

Martial Arts School Start-up Guide



So you have decided to start your own martial arts school. It is an exciting time, but there are some important decisions that you need to make.

The “Martial Arts School Start-up Guide” aims to help guide you in making those decisions so that your school is a success.

Here you will find advice on everything from selecting your school's location, pricing your classes and marketing your school.

How To Start A Highly Profitable Martial Arts School From Scratch

Before we get into guide I would recommend that any aspiring martial arts school owners goes through Michael Massie's "[Small Dojo Big Profits](#)" course. It is in my opinion the best resource available for starting a martial arts school the right way and get it to profitability as soon as possible. It will also help you avoid countless mistakes that can destroy your martial arts school dreams before they even begin.

Michael Massie is a real martial arts school veteran. He has owned numerous martial arts schools, coach hundreds of school owners and has over twenty years of experience in the industry.

In "[Small Dojo Big Profit](#)" Michael Massie shows how you can go from having 40 to 175 students in just twelve months. He also provides advice - based on his own experiences - of how to start a martial art school even if you are broke and have zero credit.

Michael Massie has put together a [free video](#) where you can learn more about his strategy for starting a profitable martial arts school, which you can watch by [clicking here](#).

Location: Where are you going to open your school?

Location will play a large role in the success or failure of your school so you need to give it proper consideration.

There are two main aspects to location **cost and utility**.

By cost we mean how much will your preferred location cost you in rent each month. In general it is usually worth paying a little more to get the right location but don't over pay for floor space. You don't want to be paying for more room than you need on the assumption that you are going to be flooded with students. Find an adequate sized space that meets your budget.

The other consideration is utility. How useful will the location be to your students. Is there adequate parking? Is it well lit? Is it easily visible from the streetfront?(great for promotion) Is it close to the homes of your students?

Target Market: Who are your students going to be?

Of course the simple answer is: People who want to study your martial arts. But you need to be more specific than this. If you decide you want to focus on kids classes then you are going to want to locate the school in an area near young families and you will want to design your curriculum around it. If you are hiring a teacher to work with the children, then you will want someone who is comfortable around kids, and who parents won't mind leaving their children with i.e. probably not a grizzled, tattooed MMA fighter with half an ear missing. If you want an older audience, think of locations with plenty of young employed people or near college campuses. If you are going to price your school at the top end of the market, then you also need to consider.

Pricing: How much will you charge?

Pricing can make or break a martial arts business. 9 times out of 10 if a martial arts business is struggling it is because they are not charging enough. If you can't cover all of your costs, have money to reinvest in the business, pay yourself a liveable wage and draw a profit, then you probably need to raise your prices.

When most martial arts business open, they usually set their prices according to what their competition is charging. This is the wrong approach. You don't know what their cost structures are or even if they are making any money at it. Undercharging is rampant in the martial arts business and is not a trap you want to fall into to.

You might be wondering how you can charge what you need to? The answer is to make sure that your positioning and marketing support your prices. If you are a premium school that markets effectively on a consistent basis then you will be able to charge more than your competitors. If price was the only consideration for consumers, everybody would only ever buy Dominos Pizza. Yet people can charge 3 – 5x the price for a gourmet pizza, which is essentially the same product, but experientially very different.

Becoming an Authoritative Resource

Martial Arts MarketingThe following strategy is one of the most effective ways of driving a consistent stream of potential students to your website. But be warned – this is a long term strategy, that requires consistently to be effective.

With this strategy you will be creating highly valuable, evergreen content that you will place on your website. Think of each of these pieces of content as being like little salesmen. The only difference being that they will continue to work for years to come without you having to pay for them!

The first step is to make a list of all of the kinds of questions someone is likely to have before deciding to commit to a specific martial arts school. For example lets imagine that you have are running an Aikido school in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

Now picture your new student who has heard of Aikido but hasn't yet decided where they want to study or even if they want to study Aikido at all.

