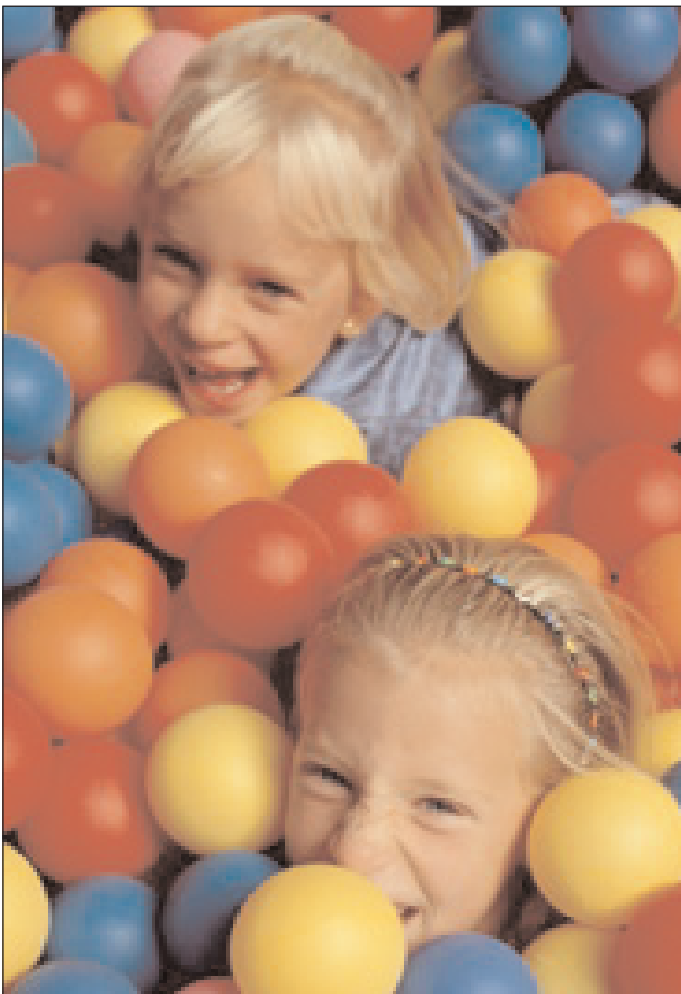


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TURNKEY BUSINESS STRATEGIES FOR OWNERS AND OPERATORS

Plan for Summer Success with Martial Arts Camps

by Clayton and Betsy McNally



Summer. It's coming and you can't stop it. In our industry, the sound of that word can dump fear into the unprepared school owner's heart. However, it doesn't have to be that way. You can choose to plan and succeed. The word summer to the well-prepared school owner is a glorious word loaded with opportunity and income potential. If you'd like to plan for success this summer, start off by reading this summer camp report.

Camp Benefits for Parents

Parents need a safe and fun place for their children to stay during the daytime while they're at work usually for eight weeks throughout summer. They may want their child to take martial arts. Imagine the business growth you could experience if you can satisfy both their wants and needs!

It's Not Rocket Science

The first thing to realize is that it isn't that difficult to host a summer camp. With some good pre-planning and organizational skills, you can create a camp that any child would love to attend. Keep in mind that if you do need advice, NAPMA is just a phone call away. Also, your billing company may provide free advice, as well. So, if you're ready to get going with your planning, read on.

Pre-Camp Coordination

Before the camp takes place make sure you have:

- a. Checked into any legalities your state child agency may stipulate.
- b. Identified and hired a competent staff to help. Make sure they are 18 years of age or older.
- c. Hired enough staff to handle the number of children you intend having in your camp. Usually one staff member per twelve children is standard.



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d. Gotten over the fear of what you are going to do with 10-100 kids, 5 days a week, 8-10 hours a day.

Summer Camp Start-up Legalities

In your area there may be little to nothing you have to do legally to host a summer camp, however, each state is different, and it's recommended that you check out your state laws to make sure you abide by them.

In our state of Connecticut, we have several options that included obtaining a day care license, a youth camp license, or working with the local Parks and Recreation Centers (falling under their license).

