

Telephone Enquiries – Why do only a few turn up to train?

© Paul Griffin: Black Belt International 19th Jan 2008

The problem is that out of every 10 who phone only 2 turn up to train in class.

Effective telephone answering is so important. The money you spend to print posters, place adverts and recruiting campaigns is wasted if they only get as far as the telephone enquiry.

We have learned our martial arts techniques and the telephone answering skill relates to your business acumen. The popularity of your martial arts club will depend on how good the instructor is at recruiting and retaining students and these subjects relate to business skills.

Understanding the problem, what causes it is essential to solving it and providing an effective answer. When someone calls we don't tend to take too much notice as we chat away. A few minutes after the phone is hung up we have already forgotten about some elements of the phone call. The brain remembers by repetition, priority and importance and a short casual phone call doesn't cut it with any more than curiosity. Once their curiosity is fulfilled the call is almost forgotten and many never start training.

To solve the problem we have to get the attention of the caller and use some professional techniques that keep coming along to train a priority.

The phone rings:

- Pick is up and ask who's calling please, write their name down.
- Ignore what they are saying and quote you need a few details just in case you are cut off.
- Ask and take note of their phone number's (cell & landline) and address.
- At this point the caller has to think as he passes on his personal details, so you have their attention.
- Ask the caller what he is looking for, why he wants to train and how he got your number/found the advert that led to the call then note it down.
- Remember to sound both interested and enthusiastic, this is the caller's first impression and you only get one chance at creating a good one.
- Try not to answer any specific questions. The caller may wish be asking because they want to avoid an element of a class and not participate, so it could put them off. Keeping the lead alive is about keeping all their options open and providing them with the market choice they are looking for. It's important to be professional and not insult any other clubs or instructors and ensure the caller is within their comfort zone.
- Now the caller is comfortable tell them when and where your classes are.
- At this point it is so important to tie the client in, get them thinking date and times etc. The tie in is when you ask the caller what class is convenient and commit to which one they will be attending. A direct "what class do you want to attend" "Take a note of the class.
- Finish the call.
- Now it is using the information effectively so they don't forget.
- Send them the details of your classes and confirm in writing the class they are attending, date time etc.
- Telephone them back a day before and say you are looking forward to meeting them and ask them their size so if you have a training suit in their size you can bring it along.