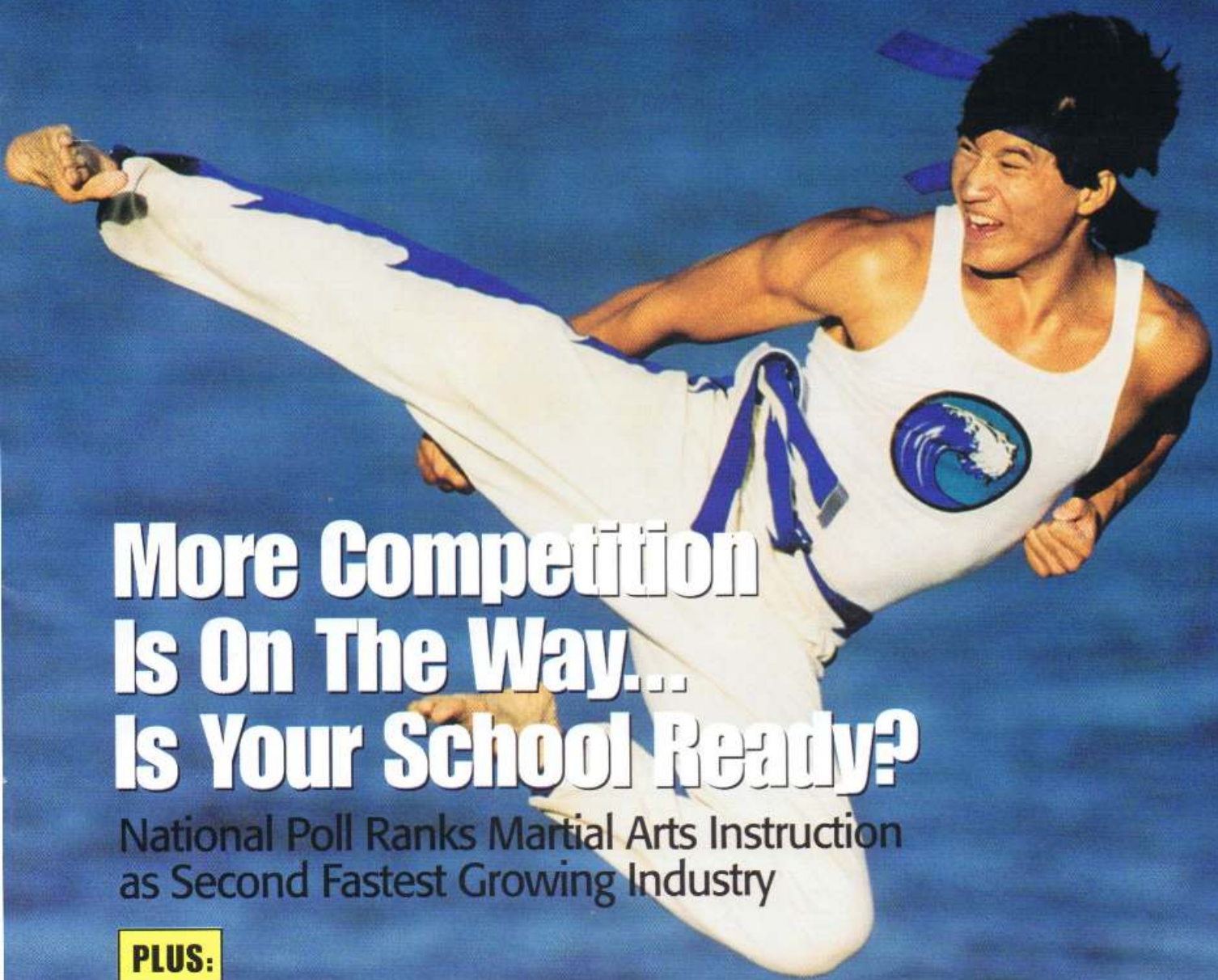
Hien Nguyen Shares His "Open House" Secrets To Success • UFC Upsets School Owners

Martial Arts PROFESSIONAL

Winter 1996

The Trade Journal For The Martial Arts Industry



More Competition Is On The Way... Is Your School Ready?

National Poll Ranks Martial Arts Instruction as Second Fastest Growing Industry

PLUS:

IFC And EFC Square Off—Should Your School Use Student Contracts?

A Revealing Look At The Industry's Quiet Giant

10 Ways To Improve Pro Shop Sales

Call Us Now For Our FREE Video On How You Can Collect 23% More Tuition Without Using Contracts



That Doesn't Mean You Can't Use Contracts With Our Services, You Can! However, Our Studies Show That You Probably Won't Have To Anymore!

IFC/Easy Pay is currently adding hundreds of new schools to the EasyPay tuition collection system making EasyPay the fastest method of dues collection in America. School owners who once used contracts now prefer the EasyPay system to any other method of dues collection and the reasons are simple:

- *No "negative contract" attitudes to overcome with potential students*
- *EasyPay gives you a much higher monthly collection rate than contacts*
- *Retention is improved with EasyPay because the choice to pay is automatic*
- *School owners receive as many as six checks per month from EasyPay*

Call now and ask for our FREE EasyPay video

800-852-4005

Isn't it time you discovered the best kept secret in the Martial Arts Industry?

"Who Are We?"



"EFC Power Team!"

Many EFC clients started with only 50 students in their martial arts schools.
Today each of them are teaching up to 300 active students and more! Get started now!
Call today to receive your complimentary brochure and **FREE** audio cassette entitled:

DOUBLE YOUR GROSS AT NO ADDITIONAL COST.

qualified martial arts schools only

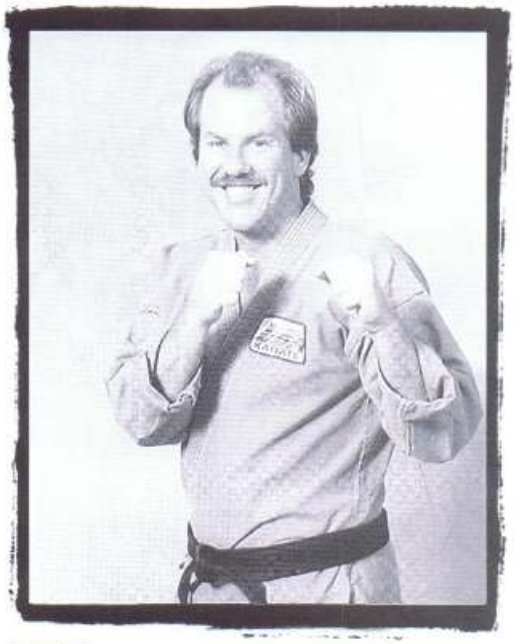
Educational Funding Company

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Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815-6459
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USA, Canada, and Australia

AS I SEE IT

letter from the publisher



We are in a winner-take-all business. When you are facing a prospective student you will either win his or her business or lose it. There is no second place or runner-up award. I personally have never had someone come back to me and say, "We enrolled at the school down the street, but your presentation was so good we'd like to give you this check." Somehow I suspect that has never happened to you either.