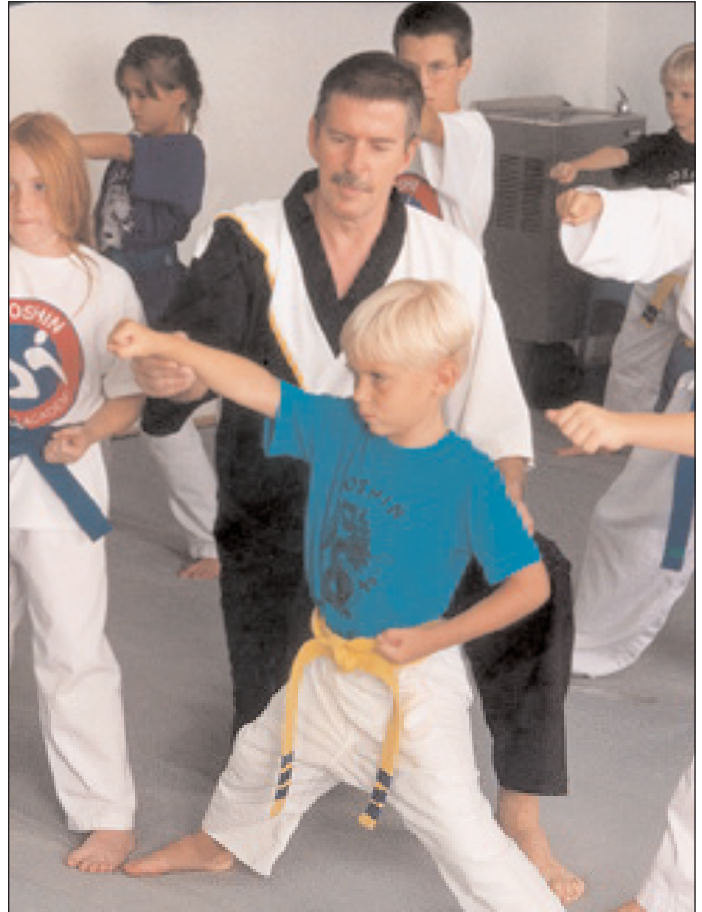
The most complex option for our state would be applying for a Day Care license and the rules and requirements may be more than most karate schools care to subject themselves to.

Obtaining a Youth Camp License would give us the flexibility of hosting both summer and after school activities for kids. Contact your state Child Care Licensing Unit, usually connected to the Department of Public Health (although your area may call it something different) for camp licensing information. Fees can vary from state to state and can range between \$100 and \$1,000 per year.

The simplest approach is to contact your Parks and Recreation Department. Chances are they already run a camp in your community. If you are willing to share part of the revenue with them, they can sponsor the summer camp and in most cases you'd fall under their license. This helps you eliminate "red tape", but your net profit may not be as high as it would if you were running the whole show.

Summer Camp Activities

Our summer camp program lasts for eight weeks and our kids can sign up from one week to all eight weeks. This year our camp will run from June 23 through August 22. Each week will be a different adventure for the kids – ages 7 to 13. Our camp activities will be a combination of life skills, adventurous field trips and plenty of fun martial arts training including games, leader development, weapons, and American kenpo.



Throughout all our activities, we will supply steady doses of:

- **Focus**
- **Discipline**
- **Fitness**
- **Leadership**
- **Team Activities**
- **Confidence**
- **Self-esteem**

Mom and dad will appreciate the great life skill lessons you provide, but keep in mind, kids just want to have fun. If the campers complain that they aren't having fun, mom and dad may find a new camp. Parents need peace of mind that their children are safe having a good time while learning a lot.

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Provide Parents with an Activity Schedule

One way you can communicate the benefits of your camp and help the parents have piece of mind is to provide them with a camp activity schedule.

It is critical to let parents know what time kids can be dropped off. If you are planning a day trip, you must have all the kids present and ready to go by a certain time. For example, our program only receives kids from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. On days that we have an adventure planned, we like to be on the road by 9:15 a.m. So it is important that the parents have their kids to us by 9:00 a.m. at the latest.

Adventure Activity Planning

Plan each week carefully and take advantage of the opportunities in your area. Outline a major event for the week and then map out each day with other activities. Using the Internet to find out what is available in your area can save you time. In our area we discovered:

Mystic Sea Port/Aquarium, Six Flags, Laser Quest, bowling, miniature golf, McLean Picnic Area, science museum, train ride, Lake Compounce, rollerskating, hiking areas, Maple Breeze Park (water slides and water kiddy carts), and Japanese classes.

A great way for children to enjoy their summer is to involve them in a variety of fun activities and change them from week to week.

Life Skill Activities

Along with these adventurous activities our camps utilize in-school activities that build character, confidence, self-esteem and teach valuable life skills lessons. These include:

- **Academic Re-enforcement Exercises**
- **Kid Safe Lessons**
- **Team Building Skills**
- **Leadership Training**

Martial Arts Activities

Martial arts activities alone could take up your entire day. "Could" is the operative word. If martial arts fill the en-

tire day, the campers might get tired of it. Variety is the spice of life, so once again, the key is to mix it up a bit.

