 31 of those 100 leads:

100 leads → 31 contacted → 19 appointments → 12 show up → 7 enrollments.

Seven enrollments versus twenty-five. Same leads. Same ad spend. Same school. The only difference is the follow-up system.

That difference is worth \$3,150 per month in new revenue. Every single month. Year after year.

Fix your follow-up before you spend another dime on advertising.

# **PART V**

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

## CHAPTER 13: Your 90-Day Summer Blitz Action Plan (The Implementation Roadmap)

Alright, we've covered a lot of ground in this book. Events, camps, school outreach, digital advertising, grassroots marketing, follow-up systems. Your head is probably spinning with ideas, strategies, and tactics.

Now it's time to put it all together.

Because here's what I've seen happen a thousand times: a school owner reads a book like this, gets fired up, highlights a bunch of pages, tells their spouse "this is going to be our best summer ever" ... and then does nothing. Or does one thing. Or starts three things and finishes zero.

Information without implementation is just entertainment.

This chapter is your 90-day action plan. Week by week, from early April through the end of June, with extension notes through September. This is exactly what you need to do, when you need to do it, in the order you need to do it.

Print this chapter out. Pin it to your wall. Share it with your team. Check things off as you go. No excuses.

### Weeks 1-2: Early April — Build the Foundation

This is your setup phase. You're building the infrastructure that everything else runs on. Don't skip these steps because they're not "sexy." They're essential.

**Fix your stats tracking.** Before you do anything else, make sure you can track what matters. Set up a simple spreadsheet or use your CRM dashboard to track: leads generated (by source), appointments set, show rate, close rate, cost per lead, and cost per enrollment. If you don't have these numbers, you're flying blind. You cannot improve what you cannot measure.

**Audit your marketing Parthenon.** Go through each pillar of your marketing. Are you running digital ads? Check. Doing grassroots? Check. Have a referral system? Check. Doing outreach to schools? Check. Running events? Check. Identify the pillars that are missing or weak. Those are your priorities for the next 90 days.

**Pull your dead lead list.** Go through your CRM or your old lead sheets and pull every lead from the last 12-18 months who never enrolled. This is your reactivation gold mine. You'll be reaching out to these people in Week 3.

**Contact schools for PE Teacher for the Day.** Start reaching out to elementary schools now. Call the front office. Ask for the PE teacher or the principal. Offer a free martial arts class for the kids — no cost, no obligation, just a fun day for the students. You need to get on their calendar before the end of the school year. May and early June are your window. Move fast.

**Build your summer camp target list.** Research every summer camp, daycare center, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and recreation program within a 10-mile radius. Get contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses. You'll be pitching them your martial arts enrichment classes starting in Week 3.

**Design your summer offer.** Decide on your summer special. Make it compelling. Create the landing page, the flyers, the social media graphics. Have everything designed and ready to deploy before you launch.

**Set up your ad campaigns.** Build your Facebook, Instagram, and Google campaigns. Write the copy. Select or create the creative assets. Set up your targeting. Configure your automated rules (CPL caps, budget increases, frequency limits). Get everything in the queue and ready to launch.

## **Weeks 3-4: Late April — Launch and Begin Outreach**

Now you start executing. This is where the rubber meets the road.

**Launch your reactivation campaign.** Take that dead lead list from Week 1 and hit it with a multi-channel blitz. Text, email, phone call. "Hey [name], it's been a while since we connected. We've got an incredible summer program starting up and I thought of you. Are you still interested in getting [child's name] into martial arts?" You will be shocked at how many of these people respond. Many of them wanted to enroll but life got in the way. This is the lowest-cost, highest-ROI marketing you can do.

**Begin school outreach meetings.** Start visiting elementary schools. Meet with principals and PE teachers. Bring your proposal for PE Teacher for the Day. Bring a flyer with your summer offer. Be professional, be enthusiastic, and be persistent. Some schools will say yes immediately. Some will need to

"check with administration." Follow up weekly until you have a confirmed date.