Success in the martial arts is not a matter of having a huge lead in one area as much as having an edge in hundreds of areas. Often, this is the difference between your sources of good information and your discipline in applying that information to your business.

That's why *Martial Arts Professional* magazine was created. It's our goal to provide you with a central source of martial arts business information, strategies, and profiles of individuals and organizations that have achieved success.

We are in a very interesting industry. Rarely, in the business world, is the thought of earning an income that would allow a person to enjoy a comfortable standard of life so controversial as it is in the martial arts. There has been a stigma attached to earning a decent living as a martial artist. It's my opinion that this is more the result of a self-deception than fact.

It's much easier to say, "I'm from the old school," than it is to risk failure by really trying to make a school a success.

Owners of non-commercial, anti-growth schools often conclude that more successful school owners have either sold out, which is never the case in long-term success, or that the owners are simply blessed from above. Neither of these is true. The truth is that these school owners simply made the decision to strive for success, and they defined and focused on improving their critical areas of success no matter how painful the process.

Indeed, it's my opinion that striving for and achieving success as a professional martial artist is the ultimate application of the skills of a black belt. The skills of self-discipline, focus, personal responsibility and, most of all, courage, are the skills we martial artists so often trumpet as though we and we alone understood them.

Yet, struggling martial artists will blame the economy, the season, their style, their lack of time to read and study, a lack of money to obtain material, their instructor and/or their association for their lack of success.

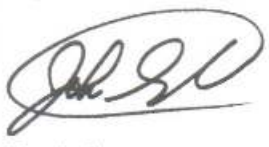
The truth of the matter is, no one is interested in excuses. Frankly, no one cares. We have our own lives to lead and our own success to create. The only person that will put the standards of success on you is you and you alone. The only person who can create your success is you.

Let's face it, earning your black belt was fun. It may have been painful, but not as painful as becoming a good professional. It's much easier to say, "I'm from the old school," than it is to risk failure by really trying to make a school a success.

The difference is that, by not trying, "the old school" is failing hundreds of people who would have joined the school or stayed with the school if it was more professional. Is it better to help 50 students grow through the martial arts or 300? If martial arts is so good for people, then why aren't more people doing it?

Martial Arts Professional, in conjunction with the National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA), are both dedicated to helping school owners create more students and keep the ones they have. We are staffed by successful martial arts veterans. We feel very strongly that our country could only benefit from the life-enhancing qualities inherent in a good martial arts program. In order for that to happen, we, as an industry, will have to resolve to walk our talk. That means applying the principles of success we learned in earning our black belts toward making a success out of our school and helping more people earn their black belts.

Respectfully,



John Graden
Publisher

Vol. 1, No. 1

Martial Arts PROFESSIONAL

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INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

UNDER SEIGE STAR JUMPS SHIP

Hollywood, CA — Steven Seagal, who started his Hollywood career as Mike Ovitz's aikido instructor, has left Creative Artists Agency and signed with International Creative Management for representation in all areas.

At ICM, a team of agents headed by chairman Jeff Berg and including Bill Block, Steve Rabineau and Peter Rawley will mastermind the next phase of the action star's career.

The Seagal signing was an emotional boost to ICM because the martial arts expert is widely viewed as a movie icon created from scratch by CAA. ICM plans to use the *Under Siege* star's domestic box office prowess and his foreign presales power as a focal point for packaging movies involving ICM writers and directors. ■

BLACK BELT HALL OF FAME PLANNED

Santa Clarita—*Black Belt Magazine*, the industry's oldest and most widely read general martial arts publication, is developing plans to build permanent Black Belt Hall of Fame. In addition to the hall, *Black Belt* will include a Bruce Lee museum, a theater for film premiers and a coliseum especially designed for tournaments.

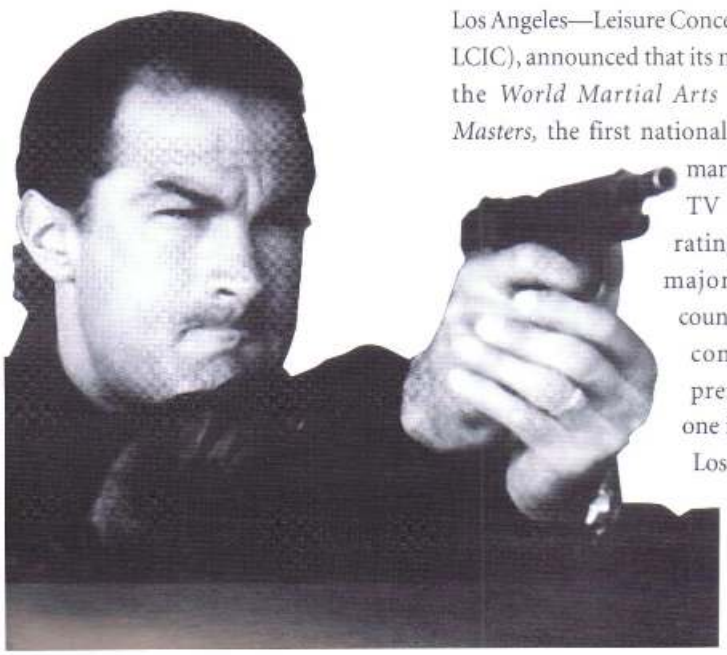


The Bruce Lee museum—just one of the many wings of the proposed Black Belt Hall of Fame.

Induction into the Black Belt Hall of Fame has long been considered the most prestigious recognition in the industry for competitors, instructors and martial arts pioneers.

Black Belt is considering a few different areas for the site. Leading the list is a 40 acre area near Syracuse, New York. Construction is slated to begin in 1996. ■

WMAC MASTERS OFF TO GOOD START



Los Angeles—Leisure Concepts, Inc. (NASDAQ: LCIC), announced that its new television series, the *World Martial Arts Council (WMAC) Masters*, the first national live-action weekly martial arts competition TV series, has strong ratings in a number of major cities across the country. According to the company, its show premiered at number one in its time period in Los Angeles, and second in New York, the two largest TV markets in the country.

