

# BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## Let Me Help You Develop Great Customer Service—AND Challenge You to Prove It!

By Tom Callos



### Know How to Greet—and Seat

Skill #1 in any leadership team curriculum is to know how to greet people, inside or outside of the school, and in a way that represents the teaching and philosophy of your school (or whatever it is that you're trying to promote or "sell").

Whether someone slowly drives by your school and looks in the windows; walks by and stands at the windows; participates in or watches a school event; or observes classes from the lobby, a leadership team member ought to know how to make contact, and engage and develop rapport with potential students or family members.

Introduce the following examples during your next Leadership Team meeting. They can be discussion points or become role-playing exercises.

### The Drive-By Viewer

Let's say you have a big set of windows at the front of your school. The street or parking lot is close enough that people can drive slow enough to look into your school. Good! When someone does that, you wave and smile. If she sits there long enough, then give the "wait-right-there-for-a-second" hand signal. Run to your front desk, and grab a business card and write, "TWO WEEKS FREE!" on it. Add a class schedule, and take both to the person who has waited in her car for you. Give her a friendly smile and say, "Here, this is for you!"

At the very least, you've shown her that your school is a friendly, safe place.



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### Window Shopper

Someone is peering through your school's window. First, establish eye contact with her (no ignoring allowed), then wave, and smile and give the "come-on-in" wave. If she doesn't enter, then wait 15 seconds. Open the front door and say, "Hi, don't be shy, come on in!" Whether she follows you into the school, make sure to hand her a class schedule and a guest pass.



If you happen to be teaching a class during either of these examples and can't leave the floor, then coach a parent or student to do it for you. It takes about 60 seconds to train the average student or parent to smile, wave and hand someone a flyer while exchanging pleasantries. Once he or she is trained to be a "greeter, you can flash the "secret" signal whenever you need help.

(I usually point at the person in the car or at the window and say to my greeter, "Would you mind helping them for me, please?")

### Walking Through the Front Door

If someone is brave enough to walk through your front

door, then be smart enough to say or do something that recognizes her within the first three steps (or within three seconds, whichever comes first). There is ALWAYS a way to recognize someone who has just stepped into your school. If you're free, then you can say hello; if you're teaching a private student, then you can wave and say, "I'll be with you in a two-shakes of a lamb's tail;" if you're grappling with a guy twice your size and find yourself fully engaged (in other words, being smothered), then whisper in your opponent's ear, "Excuse me, could you let go of my neck for five seconds, I want to talk with the fellow who just walked into the school." Of course, once you tell the person that you'll be with them in less than a minute, you should catch the big guy by surprise and make him beg for mercy (which is not necessarily good for business, but a great way to show your students how to use distraction to your advantage).

I can't count the many times I've walked into martial arts schools and stood there waiting to be helped, without so much as glance from the staff. I can tell you that nine times out of ten I am ignored and usually leave, wondering how the schools manage to stay in business.



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### What to Do

Of course, you don't want to run from your school, waving papers and chasing unsuspecting people down the street yelling, "Wait, I just want to give you something!" There's a right way and a wrong way to do all of this. The point is to do SOMETHING! Greeting and seating (which means saying hello and giving a person the information he or she needs to start the "become-a-student" process) is something you must practice. School owners know how to do it because at some point in their careers, they had to learn to avoid starving; but new volunteers, assistants, leadership team members and staff members must practice these techniques to do it correctly.



Schedule a special staff-training meeting with the goal of listing, discussing and learning the 10 (or so) best ways to greet and seat—then practice them, using role-playing methods. The result of all this activity is that visitors to your school will feel like they are receiving the BEST customer care from the BEST martial arts school on the planet.

### Ideas For Spectacular Results

Forgive me for few moments, while I step into left field.

What if...

1. You created a special flyer with the headline, "What to Look for When You're Looking for a Martial Arts School"? It would, of course, include a guest pass.

2. You produced a video tour of your school that also included a short interview with each of the staff, and you posted it on YouTube? You could title it, "<YOUR SCHOOL NAME> Tour." When you greet and meet a visitor (a potential student) to your school, you could obtain his or her e-mail address and send the link on YouTube to watch your video tour, as a follow-up.
3. Took your leadership team and staff to various businesses in your town and observed their greet-and-seat skills?

### A Challenge to You

This has NEVER been done before, so read carefully, as we are about to make history.

I have a challenge for you, Mr. or Ms. School Owner or Head Instructor: Produce a video of your favorite greet-and-seat technique, post it on YouTube or Google-Video, and then send me the link. The staff of NAPMA and I will sort through the videos and pick the best presentation and ideas for greeting and seating. The winners of this challenge will receive profiles in this column, with pictures, during the coming year. I will also give the winners a free, 30-minute staff training conference call. We may also feature your video on the *NAPMA Innovations DVD* in the monthly NAPMA Professional Package.

The rules:

Your greet-and-seat video should be a maximum of four minutes. We must be able to hear the audio clearly. Please state your name and the name of your school clearly at the beginning of the video—and introduce all of the talent in your production.

Send your greet-and-seat videos to [tom@tomcallos.com](mailto:tom@tomcallos.com). Put "NAPMA VIDEO" in the subject line.

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*For more than 30 years, writer, consultant, and martial arts activist Tom Callos has been "greeting and seating." He resides in Placerville, California with his wife, Kathleen, and their four children. He may be reached by e-mail at [tom@tomcallos.com](mailto:tom@tomcallos.com) and by phone at 530-903-0286.*