They might have questions like:

- How much does Aikido cost?
- Where can I study Aikido in San Francisco?
- Is Aikido effective in a real fight?
- Does Aikido have punches?
- How long does it take to master Aikido?
- What uniform do I wear for Aikido?

As a teacher of your martial arts you will have noticed similar questions asked all of the time. Think about these questions and add them to your list.

Aim to have between 50 – 100 questions.

For each of these questions you are going to create a 300 – 1000 word answers. The exact length should be as long as it takes to adequately answer the question.Martial Arts Business

Next set yourself a schedule. For example every Wednesday and Sunday night, you will sit down and for one hour, right an answer to one of these questions. Make sure that you stick to that schedule!

If you do only two answers a night over the course of a year's time you will have 100 pieces of highly valuable content on your website. Each of these pieces of content will become indexed by the search engines.

Soon you will be ranking for what is known as “long tail keywords”. Keywords are the phrase a person enters into a search engine when they are looking for information. A root keyword is something like “Aikido School” a long tail keyword is something like “What uniform do I wear for Aikido”. Because most people can't commit to the kind of content creation schedule mentioned above, long tail keywords are easy to rank for. The collective power of ranking for hundreds of these long tail keywords means tons of free visitors to your site.

The key to success with the system is being consistent. Don't try and do a hundred pieces of content

in a single setting. Just set your schedule and stick to it.

Marketing On Twitter

According to Twitter's own statistics there are currently over half a billion active, registered users of the social media site and each day over 180 million unique people use Twitter.

That means that there is a very good chance that there are potential students for your school on twitter. Right now they are tweeting about martial arts or actively looking for a school to follow.

The Magnet Strategy

The magnet strategy works as follows. On a consistent basis (3 – 5 times a day) you tweet about subjects related to the martial art that you teach. This should not be predominately things that are happening at your school.

Twitter is not a place to advertise, it is a place to engage in conversation and to provide useful information.

Instead tweet about interesting things related to your martial art that have been happening around the internet. If you saw a video on YouTube of the perfect arm lock, then tweet and include a link to that video.

Every 10 tweets or so include a tweet that links back directly to your own website.

The reason that the Magnet strategy is effective is that you are naturally going to attract people who are interested in your martial art.

Imagine that you are a Twitter user who is maybe interested in studying Kendo. You do a search on Kendo and this guy who runs a Kendo martial art school comes up. You look through his tweets and you realize that he gives out a lot of free and valuable information about Kendo and so you decide to follow him.

How likely do you think it is that this follower, if he decides to take up Kendo will apply to your school first?

Because you really want to attract people in your geographic location – so they can actually attend your school – you need to geo target your tweets. One good way to do this is to add a hash tag to the end of your tweets, for example #San Diego.

One of the other advantages of adding the hash tag is you will get some Twitter search engine traffic for the location that you have used. It's also a good idea to include some local content in your tweets, even if it is not related to martial arts. So for example if your local school is having a fund raiser you should tweet about it.

One of the reasons that people shy away from using the magnet strategy is because they believe it will be too much work. Logging into Twitter and finding something to tweet about can be time consuming.

The secret is to use Twitter automation software. There are a number of both paid and free online software services where you can write all of your tweets in a single setting and then schedule them

out over the course of the following week.

Take a ½ an hour to an hour each week and write down your tweets for that week. Then simply schedule tweets for roughly five a day over the course of the week.

Some of the services you can use include:

- [Hootsuite](#)
- [Twaiter](#)
- [FutureTweets](#)
- [Twuffer](#)

Using Advanced Twitter Search

Using the advanced twitter search is taking a more proactive approach to bringing in customers. One of the great things about advanced Twitter search is that you can search by ZipCode as well as topic. This means that you can perform a search for people who are tweeting about your martial art that live in your local area.

There are really two kinds of tweets you should be looking for. The first is people with questions about your particular martial art. Give them the best quality answer you can, as these people are perfect for potential students.

The second type of tweet is people who are simply talking around the martial art that you teach. Even if these people are not likely to be students themselves, they probably have who followers who might be.