LCI has developed a referral-lead system with schools around the nation. Participating schools pay $200 a month. During the *WMAC Masters* broadcast, an 800 number is shown for people interested in learning martial arts. These calls are re-routed, based on zip codes, to the participating schools. *Martial Arts Professional* has requested confirmation of the quality and quantity of leads generated, but LCI has yet to respond.

"WMAC Masters" is hosted by Shannon Lee, daughter of martial arts legend Bruce Lee. ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

TWO DAYS OF SUNSHINE, SIGHT SEEING, AND SEMINARS

NAPMA will be holding their annual convention near Disney this year on June 1st and 2nd, in Orlando, Florida.

This two day, multi-class program gives you a great "menu" of training options for your staff including: Improving Retail Sales; How to Become a Martial Arts Star in Your Town; Avoiding Liability In Your School; Tax Issues For School Owners; What It Takes To Succeed In The '90's; Designing Ads That Make The Phone Ring, installing an executive kickboxing program, exciting class drills and more!

Admission to the two day NAPMA Convention is only $199 per attendee ($149 for NAPMA members) Includes Sat. Night Awards Banquet

To register call (800) 973-6734. For hotel resv, or special vacation pkgs. call Pati or Jackie at the NAPMA Travel Desk at (800)940-5757 ■

MARTIAL ARTS 2ND FASTEST GROWING BUSINESS

According to the *Business Change Report,* Martial Arts Instruction was one of the fastest growing businesses. ■



Source: American Business Information

UFC CREATING CONTROVERSY WITH SCHOOL OWNERS



New York — *Ultimate Fighting Challenge* (UFC) creator and promoter Robert Meyrowitz has been a frequent guest on the major talk show circuit lately. The issue is that many elected officials have taken a high-profile position against these events.

Indeed, the UFC has been banned in three states and the anti-UFC movement is gaining popularity as the "issue dejour" with both the mainstream media and our politicians.

Meyrowitz appeared on *Larry King Live* opposite Arizona Senator John McCain, along with UFC-fighter Ken Shamrock and the Nevada State Boxing Commissioner.

On, *Good Morning America,* Meyrowitz appeared opposite Denver Mayor Wellington Webb.

School owners across the country were angered with Meyrowitz' argument, on these programs, that what is happening at the UFC is the same thing that's happening in martial arts schools nationwide. The implication he presents is that, to regulate UFC, is to regulate martial arts as taught in schools.

Note this exchange from *Good Morning America:*

Charles Gibson: Can I kick them in the face?
Robert Meyrowitz: Yes.
Gibson: Can I kick them in the groin?
Meyrowitz: Yes.
Gibson: Can I choke them?
Meyrowitz: Yes, you could.
Gibson: You could play Russian roulette some times and not get hurt. That doesn't make it safe.
Meyrowitz: No, no. This goes on all the time. This is part of martial arts. What people don't know is that this is martial arts and this happens all the time and no one gets hurt. That's just a fact.

And later in the interview:

Gibson: Can't you see that people will be offended?
Meyrowitz: Again, go to any city. There's going to be a karate academy, there's going to be a tae kwon do academy [doing this]. ■

martial arts success tour

Century Martial Arts, NAPMA and IFC/EasyPay have teamed up for a major seminar tour for school owners entitled, "The Martial Arts Success Tour: Recruiting, Retaining and Retailing." The seminar teaches innovative approaches to operating a school in the highly competitive marketplace. The seminar is free to V.I.P. clients of each organization, courtesy of Century Martial Arts. Call for reservations at (800) 626-2787.

Jan. 13th	Los Angeles, CA	June 29th	Las Vegas, NV
Feb. 17th	Atlanta, GA	July 27th	Chicago, IL
Mar. 23rd	Dallas, TX	Aug. 17th	New York, NY
Apr. 13th	Washington, D.C.	Sept. 28th	San Francisco, CA
June 1-2	Orlando, FL	Oct. 26th	Phoenix, AZ

AFTER BUILDING THE INDUSTRY'S LARGEST MARTIAL ARTS COMPANY, MIKE DILLARD AND GARY HESTILOW ARE ...

A Century On Top

It didn't take long. I was curious to see if he still had it, and he did—we were in a mini-dojo in the center of the huge Century complex just outside of Oklahoma City. Century President Gary Hestilow was taking me on the grand tour and grand it was.

After almost twenty minutes of navigating a maze of offices and warehouses the size of three football fields, I was beginning to wonder why we didn't have a golf cart to traverse this huge mecca of martial arts merchandise.

Up until that moment, Gary had been very cordial yet corporate. Then, in that mini-dojo, he showed me the latest Century product, the Wave Master. The Wave Master is a free standing heavybag that can sit in the middle of the floor and is held in place by a basin of water.

Suddenly, Gary's passion for the martial arts surfaced. His eyes fired up as he smacked the bag with some surprisingly quick punches for a guy in a three piece suit.

His voice got a little more excited as he recounted the class he taught the night before to some employees he trains twice a week. He mixed his words with punches and he almost threw a round kick before catching himself and returning to a role somewhat more befitting the president of a $40 million dollar company. But it was too late. It showed. He's still got the bug.

Indeed, you could say that Century Martial Arts still has the bug. People here smile and have fun. They get the job done with extreme efficiency (the computer measures how long you're on hold and they track it with a vengeance) yet, the atmosphere is not really different from a very well run (and very big) karate school during prime time hours.

Instead of 300 students, Century has 300 hundred employees. Like a busy school, people are all over the place. It's a loud, charged, excited atmosphere yet, there is some serious business going on. Companies like this are always a reflection of the leadership. While Gary has been the president since 1980, Mike Dillard is founder and CEO.

I knew of Gary from his days with John Worley. Mike Dillard was more of a mystery.

I looked forward to meeting this self-made martial arts millionaire. I expected to meet a sharp, tough, get-to-the-point businessman. What I met was a guy who seems very relaxed and content with his place in things. Mike Dillard is a casual, warm person who seems intent on making you feel comfortable. He clearly is the CEO, yet, he demonstrates full trust in his president and friend, Gary. For more on Mike Dillard, you'll have to wait until part two of this interview in our next issue.

Continued on page 16

INTERVIEW BY JOHN GRADEN



Product testing at Century often occurs in their mini-dojo during Tuesday and Thursday night classes taught by company president, Gary Hestilow.