Here are some of our martial arts related activities:

- **American Kenpo Karate classes**
- **Staff Training** (each participant receives a staff to keep)
- **Stick Training** (each participant receives a pair to keep)
- **Sai Training** (each participant receives a pair to keep)
- **Kata/Forms**
- **Board Breaking**
- **Balance Drills on Custom Balance Boards**
- **Sparring Workshops**

Additional Fitness Activities

We have added many new pieces of equipment that can also be used in our cardio classes and even our karate program:

- **Exercise Balls – used for both exercise and stretching**
- **Exercise Tubes – used for exercise and toning**
- **Balance Boards – used to develop agility**

Each of these simple pieces of equipment comes with a multitude of examples of how to use them and will keep a group of kids busy easily for 45 minutes to over an hour each day.

Pricing your Summer Camp

Prices will vary for each school depending on several factors including your competition, the market in your area, and what your estimated costs will be, and what number of children you can accept.

Competition

Competition for summertime programs can be larger than you think. There are YMCAs, day cares, church camps, community college programs and more. Your school and camp must stand out from the crowd by not only what you will do with the kids during the camp, but by how you communicate the benefits of camp attendance.



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Market Price

The age-old question in any sale is “What will the market bear? Your price may draw in potential campers because it is priced too low, or drive them away if priced too high. Try to price it in the middle of other “camps” in your area.

We add the cost for our special events into the cost of the camp so that our parents can use their entire camp cost on their income tax forms. Parents appreciate this.

Economy of your school’s location - If you are in a poor area or if there is a high rate of unemployment, your camp price may need to reflect that.

Average family income - You may price according to the average income in your area. If the average is \$80,000 you can charge a higher price, than if the average is only \$40,000. Adjust your price accordingly.

Proportion of two family incomes - If the makeup of your community is single income families then you have to anticipate fewer campers for fewer weeks. This isn’t a challenge, just something to consider when planning and preparing.

Our Pricing of Summer Camp

In our community we charge \$195.⁰⁰ per week. Our price of \$195.⁰⁰ can be broken down to include:

- **Weekly camp fee** - Our weekly rate is \$140.⁰⁰ and includes everything but lunch. Kids have to bring their own lunches except for Friday, which is pizza day.
- **Pizza day** - We include a fee of \$10.⁰⁰ for the price of pizza, which also covers the staff.
- **Event cost** - In our area, Six Flags is the most expensive trip that we do and the cost is around \$35.⁰⁰ per student. Kids bring their own money for food or games while there.
- **Busing costs** - We hired local school bus companies for our transportation needs and the students pay \$10.⁰⁰ per week for travel.

Camp Tuition Discounts

We offer three different discounts. The first is for families with more than one child. The second is for those attending more than one week. The third is for those who prepay four weeks or more upfront. Discounts range between 10%-25% off. Prepayments are non-refundable.

Potential Income

Here are some examples of the camp revenue you can generate: Keep in mind that each scenario takes into account that for every 12 students you have, one adult (over age 18) will be hired. Also, we’ve taken out the extra money originally collected for transportation, pizza, and a special trip.



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Income and Profit Example

# of kids	Tuition	Staff Expenses	Weekly Profit
10 X \$140 = \$1,400	- \$500-\$320-\$128	= \$452	
20 X \$140 = \$2,800	- \$600-\$640-\$384	= \$1,176	
30 X \$140 = \$4,200	- \$700-\$960-\$512	= \$2,028	
40 X \$140 = \$5,600	- \$800-\$1,280-\$640	= \$2,880	

The amount of staff required will vary state-to-state. However, in most cases having one adult age eighteen or older per every twelve children will be pretty standard. When in doubt, try to overstaff your camp. This way if someone needs a break, or gets sick, you are covered.

As the owner, I give myself a \$4,000.00 raise each summer. This covers the extra time I spend managing our camps. Who couldn't use a raise?

Even if you run a camp with just 12 kids at \$120.00 a week, you'd gross \$1,440.00 and over an eight week

period \$11,520.00. If you haven't hosted a camp before, consider experimenting with just two or four weeks of camp. Gain the experience, and then get ready for next summer.

Is it Worth it?

Anytime you can market to needs instead of wants you will reap the benefits. Kids will want to come to your camp, but parents have a need that has to be satisfied first. Your martial arts camp can satisfy both the needs and the wants of parent and child while at the same time providing valuable income for your school.

At the end of each session give non-students a strong incentive to join your school. Discount the price of enrollment or offer another money-saving incentive. If you have an after-school martial arts program, consider offering a free-trial week. Make it a goal to enroll as many of summer camp participants into your martial arts program as possible.