For example if the local MMA champ is tweeting out about MMA, and you also teach MMA, the replying to his tweets would make very good sense. When you reply all of his followers will be able to see your tweet and some will be curious enough to check out your profile and see who you are.

The key to success with Twitter is to be useful and to engage other users in a dialogue. If you only talk about your martial arts school you will be viewed as overly promotional. However if you provide value by linking out to useful resources and talking with rather than at other Twitter users, you will find that it can be a great potential source of students.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is one of the most cost effective ways of marketing online. If there was one change you could make to your martial arts business to increase its success it would be this: Start collecting email addresses.

Email allows you to develop a relationship with potential students so that they can get to know you and your school. It also allows you to communicate with your existing students which helps with retention.

To understand the power of email, picture someone who is looking for a new Karate school to join.

The potential student searches online, visiting the local Karate school sites in their neighborhood. Chance are that they will not decide then and their which school they want to join.

When they visit your site they see that there is a free report that they can download a “*Beginners Guide to Karate*” short report. Inside they will learn everything they need to know about the history of your style of Karate, the different katas, how you train your students , uniform and equipment they will need and how the martial art can be used in real life.

Of course the student in this information gathering phase, wants this report and so is happy to provide them you with their address. Now something important has taken place. Unlike any of the other local schools in your area, you have your potential students contact details, so you will be able to follow up with them.

For the next few every 2 – 3 days your prospective student will receive a follow up email. This will provide them with more useful information about your style of Karate. You can also include information about you, your school and what is happening right now. You can also include an invitation to a demonstration class that you run once a month on Saturday morning, where they can try the martial art outside of the formal structure of the class.

There is a very good chance that if you do this that you will be able to convert that prospective student into a sign up to

your class. Simply by emailing them you will stay top of mind and stand out from your competition. Students are far more likely to choose a school that they feel that they already know something about.

Promoting your martial arts school in local directories provides two major benefits. The first of these is the number of direct visitors that they can bring to your business. Local directories are great because everyone who sees your listing will be in your area and so is a potential student for your school.

Local Online Directories

There is another important advantage to local directories as well. Google and other search engines will be able to see that you have links from multiple directories back to your own website. This will help to increase its page ranking for local search results. It helps to reinforce in the search engines eyes, that you are local and active member of the community where your business is located. Where to focus your energies

There are a lot of different online directories that you can list your martial arts school in, so where should you focus your energies? The best place to get started is the top ranking directory for your targeted keyword.

To find your top ranking directory, choose the keyword that you would most like to rank for. For example a San Francisco Aikido dojo might want to rank for “San Francisco Aikido”. Type that into Google and look through the search results. You are looking for a local directory, like Yelp, City Search or Yellow Pages (see below for more types of directories). When you find the first directory, click through on the link and make sure that you list your school in that directory.

Focus your energies on making sure that you rank your school well in that particular directory. You may even want to pay for a premium listing within that one directory.

It’s a sneaky way, to take up another spot on the first page results for your main keywords in

Google.

Yahoo Local Listings

Yahoo local listings allow you to post a free listing which includes the location of your school, phone number and address. You can also include one photo and some information about the lessons and other services that you offer.

Alternatively you can choose to upgrade to a paid listing. This allows you to include up to 10 photos as well as more detailed information about your business.

Craigslist

Craigslist gets a huge amount of searches. Each day over 50 billion craigslist pages are viewed, making it one of the most searched sites on the internet. Of course among these are plenty of potential students for your school. There is both paid and free advertising options on craigslist.
Local.com

Local.com offers both free listings and pay per click options. They also offer an all inclusive marketing package for \$249 which can be running in 7 – 10 working days
Bing Local

You can choose to list your martial arts school on Bing Local for free. If your business is already listed on there, then you should claim it in the same way that you would for a Google Places listing. You can also choose to add in extras to enhance your listing including photos, logos, class times, and a description of your school.