A HARD LOOK AT SOFTWARE

power and ease-of-use push this software to the head of this class

software review

Product: *Black Belt Management—the software™*
Developer: Indigo Sky Productions
Platform: Macintosh, and Windows 3.1
Rating: 4½ kicks

MAPro

The Decision: Finally, the most powerful industry software is also the easiest to use.
Price: $399
Available at: 1-800-973-6734

Based upon the popular *Black Belt Management* manual, this customized business software was specifically designed to be as user-friendly as possible. The key is in the program's simple and attractive interface.

For entering attendance or charting a student's advancement in rank, Black Belt Management will provide a list of the students you choose. One click "checks" that person off. That's all it takes. Just check it off and move on.

The mail merge module is stocked with thirteen letters ranging from welcoming new students to overdue payment notification. If the program's letters don't quite present it your way, you can edit them or easily write in your own preferences.

Each Black Belt Management program is uniquely customized for each school and provides automatic rank updates after testing along with a poignant message of the week.

While retention is critical, no software worth its salt can ignore the need for accurate financial reporting. Black Belt Management has dozens of powerful reports that provide you with instant access to your school's current financial state. Many school owners feel that these reports alone justified the investment.

Clearly, Black Belt Management is off to a great start. However, like most first versions, the software is lacking a couple of bells and whistles that some school owners may miss, such as pen scan entry or statistical analysis.

According to Jeff Pagano of Indigo Sky Productions, "You can add and add and add to a program, but, eventually, you have to stop and say, "We'll put that on the next version."

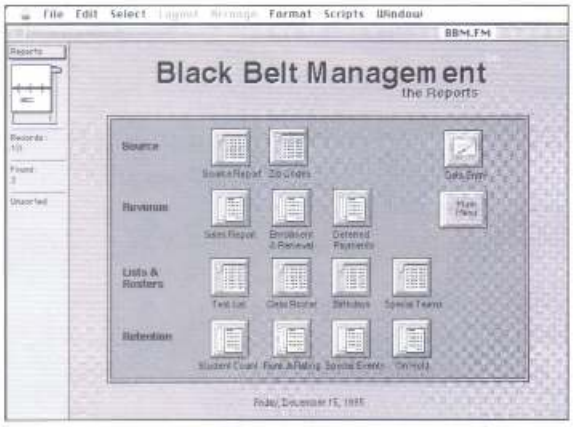
The Decision

There's no need to wait for the next version. Black Belt Management is a top-notch software that has jumped to the head of its class.—*Review by Rob Colasanti*

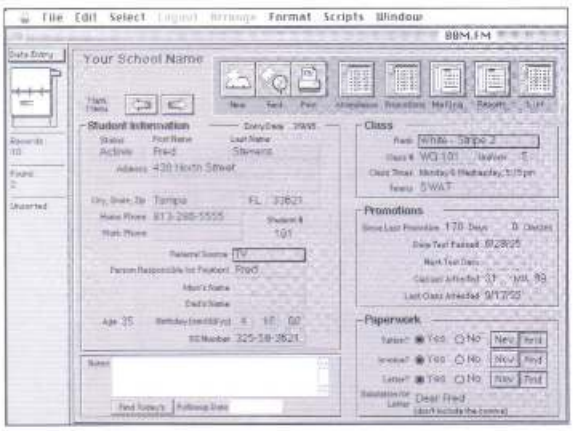
MAPro ranking system

The Martial Arts Pro ranks premier products on a one kick to five kick rating system for quality:

= no belt
= white belt
= green belt
= brown belt
= black belt



BBM's powerful reporting section is grouped into: Ad Source, Revenue, Retention, Lists and Rosters.



Student Entry is the starting point of Black Belt Management—the software.



BBM's simple push-button interface provides easy access to a wealth of reports and information.



master piece

Hien Nguyen

Hien Nguyen is a key stuntman on the megahit *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* and also portrays "Tsunami" on the weekly *WMAC Masters* TV show. Perhaps more than any other Power Ranger, he also travels the country performing for schools interested in capitalizing on the Power Ranger's massive popularity.

1. How many of the open-house, live appearances have you made at martial arts schools?

Over 50 per year.

2. What is the typical scenario?

Most instructors hire me for an open house or anniversary celebration. There is no question, the martial arts is growing very fast. School owners are really getting their business together.

3. What has been the single most successful event ?

Hillary Sandival in El Paso, Texas. Hillary spent a lot of money on mainstream ads and it made a big difference. His staff was well organized so there was a great team running the show.

4. On average, what do instructors do to make a successful event?

Advertising is very important. Also, most schools have had a lot of success using one main emcee who runs the show and directs people to the enrollment stations. Getting a lot of kids to show up for a Power Ranger Stunt Show is easy, but getting them to join the school during—and as a result of the show —takes planning.

5. Conversely, what have been some common errors?

Some instructors promote the show just to their students, but not to the general public, and the school fills up with active students instead of strong new prospects.

