

# BLACK BELT **MANAGEMENT**

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL OWNERS AND INSTRUCTORS

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## How to Make Lead Boxes Work for You

By James Theros

**M**any schools have tried using lead boxes as part of a proactive approach to marketing. In the past, we'd place lead boxes in any store that would allow us. Although we had success in generating lots of low cost leads (especially from a Subway sandwich shop), we didn't have much luck getting the leads to come in to our school to try their free classes.

When following up with the leads we would either get an "I'm not interested" response, or they would come in, take the free classes (and free uniform) and disappear. The same thing happened with ALL of our other lead box promotions as well. I knew that there had to be something that I could do to improve our success.

Then I read an ad for a company called Jimmy Mack Marketing. They claimed that they could help us place 60 lead boxes in three days. Being the open-minded business owner that I am, I decided to "jump off the cliff" and give it a try.

The 60 lead boxes, some extra pens, and pads of entry forms cost us about \$1,100. The boxes we selected were real "eye catchers." They were made from a high-quality yellow card board with red or black lettering.

We also chose to spend around another \$1,600 to have Jimmy Mack help us place the boxes in person. We successfully placed all the boxes within three days just as the ad I'd read promised.

### **Getting Started**

We started by making a target list of a lot of restaurants, hair salons and places with waiting areas such as car care businesses. The strategy we used to get the lead boxes placed was to simply go into the store and target the manager or owner. We let them know that our school had lots of mothers and kids taking or watching classes on a regular basis. This grabbed their attention.

### **Placing the Boxes**

In trade for placing our lead boxes in their businesses, we offered to hand out their company's information to all of our students and their families. Most of the businesses we targeted quickly agreed to participate. We then put the lead box in a conspicuous area of their businesses.

However, in some cases, the owner/manager was hesitant. So we offered them a free membership for him and/or his family in trade for placing the lead box. The deal was that they got to keep their free martial arts membership for as long as the lead box remained at their store. This made matters simple.

Just for the record, Mr. Jimmy Mack was able to walk into a store that he'd never been in before and within five minutes or less, got the box placed. Using a "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" type of marketing approach, we were able to place boxes in businesses that we had been turned down from previously.

### **Follow-Up**

After the 60 boxes were placed, we had to get to work on collecting the leads. When we drove out to the business, what we found was a real eye-opener. After the first week, we lost about 15 lead boxes for various reasons, i.e. the general manager came in and didn't like them, the person we cut the deal with changed their mind, the business simply lost the boxes, etc. As I learned, that's just a reality



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*This is an image of the lead box header NAPMA member James Theros used in the promotion he describes in this report.*

when working with lead boxes. So be sure to take this into consideration when trying to determine how many boxes to place.

In the past, we hadn't had much luck getting actual enrollments from the leads our boxes generated. Therefore, we really thought through why people would take the time to fill out our info slips and then not show up after setting an appointment? How would I react if I was on the receiving end of the same type of phone call as we were giving our prospects?

The answers became clear. First, people didn't come in when we called because we had no call to action like visit us within the next 48 hours and receive...or free uniform upon enrollment.

Secondly, people get telemarketing calls everyday and they are very suspicious of people telling them that they won something or "we have this free THING for you - all you have to do is come in."

We basically made two key adjustments to the way we followed up the leads in the past. These changes made a world of difference and our leads started showing up for their free classes more consistently.

***The key adjustments were:***

- Rather than calling them, we mailed them a short letter letting them know that they have been chosen to receive a free two-week membership and that they have 48 hours to contact us or we will select another name. We only call them if they failed to provide us with an address.
- Along with the letter, we include the actual information slip that they filled out written in their own handwriting! This way, they know it is real and not a solicitation. This is the step that increased our success the most!

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Dear Friend,

**CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'VE WON!**

We are pleased to announce that you have been chosen to receive a FREE Two-Week Membership at Level Ten Martial Arts College!

Level 10 Martial Arts College offers the very best in martial arts instruction. All classes are conducted by certified instructors who are thoroughly trained to help each student develop a new sense of mental discipline and self-confidence!

Our program emphasizes:

- Academic Achievement
- Leadership Skill Development
- Better Health through Physical Fitness

If for any reason you cannot use this special membership, you may give it to a relative or friend. If we do not hear from you within 48 hours, we will select another name for this gift membership.

The staff at Level 10 Martial Arts College looks forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Debi Sheryak  
Program Director

*Here is a sample of the Congratulations letter that Level 10 Martial Arts College sends to each person who enters their membership contest.*

We sent out the letters within two or three days of collecting the leads. We like to collect on Fridays and mail out letters on Monday (or make calls if necessary).

We schedule our leads into a group introductory class that lasts about 25 minutes. When they come back for their next free lesson, they simply join our regular classes. Although they are entitled to receive four free classes, our statistics show that about 60% enroll after the first class. This is because we tell them about a special incentive for early enrollment when they first come in. If they enroll within the first two classes, then we give them 50% off their enrollment costs. That's another call to action that helps create urgency.

If someone schedules an introductory lesson and doesn't show up, we call them to reschedule the appointment and then place them on our direct mail list to stay in touch with them. It's been our experience that many of these prospects end up getting back with in touch with us in a couple of weeks to get started with their lessons. It pays to follow-up.

### **Results**

Within about six weeks from the time we placed our first set of boxes, we enrolled 10 students. Two families from the 10 students paid in full, which amounted to \$4,000. This alone more than covered the cost of the program. We also generated an additional \$1,000 in down payments and \$5,000 in tuition contract value. This is just for tuition revenue and doesn't include retail, test fees, referrals, special event income, etc.

Also, one person couldn't afford the full price of the lessons so we have her gathering our leads for us each week in exchange for a discount.

### **To Sum It Up**

All in all, utilizing lead boxes has turned out to be a home run for us. In fact, we're still reaping the benefits of our original group of leads by continuing to market to them. Just recently we enrolled several of these leads into one of our summer camp programs. I'm really glad we didn't throw the towel in just because we didn't have the greatest results the first time around.

Endnote: Next month, your NAPMA Now will feature a second report on lead boxes titled, *10 Guidelines for Developing a Lead Box Route* by Jimmy Mack.

