

BLACK BELT **MANAGEMENT**

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL OWNERS AND INSTRUCTORS

10 Guidelines for Developing a Lead Box Route

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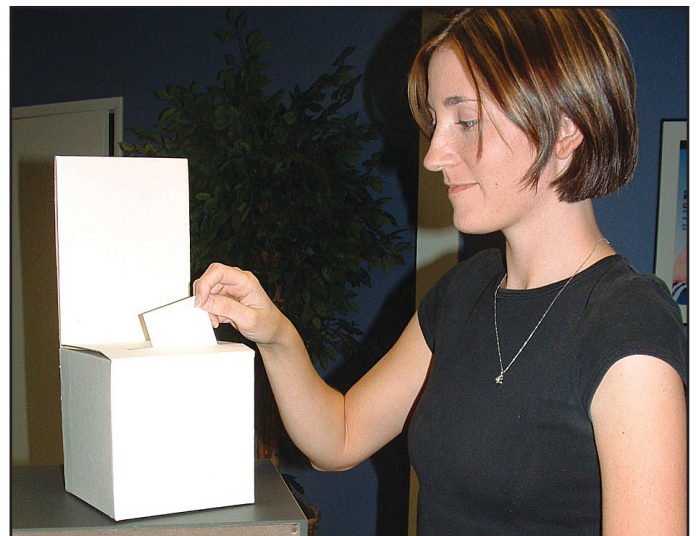
Last month's Black Belt Marketing report featured an article titled Making Lead Boxes Work for You by James Theros. Here, he shared his admirable success story on how he modified the way he used lead boxes and improved his results to help his school generate an extra \$10,000 in contract value in just a few short weeks.

In this month's follow-up report, it is my pleasure to provide you with 10 guidelines for developing a lead box route. Okay NAPMA members, here now are ten of my best tested-and-proven suggestions:

1. Box Design and Allure

The box you select can be cardboard or acrylic and I'd recommend ordering them with pens and entry pads as well. I suggest using acrylic boxes since the header can be changed in conjunction with a variety of different marketing campaigns you'll want to run. The acrylic box is aesthetically pleasing to the eye and increases the likelihood that a merchant will want it in his establishment.

Display pictures of happy smiling people students training at your school, as well as your web address on the box or header. The information you're asking for on the entry form should include all of the prospect's contact information including their email address.



2. The Offer

Next, you need a really good offer that will entice local citizens to fill out the entry form. For instance, offer a free trial membership. When doing so, resist the urge to state the length of the membership. This way, if you choose to have a fish bowl style contest drawing at your club, you will be able to give away a variety of memberships with varying lengths. You want to keep your options open.

3. Effort

To get started, acquire a local road map and create a lead box route. Be sure and select the main business arteries in your area. Your helpers can help you devise a placement strategy that leads back to your school for convenience. You want your route to take on a very organized character especially when it comes time to service it.

Once the boxes are distributed, your lead box helpers should be able to smoothly transition from one location to



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the next for lead collection rather than having to drive six miles one way and six miles the other. A loose-leaf notebook for storing each lead box location's business name, manager's name, address, and details of each arrangement or business perk they've set up can be used as a valuable reference tool. This is especially true if you have to send someone else to service your boxes.

4. Quantity

Volume is what makes a lead box program really work well so you will want to place as many boxes as possible in your community. Depending on the size of your community, 75-to-100 locations should be a realistic goal.

5. Box Placement and Contracting Merchants

Placing the boxes within a six-mile radius of your school provides you with prospects that are within driving distance to your classes. You do not want to place boxes too far from your school because students will not likely travel to far to train.

Also, I've found that the following types of merchant stores have historically demonstrated higher levels of success:

- **Car Washes**
- **Chinese Restaurants**
- **Cinemas**
- **Delicatessens**
- **Waiting Areas (Jiffy Lube, etc.)**

It is imperative for the long-term success of each lead box that you make personal contact with the owner, manager, or whoever has decision-making ability at each location. When your box placement team enters each business, they should look professional. This means wearing a name badge and a staff uniform. The more clean cut the better.