6. Do you wear the Power Ranger costume at these shows?

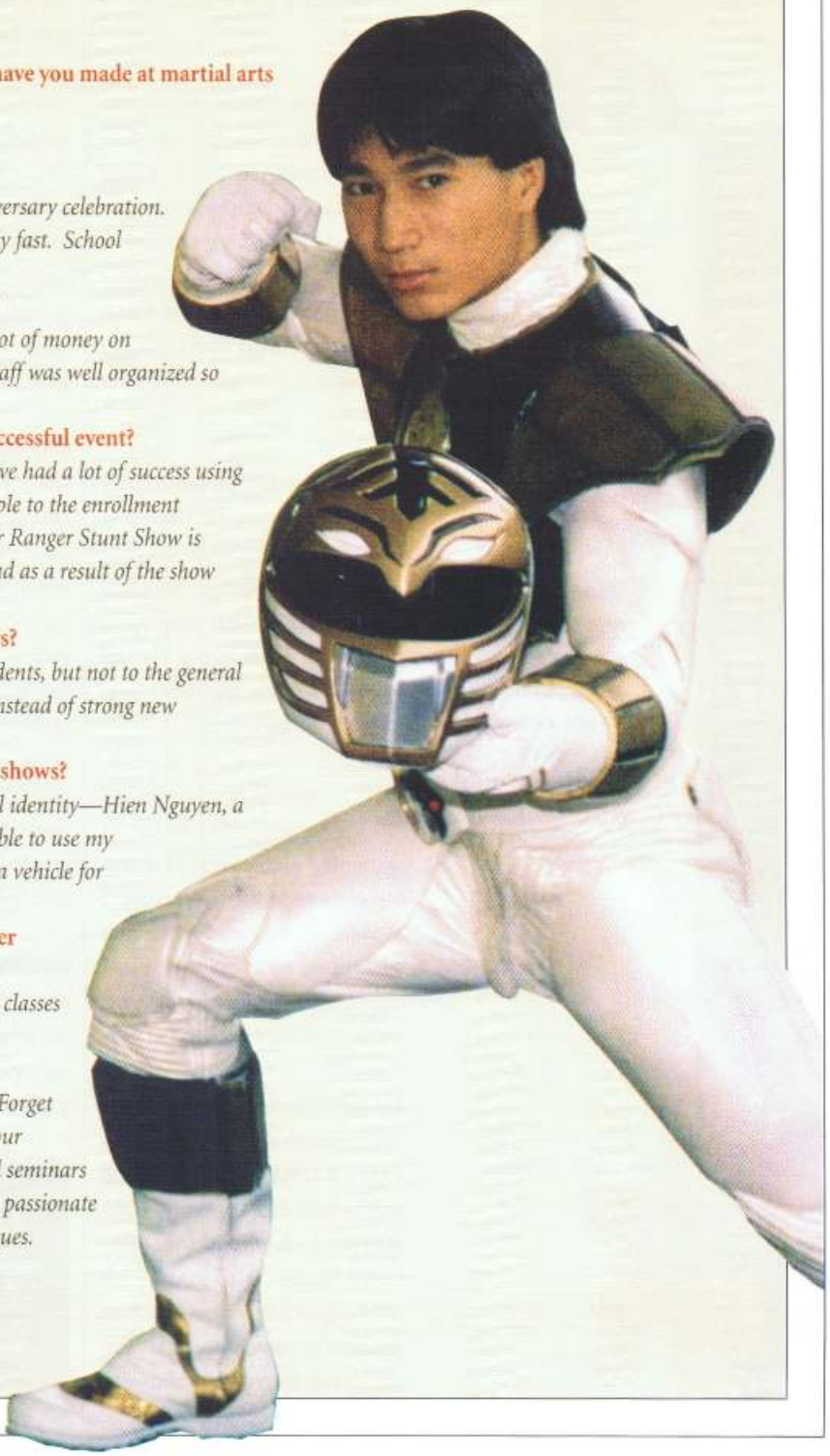
No. Because of legal rights I must maintain my real identity—Hien Nguyen, a representative of the martial arts world. But I am able to use my professional association with the Power Rangers as a vehicle for people to get involved in martial arts.

7. How are school owners capitalizing on the Ranger popularity?

Some schools have created so-called "Little Ranger" classes for 4- to 6-year-old students.

8. Any final words?

Take the opportunity to succeed now and not wait. Forget about holding on to outdated traditions and give your students real value by increasing your value. Attend seminars and seek martial business knowledge with the same passionate enthusiasm you used to pursue martial arts techniques.



Here's Your Invitation To Growing Professional N

NAPMA



As martial artists, most of us didn't decide to get into the martial arts business because we thought it was a quick way to get rich.

We chose this life because we love to teach and we love to train. However, the reality is that a Martial Arts School is a business, and you can't make it in this highly competitive business without growing revenues, without new students, and without constantly marketing and prospecting to make your school grow.

We understand that school owners want to focus their time and attention on the students, not on marketing. That's why the National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA) was formed.

"I have run successful martial arts schools for over thirty years now. After viewing the NAPMA material, it looks like an old dog can learn a few new tricks. I'm joining today."
JIM HARRISON
—American Karate Legend

NAPMA has put together a powerful team of marketing professionals to give school owners affordable access to proven, quality marketing and advertising materials that would normally be out of reach for most small to medium sized businesses.

The response has been absolutely phenomenal! Why? Because each month NAPMA provides you and your school with the professional marketing, advertising, and operational materials to make your school grow faster than you ever dreamed possible. This allows you to focus on the area that motivated you to open a school in the first place; teaching Martial Arts. NAPMA was designed from the ground up to be so affordable that any school could afford to participate. Besides, the program is set up to pay for itself by adding just TWO new students! And the whole program is backed by NAPMA's unconditional money-back guarantee! But these are just part of the reasons why NAPMA is experiencing this incredible growth; if the program didn't work, it wouldn't continue to grow.

Why NAPMA Works

Since NAPMA launched, back in January 1995, over 500 schools have signed on and are already enjoying the benefits and advantages of the latest in innovative martial arts marketing, teaching and business education. NAPMA membership gives your school a major advantage over your competition by helping you retain more students, sign up more new students, and become more successful WITHOUT selling out!

Monthly Marketing Muscle

As a NAPMA Professional member, We'll supply you with everything you need to help make your school a success, including:



Pre-designed camera ready ads that get results!

NAPMA has contracted a team of professional design experts to provide you with the most powerful ad campaigns our industry has ever seen, all camera-ready, and de-



signed to get results fast! For instance, Terry Bryan's school in Colorado Springs, Colorado enrolled over 70 students from our special NAPMA promotional tie-in with the Power Ranger film in theatres. Our marketing strategies get results, and we do all the design, copy, and research work for you, leaving you free to concentrate on providing quality training.

National Black Belt Club Renewal Program

It's no secret that in the past some Black Belt Clubs were used as a way for students to "pay" for black belt status without earning one. This is absolutely not the case with NAPMA and our program is set up entirely different. Our National Black Belt Club is designed to help you, the school owner, attract and retain quality students though their commitment to reaching Black Belt Status the right way; through hard work and discipline.



Join The Nation's Fastest Martial Arts Association

NAPMA

The National Black Belt Club is the perfect system for generating a steady monthly source of highly profitable renewals and should account for 60% of your tuition income while having a huge effect on the atmosphere and energy in your school. NAPMA provides you with all the flyers, brochures, patches, certificates, posters and most of all, national affiliation for your Black Belt Club students.

Video Training Seminars for Your Staff

NAPMA members nationwide say that this is the most valuable tool they have ever used to educate and motivate their staff. Imagine the benefits of exposing your staff to the most successful martial artists in the industry; sharing their drills, their business strategies for success, and their experiences. Our monthly video training provides you with three 20 minute seminars targeted to a specific area of the school: Instructor training, office training, and owner training.



Professional Designation

Only NAPMA member schools receive the authorization to use the designation, "Member: National Association of Professional Martial Artists" on their marketing materials, ads, business cards/letterhead, and even



on the school itself. This designation shows your affiliation with a nationally recognized professional organization and speaks volumes to the public about your commitment, integrity, and concern for your school and your students. NAPMA schools uphold the highest ethical and safety standards in the business and it's our intention to inform the public of the benefits of patronizing NAPMA member schools.