**Book live events for Memorial Day through Labor Day.** Start locking in your event calendar. Movie theater opening weekends. Farmers markets. Community festivals. Fourth of July celebrations. Back-to-school fairs. Contact event organizers now. The best spots get taken early. Book your booth, order your supplies, and get it on the calendar.

**Start grassroots materials deployment.** Get your rack cards out to all 250+ locations. Deploy bandit signs. Start distributing doorhangers and flyers. Begin the weekly rhythm of grassroots distribution that will continue all summer long.

**Launch summer Facebook and Google ads.** Flip the switch. Your campaigns should already be built from Week 1-2. Now turn them on, monitor daily for the first week, and start optimizing.

## **Weeks 5-6: Early May — Execute and Build Momentum**

**Execute your first PE Teacher for the Day events.** You should have at least two to three school events booked by now. Execute them flawlessly. Bring your best instructor. Bring plenty of flyers with your summer offer. Bring certificate of completion forms for every student. Collect every parent's contact information you can through the take-home flyers.

**Distribute end-of-school certificates.** Work with school administrators to include a "Certificate for a Free Introductory Martial Arts Class" in end-of-year materials, take-home folders, or award ceremonies.

**Launch your summer special offer.** Your summer offer should be live everywhere now — on your website, in your ads, in your school, on your social media, in your grassroots materials.

**Host your first buddy event.** Invite every current student to bring a friend for a special class. Make it fun, high-energy, and memorable. Follow up with every guest the same day using your speed-to-lead system.

**Plan your movie theater promotion calendar.** Identify the big summer movie openings — the family films, the superhero movies, the animated features. Contact the theater. Book your booth space for opening weekends.

## Weeks 7-8: Late May — Memorial Day Push

**Memorial Day live events.** This is your first major summer event weekend. Be visible. Do a community demonstration. Set up a booth at a local event. Host a special class or open house at your school. Go big.

**Summer camp classes begin.** Your enrichment classes at summer camps and daycares should be starting now. Execute with excellence. Every camp class is a funnel to your school.

**Intensify follow-up on all leads.** By now, you should have a healthy pipeline of leads from your ads, events, school outreach, and reactivation campaign. Make sure every single one of them is being followed up on. Check your CRM. Look for leads that haven't been contacted. Pick up the phone.

**Review and optimize ad performance.** You're four weeks into your summer ad campaigns. Pull the numbers. What's your CPL? What's working? What's not? Pause underperforming ad sets. Scale winners. Refresh creative if frequency is climbing.

## Weeks 9-10: June — Peak Season

**Peak summer camp and daycare outreach.** If you haven't secured all your camp and daycare partnerships yet, make one final push. Some camps are still finalizing their programming. Get in there.

**Movie theater opening weekend booths.** Execute your first movie theater event. High energy, great signage, lead collection forms, an irresistible offer.

**Host a Family Fun Day event.** Invite current families and prospects for a big event — demonstrations, games, food, prizes. Make it a celebration of your school community. Collect leads from every guest.

**Mid-summer reactivation push.** Go back to your dead lead list and hit it again with a new offer. Some people who didn't respond in April will respond now. Timing matters.

## Weeks 11-12: Late June / Early July — Keep the Pressure On

**July 4th / Canada Day event preparation.** Plan a patriotic-themed event or class. Partner with local organizations. Be visible in the community during holiday celebrations.

**Farmers market and festival booths.** Summer festivals are in full swing. Be at every one you can manage. Set up early, stay late, collect leads aggressively.

**Continue camp and daycare classes.** These are ongoing throughout the summer. Maintain quality. Follow up with every child's parents.

## July Through September: Extension Notes

**July:** Continue your event cadence. Farmers markets, community events, camp classes. Keep ad campaigns running and optimized. Mid-July is a great time for a "Last Chance Summer Special" push.