As was mentioned in last month's report, be sure to explain the benefits that you are offering to the decision-maker for hosting the box. Commonly, this includes a free membership to your school. However, be ready to offer something else to the few people who say that they don't have enough time to workout themselves or if they're flat out not inter-

ested in training. You have to offer them something else that they'll want so the lead box gets placed.

You may offer to:

- A) Present every employee with an award certificate redeemable for training. Not only is this a benefit to the merchant, but many of these employees may ultimately join your school.
- B) Set-up an Employee of the Month incentive program where each month that selected employee gets a month's membership at your school.
- C) Give a special discount or corporate rate to all employees of the hosting business.
- D) Place the merchant's coupon in your business. If he/she makes the coupons you will give them to your members. The printing is at their expense. Everyone wins! The merchant gets some exposure, and your members enjoy savings at a local business.

Be sure to positively reinforce each business's decision to host your lead box via a personal phone call or through a written thank you card the day after a box is placed. Make it clear in your note or phone call that they are entitled to a free membership to your school as a privilege for hosting the contest box even if you've given them something in writing prior. You're simply restating the benefits of their involvement.

6. Servicing the Route

It is critical to the success of your campaign that your route is serviced once a week. This is done best during off prime-time hours. Break the route into demographic sections to help you smoothly move from one stop to the next and always be on the look out for new locations.

Each time you enter a location, make contact with the person who gave you permission to place the box or an employee, and every time, thank someone. You want to build a relationship with these folks.

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Also make sure the box:

- **Is in the agreed upon location**
- **Contains the proper supplies (entry forms, pens, etc)**
- **Still looks good and hasn't been vandalized or destroyed**

After collecting all of the forms from the box, sort and discard any undesirable leads, i.e., graffiti, children, jokes, etc. If the box has been moved to an undesirable spot, this could be an ideal time to offer the employees a one or two week pass, to encourage them to move your box back to the spot that is most visible.

7. Organizing

Use the loose-leaf notebook mentioned earlier in this report and create categories for "date" and "amount of leads." Record this information from each location in your notebook.

When you return to the office, the leads should immediately be entered into the contact area of your database. The day's leads will now be ready for your appointment setter to call later that evening or for address labels to be printed out for sending "Congratulations" letters.

8. Create a Prospect Profile

Now that you've entered the prospects' information into a software program, you are able to build a prospect profile. Add information to each lead's profile as it is gathered including health concerns, facility interests, objections, and the origin of the lead. This will create a really strong targeted mailing list for your future use.

9. Telemarketing

Telemarketing to your new leads should be done within days of collecting them. Be sure to wisely choose the person or people who will be responsible for making your follow-up calls. Give them a specific script or at least guidelines to follow when making the calls. Make sure the person making the calls has some sales experience and a warm, friendly personality.

10. Goals and Statistics

The final key to a successful lead management system is to set goals and keep statistics. For starters, establish quotas

for yourself beginning with the amount of business locations you want to place a lead box into. If your goal is 100 locations for example, stay at it until you reach that goal.

The next goal to consider is route homeostasis. You will likely lose five locations the first week with a route this size. That being the case, your goal is to find five new locations every week. This may be as easy as picking up the telephone directory, calling, asking to speak to the manager or owner, and explaining the program. But you continuously have to add new locations to your list to keep it producing.

Also, it's very important to keep accurate statistics and create goals around those numbers. For instance, you want to keep track of the amount of boxes your route contains, and set goals as to the amount of leads you want to each box to generate. If a particular lead box is not getting good results, you may want to move it to a different location. Also, it's key to keep track of the ratio of leads you generate to the amount of appointments set, the ratio of appointments to shows, and the ratio of shows to intros and enrollments. With these numbers you can tweak any step in the process to generate better results.

In conclusion, by doing a lead box program like the one mentioned above, you can have a mini-billboard in dozens of local stores with tons of people seeing your promotion every week. It costs you virtually nothing and you'll generate ongoing leads for effectively attracting new students to your facility.

Creating a lead box system is simple but requires attention, professionalism, and a systematic approach. Also, getting permission to put a box in a specific location requires some experience. If you've never done it before, then it is recommended that you consult with a veteran who has, in order to ensure the proper results.

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