Networking: We've found that NAPMA member schools want to help each other succeed. Many school owners find this an invaluable resource; the ability to instantly have a common bond with another member school and to interact on a variety of issues, techniques, and challenges all school face in today's marketplace.

Toll-Free Consulting Hotline

The NAPMA hotline is there as your link to getting the most from



the NAPMA program material, videos, Black Belt Club program, and all aspects of NAPMA membership. School owners have told us time and time again, how important this toll-free access is.

Cutting Edge Developments:

Possibly one of the true milestones in the martial arts industry is the development of the "No Intro Tour." Imagine enrolling a new student after only 15 minutes. NAPMA members were some of the first in the country to learn this extremely effective method of enrolling new students.

"In my first month with NAPMA, I enrolled 10 students into the National Black Belt Club. Thank you!"

—SCOTT ASHLEY KARATE Kickboxing Athletic League

As a NAPMA Professional member you will have the opportunity to implement many of the latest, cutting-edge marketing strategies months before your competition even knows what hit them.

Many of these brilliant strategies and new products are more powerful and even more profitable than you can imagine. We make sure our members always get the competitive marketing edge.

In-House Promotional Events

These can be very lucrative (potentially generating thousands of dollars in additional monthly profits) and easy to produce. We'll provide you with step-by-step instructions, plus ready-made ads and flyers for super successful in-house promotions for student retention and additional profits.

continued on back



"I have seen the future and the future is NAPMA."

— JOHN CORCORAN
Author, Martial Arts Sourcebook

"John Graden has the best material on running a successful school."

—JEFF SMITH
6 schools, 2800 students

"A sign of greatness is when someone does something that doesn't remind you of anyone else. John Graden has a great ability to communicate how to take total charge of your success. His landmark program will set the standard for high caliber schools."

— JOE LEWIS
American Karate legend

"John Graden is the Bruce Lee of martial arts business education"

— ROBERT FERGUSON
Publisher Martial Arts Gazette

Don't Let Your Competition Get The Upper Hand, Enroll Today!

Professional Certification Seminars

Our NAPMA Professional Certification Seminars allow you and your staff the opportunity to be certified as Professional Instructors and School Directors, complete with certificate suitable for framing. This recognition and motivation is another way to build your students confidence and show your students you're commitment to helping them achieve their goals.

NAPMA Membership

NAPMA Professional Membership includes a monthly support program that provides you with:

- A three-part video seminar each month
- Camera ready advertisements that get quick results
- Proven Retention techniques and strategies
- Pre-designed marketing campaigns
- Authorization to use the NAPMA member designation on your printed materials
- In-house NAPMA sponsored promotions for student retention and profit
- The National Black Belt Club
- Travel Discounts
- Toll-free consulting hotline to help you get the most from the material and much, much more..

That's really just a sampling of the benefits of NAPMA's Professional Membership.

We made NAPMA affordable for every school

NAPMA membership is an ongoing monthly subscription at $99 (+$3 shipping). There are no contracts and you can cancel at any time. If NAPMA helps you enroll just two more students and they stay in class, your yearly membership is paid for by their tuition. That's not two students per month; that just two students period! That's only $23 per week for all of the value of the NAPMA Professional membership.

NAPMA Start Up Kit

The NAPMA Start Up Kit includes a sample month's material plus two bonus books:

Bonus #1 THE BLACK BELT MANAGEMENT MANUAL

This 320 page, fully illustrated guidebook to success is considered to be the best book ever written on the subject.

Bonus #2 THE NAPMA REPORT BOOK

This control book is designed with the retention, statistical and enrollment forms needed to interface your school with the NAPMA program.

The NAPMA Start-up Kit is only $99 plus $10 shipping and handling.

How To Get Started

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2. Give students and parents a list of items required for class when students enroll. *Provide a new list for each belt level promotion.*

3. Use products in class. It is the best way to show and tell about products. *Give students homework assignments that use different products in the homework exercises.*

4. Have catalogs available. *To encourage ordering through your school, rubber stamp the catalog cover with your school name and ordering information. Tear the retail order form out of the catalog before giving it to your students. Every item in the Century catalog is a proven seller. Let your students see the wide range of products available.*

5. Have regular "Sale" promotions. *Reinforce purchasing habits by selecting items other than required training equipment for special sales.*

6. Use attractive product displays. *Display products other than uniforms and sparring gear. Every student purchases the basics. Aim for sales of specialty items beyond the basic commodities.*

7. Keep new training equipment for class use. *Once a month, rotate the equipment by selling "slightly used" products at a discount. This gives your school a professional appearance and emphasizes your commitment to safety.*

8. Offer special classes and seminars. *In the fee for the class, include the cost of the weapon or training aid being taught. Special classes expand your product base and increase student loyalty.*

9. Establish recognition items. *To reward achievement and create repeat sales, limit colors and styles of uniforms, sparring gear, or patches to specific belt ranks.*

10. Make the sale. *Understand that selling a product at a slightly lower profit margin still puts dollars in your pocket. Refusing to match a competitors price helps build the competition's business.*





Gary Hestilow, President Mike Dillard, Founder and C.E.O.

A Century on Top—from page 8

Maybe it was me who wanted to get down to business this time. So, after countless emails, phone calls and an aborted meeting in San Diego, Gary Hestilow jumped on a plane and flew to Tampa where I met him for two days of interviews, seminar planning and sushi.

MA Pro: *What would you say, through the years, has been the source of Century's success?*

HESTILOW: Frequently, you hear the comment from clients talking to our agents, that from a service perspective, we do the job better than the other people and I think that's a significant part of success.

MA Pro: *One of the things that struck me about my visit to the factory was there is a definite sense of enthusiasm. There was a lot of smiles, a lot of people saying, "Hi."*

HESTILOW: I would like to think that the attitudes we have at the top are the same that get passed all the way down. We try to provide the type of company that people enjoy working at.

MA Pro: *Let's talk a little bit about your relationship with the schools out there. How many schools will you service this year?*

HESTILOW: School is sometimes a difficult word to pin down since some are part time, but from a perspective of how many wholesale accounts, this year we will probably deal with somewhere between 15,000 to 20,000.

MA Pro: *How would you describe your relationship with these schools?*

HESTILOW: Well, I think in many ways, it's excellent from the perspective of trying to service them in ways to help their business. I think people appreciate the ease of ordering and the time with which the products are shipped.

MA Pro: *Let's touch on the sporting goods issue, it's been a source of frustration from a perception of some school owners. Why is Century selling in sporting good stores?*

HESTILOW: The market for martial arts products is really much, much larger than just the people who are actively taking classes. We've been servicing that market since 1980.