**August:** Begin your back-to-school ad pivot. Shift messaging from "summer activities" to "build confidence before school starts" and "back-to-school special." Set up booths at back-to-school orientation events and school supply drives. This is when parents are thinking ahead to the fall schedule.

**September:** Labor Day events. Launch your fall enrichment programs. If you've built relationships with schools over the summer, pitch after-school programs for the fall semester. Run a "Fall Into Fitness" or "September Starter" offer.

## Your Daily and Weekly Rhythm

Here's what a winning summer looks like on a daily and weekly basis:

### Every Day:

- Check CRM for new leads — follow up immediately
- Post on social media (one organic post minimum)
- Distribute grassroots materials (flyers, doorhangers, rack cards)
- Make 5-10 follow-up calls to leads in the pipeline
- Check ad performance (spend 5 minutes — just a quick glance)

### Every Week:

- Monday: Review last week's stats (leads, appointments, shows, enrollments, CPL, CPE)
- Monday: Team meeting — what worked, what didn't, what's the plan this week
- Tuesday-Thursday: Execute outreach — schools, camps, businesses, events
- Wednesday: Refresh social media content for the rest of the week
- Friday: Plan next week's events and grassroots schedule
- Saturday: Host or attend one community event

## The Metrics That Matter

Track these numbers weekly. Put them on a whiteboard in your office where everyone can see them:

- **Leads Generated:** Total new leads from all sources. Target: 50+ per month from digital, plus leads from events, referrals, and grassroots.
- **Appointments Set:** How many leads became scheduled introductory lessons. Target: 60%+ of contacted leads.
- **Show Rate:** What percentage of appointments actually showed up. Target: 80-90%.
- **Close Rate:** What percentage of intros enrolled. Target: 50-75%.
- **Cost Per Lead:** How much you're spending per lead across all paid channels. Target: under \$30.
- **Cost Per Enrollment:** The true cost to acquire an enrolled student. Target: under \$200.

If any of these numbers are off, you know exactly where the problem is and exactly what to fix.

## The Accountability Piece

Let me be blunt about this: if you don't track it, you can't fix it.

I've had school owners tell me, "Stephen, I'm doing everything you said and it's not working." Then I ask them for their numbers and they stare at me blankly. They don't know their CPL. They don't know their show rate. They don't know how many leads they generated last month. They "feel like" things aren't working, but they have zero data to back it up.

Feelings don't grow businesses. Numbers do.

Track your numbers. Review them weekly. Share them with your team. Set benchmarks. Celebrate when you hit them. Diagnose and fix when you miss

them. Hold yourself and your team accountable to measurable results, not vague impressions.

Get an accountability partner if you need one. Join our coaching community. Attend our events. Surround yourself with other school owners who are playing at a high level and holding each other accountable.

## **The Final Word**

Let me leave you with this.

There is no slow season unless you choose to believe it and act as if it's true.

Every chapter in this book has given you proven, specific, actionable strategies to dominate the summer months. Events that fill your pipeline. Outreach that builds your community presence. Advertising that generates leads at scale. Grassroots marketing that puts you in front of prospects every single day. Follow-up systems that convert those leads into enrolled students.

The strategies work. I've watched them work in hundreds of schools across the country, in big markets and small ones, in cities and suburbs and rural towns. They work in hot climates and cold ones. They work for karate schools and taekwondo schools and jiu-jitsu schools and mixed martial arts schools.

But they only work if you work them.

The school owner who reads this book and implements even half of what's in here will have a radically different summer than the one who reads it, nods along, and goes back to doing what they've always done. One will grow. The other will complain about the "summer slump" again next year.

Which one are you going to be?

If you're ready to get serious — really serious — about making this your best summer ever, here's your next step:

Visit **[MartialArtsWealth.com/100](https://MartialArtsWealth.com/100)** or text **720-256-0208** to connect with our team. We'll help you build your plan, set up your systems, and hold you accountable to the results you deserve.

Summer is your secret weapon. Stop treating it like a problem. Start treating it like the massive opportunity it is.

Now go execute.