Imagine if you liked baseball, but the only way you would be allowed to buy a glove or mitt is to be on a team and you have to be actively playing during the season or you couldn't buy the product.

The market for baseball products is all the people who have an interest in playing baseball and every kid in America is going to have a glove and a bat and a ball and a hat.

The market for martial arts products is not just the people who are taking classes today. There are millions and millions of people who have taken martial arts training over the years.

MA Pro: *Still, it can be frustrating when a student buys their sparring equipment down the street.*

HESTILOW: We are working on some



products that are going to give the differentiation so that the product available in the school will be a distinctive product from the one sold at the sporting goods store.

The new products for the schools will be a much superior product, probably won't cost as much and it will have a higher retail value. We recognize that those are areas that need to be addressed and we are spending money every day working on those issues.

MA Pro: *So, what does the school owner do to keep sales in the school?*

HESTILOW: I would be honest with my students and ask them to buy from me. I would say I need you to buy from me because that's the way we pay our bills and keep tuition down. I appreciate your support. Some people would still choose to buy down the street because if they can save some money, you can't blame them for trying to get it for less.

I don't think it's a good idea to tell students that you don't use that kind of gear because it's not as good. If you're a consumer, it's going to be hard to see how one is vastly different from the other. They all look and feel about the same. So as the consumer, I'm going to realize that the reason you are telling me that, doesn't have anything to do with the product, it has to do with you not making the sale.

If the message that the consumer gets out of that is that, you are not telling them the truth, you are trying to deceive him to get some extra money out of him, that probably isn't the best message.

A better option is to offer to match the price they've got down the street.

MA Pro: *What can school owners do to enhance their retail situation? It's an area of weakness in a lot of schools.*

HESTILOW: I think product sales can be a much bigger source of revenue than it is currently at most schools. Good merchandising really isn't done on some display, it's really done out in the classroom.

As an example, let's take a kick shield. The school owner buys a shield and puts it into class. After a while, it starts to wear thin. At some point, that pad is no longer useful in class. (Smiling) If anything, it makes the students cry when they have to hold it up to get kicked.

Here's a suggestion. Somewhere on that shield mark the date that it was bought. The kick shield shouldn't be used more than three weeks or a month. Then, you can sell it to your students as slightly used at a discount from the retail price.

You'll replace it with a brand new shield which you'll sell again in a month or so. That way, the students are always training with new equipment. It's also helping your product sales. That's a real straight forward step that many schools are using. It is generating great success.

As a school owner, I would also use the catalog as a primary selling tool. I would give every student a list of all the products that they will have to have for class with a catalog. As they look through that book, I think it is extremely likely they are going to find not only those things required, but a lot of other things they have an interest in buying.

MA Pro: *What kind of profit margin should a school expect on equipment sales?*

HESTILOW: It's a common error that most school owners feel that if they pay $10 for

The Oklahoma Bombing

In Gary's words.

We're about 15 miles from the blast site and it shook the windows. We are relatively close to an Air Force base and one of the thoughts was gee, I think a plane just went down.

Actually, Mike's sister-in-law was one of the very first people they were able to pull out of the wreckage and she was seriously injured but she was able to come through that.

I had the opportunity to see a big, tall building blown halfway down. You never want that opportunity. It was really a frightening site. No matter what you saw on television, to actually see it was a lot worse.

Century did not have any employees directly injured by the blast but we did have relatives and friends who were in the blast and some of those people were killed and many were injured. So it did touch us personally.

There were many things that the rescuers needed, so we were able to coordinate about three trailer loads of products that they needed for the rescue efforts. Certainly a lot of our people helped with Red Cross type activities and food service things and just all the different ways we could, but understand that what we did was no different than anybody else in Oklahoma City did. Everyone in town did absolutely all they could to help out that situation.

It was just a devastating thing to have happen and nothing else really matters when something like that is going on. It's hard to think about selling any product when you are faced with that kind of a domestic issue.

something they can sell it for $20. Well, that is not the type of margin typically that is being generated today. The typical sporting goods store's margin is 30 – 35%.

The stores just work with a lower margin. In fact, school owners can buy products from us at as *low a price* as the sporting goods store. Many times, the sporting goods stores actually wind up paying a little bit more for some items because of the special packaging they require.

MA Pro: *Let's talk a little bit about what you think the biggest challenge facing school owners today.*

HESTILOW: The biggest challenge, I believe is management related. If I'm doing everything, I'm limiting my growth because there is only a certain amount of things that I can do. You have to develop staff. So the management issues relating to staff development, not teaching, is where most people are going to have the biggest challenges.

Certainly NAPMA is a big help in that regard. Plus, you need a good billing company like IFC or EFC, who have been out there for a long time.

People who want to build their business are going to have to face up to the reality that it's going to take a big commitment to build their school. You can't steal second base and keep your foot on first base.

MA Pro: *What are your perceptions about the possibilities of say, a Bally's Health Club opening a chain of martial arts schools across the country?*

HESTILOW: I don't think that you are going to see a significant number of people operate in multi-cities because of staffing issues. It is very difficult to recruit and keep the kind of staff that they need. If the person gets frustrated working for that location, he can go out and open up his own school and be a competitor. There are many chains that come and go but I haven't seen too many that come and stay.

MA Pro: *What does it take to bring a new product to market?*

HESTILOW: We have a product called the Wave Master. It has been a very successful product. I'm probably as proud of that product as any new product that we have ever introduced.

This also relates to the sporting goods issue. A lot of the Wave Masters that are being sold are being sold through the sporting goods stores. A lot of them are also being sold to the schools.

By the time we actually had one to test, we had to spend well over $100,000 just to get to see if it would work. Now, if it didn't work, then we had $100,000 worth of experience.

Then, before we have the opportunity to sell it, we have to spend a significant amount of money to promote the product and get it ready to go. So, before we ever collected any money on selling the Wave Master, we had about $350,000 invested.

Now, here's how that relates back to the sporting goods side. At this point in time, about 25% of our Wave Master sales have been through the martial arts schools and about 75% of them through the sporting goods side.

The market we are offering this product to is the martial arts consumer, not just the school owner and active student. That combined consumer base is pretty large and allows us to spend significant money on research and development. That allows us to bring a much bigger variety of products to market, which is great for schools.

MA Pro: *What's in store in 1996 for Century?*

HESTILOW: We think that it is really important for people to have an opportunity to hear about some of these merchandising issues because it's time we do something to really help them generate additional product sales.

If owners can do a better job in the classroom, creating students and retaining their students, ultimately product sales will go up as well. So, we are going to promote a series of seminars for the school owners. (*See Calendar of Events on page 7.*)

We are going to be concentrating on the issues of merchandise sales and I think we will have some pretty successful seminars this year by doing that. This is really an effort to give some benefit back to the school owners that have been supporting us all these years. ■

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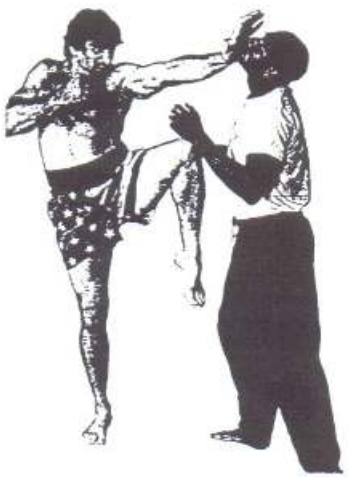
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OPINION

SQUARE OFF

Q. Should Martial Arts Schools Have Students Sign Contracts?

FOR CONTRACTS *By Tom Callos*



Should martial arts school owners have contracts with their students? Absolutely!

Whether you choose to collect your tuition using a third-party billing service or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), there should be a written agreement outlining the obligations and tuition arrangements between the student and the school. Both parties should have a crystal-clear understanding of the conditions of enrollment.

Should contracts be used to collect money from students who no longer attend class and thus do not want to pay? Should they be sold to a third party for a percentage of their value? Absolutely not!

A contractual agreement between the school and the student is a must for two reasons:

1) Lawsuits. I was sued last year over a broken wrist. We won the case because of the wording in a portion of our contract.
2) I sold my schools last year. I had almost a half-million dollars in accounts receivable, documented in contracts, with a five-year, 90% collection history. That was like money in the bank. I don't know if I would be living in Hawaii right now if I hadn't had contracts that outlined my assets. What would I have sold? My mirrors, mats and trophies?

Forget about using contracts to collect money from students who don't attend and don't want to pay. Use good service to keep the money coming in. But definitely create a document that spells out the obligations between the school and the student. If it's the wording in a contract that bothers you, rewrite it. Always use contracts in your schools. But use them wisely, and use them properly.

It's worthwhile to note that I had over 800 active students and not one of them ever raised an objection over the use of a contract. ■

Tom is a former board of director member of the Educational Funding Company. An instructor of the highest caliber, he sold his 800-student school in Reno, Nevada and now lives in Hawaii, where he's working on his first children's book, "We All Start As White Belts."

ANTI-CONTRACTS *By Rick Bell*



Any debate about the validity or necessity of contracts to collect tuition can easily be put to rest by a comparison of contracts to other methods of dues collection to measure effectiveness.

IFC did a four year comparative study between contracts and open ended EFT's (bank drafts without a contract). In that study we found open ended EFT's consistently collected 20% more tuition every month than contracts did. We also found contracts were more of a hindrance to enrolling students than they were a help in keeping them.

There are several reasons not to "take out contracts" on your students and here are just a few: First of all, people hate them. In fact, the mere mention of the "C" word in an enrollment conference must be skillfully avoided to keep from scaring off your prospective student. Further, if your no-contract competitor down the street knows what he's doing, he can effectively use your contracts against you in sales efforts...without you even realizing it.

Secondly, contracts for future services not yet provided, i.e., martial arts lessons, are largely unenforceable. But even if they were enforceable, only a fool would take his ex-students to court and sue for future tuition. The negative public exposure could be devastating, and even if you won...you would lose.

And last but not least is the old argument that says: without contracts your retention goes down the tubes. Not so! When I stopped using contracts in my school after many years, I still maintained my high retention rate... and found it much, much easier to enroll new students. My personal experience confirmed a long time suspicion and that was; If your program and curriculum are sound, you don't need contracts to make your students want to come to class, or pay their tuition. Period. ■

Rick Bell is the National Director for IFC/EasyPay and the developer of the revolutionary No Intro Enrollment Tour. Rick is a marketing specialist and veteran Martial Arts school owner who is considered one of the leading experts on enrollment in the industry today.

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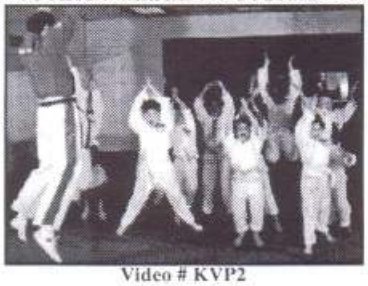
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Video # KVP2

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- ◊ Drills to Increase Reaction Speed
- ◊ Practical Ways to do the Same thing Over and Over with out boredom
- ◊ Competitive Repetition
- ◊ Keep'em Sweating & Smiling
- ◊ ***Detailed Instructors Manual***

ABC's OF CONFLICT AVOIDANCE



Video # KVP4

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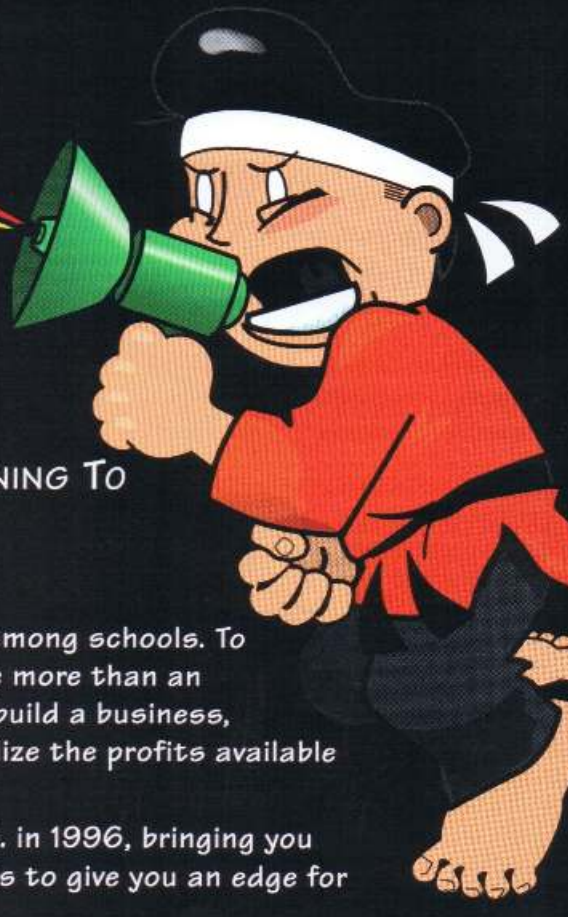
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