

The untold reasons why most advertising doesn't work for martial arts

Learn how to not waste your money on advertising that doesn't produce a positive return on investment --- and what to do instead

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From: Allen Oelschlaeger

Dear Martial Arts School Owner,

My name is Allen Oelschlaeger and I'm one of the founders of the Martial Arts Marketing Network. I've been involved in local business advertising for many years and I wrote this report due to my frustrations with the amount of money that is flushed down the toilet every year by martial arts school owners who have been given bad advice about how to promote their business.

I hope you benefit from reading it.

Let me start with a discussion of ad salespeople.

If you are like most local business owners, you get inundated by advertising salespeople who try to get you to spend your hard-earned money on advertising. Here are just a few of the advertising mediums who probably contact you:

- Yellow Pages
- Valpak
- Money Mailer
- Clipper Magazine
- Local Newspaper
- Local Radio
- Postcard Mailers

The very first thing you need to realize about these folks is that **they are salespeople – not marketing experts**. Their goal is to sell you bigger ads that run more frequently – period.

Therefore, their pitch is usually something like this:

- You need to develop a brand image for your business
- Advertising on a regular basis in the best way to do this
- The bigger and more frequent the ad, the better
- You must advertising over a long period of time to get results
- At some point in the future, your advertising expenditures will pay off

Hogwash!

Here is the truth – **you don't have enough money to develop a brand image in your community via advertising**. There is just too much advertising clutter (experts say that the average consumer sees 4000 advertising messages per day) for you to get noticed unless you

have A LOT of money to spend (think McDonalds-type money).

The reality is that you could consistently run image ads in the above mediums for years and years and you still wouldn't have a recognizable brand among the population in your community.

But, even if you did create such a brand, the bigger question is if it would result in any more business for your martial arts school. Frankly, I doubt it.

This whole "brand image" thing works for companies like McDonalds who have millions of dollars to spend and are competing in an established market of fast food eaters. But, it doesn't work for martial arts (or for any other local business).

So, that's the first lesson --- **don't listen to marketing advice from ad salespeople.**

Next, I want to talk about "box" you probably receive every month which includes some new ad or direct mail piece to try out. In general, I think you'll find that most of these are just more of the same --- brand images ads that won't work in generating more students for your martial arts school.

In fact, **the whole idea of getting a new ad to try each month is a flawed one.** Even if you had tons of money to run a brand image ad campaign, you wouldn't use a different ad every month.

Check out what the big advertisers do --- they find one ad that they think works and then run it over and over and over again.

Instead of running a different ad every month, the ideal situation is to find an ad that really works and then run it forever (more about that below). But, then the "box" folks would have nothing to sell you, would they?

Just because you get a new ad to run each month it doesn't mean you should run it.

So, let me summarize --- **brand image advertising is a waste for most local businesses but, if you are going to do it anyway, the worst approach is changing your ad every month.**

What about direct response marketing?

My guess is that you have probably heard of direct response marketing. This type of marketing has gotten notoriety over the last several years due to the work of guys like Dan Kennedy and Jay Abraham.

In case you haven't heard of direct response marketing, let me give you a brief overview.

This type of marketing is focused on getting an immediate response -- instead of building a brand image over time. That enables you to quickly figure out if an ad is working or not – rather than trying to determine years from now if trying to build a brand image had any affect on your business.

Because direct response marketing is looking for an immediate response, the ads generally have these attributes:

- Attention-getting copy
- Compelling offer (e.g., free trial)
- Clear description of how to respond
- Deadline for response

Again, **the entire focus of direct response marketing is on getting a response rather than building a brand image.** So, the above attributes are emphasized rather than such common ad components as the business's name and logo (in fact, often the business's name isn't even included).

Have you tried this type of marketing? Has it worked? In other words, did you get enough responses to provide a positive return on investment?

I'm guessing that the answer is NO. Either you haven't tried it or you have and it hasn't worked.

So, what's going on? People spend thousands and thousands of dollars to learn direct response marketing from Dan Kennedy, Jay Abraham and many others – so it must work or they wouldn't still be around. **So, why doesn't it work for martial arts?**

[Or am I wrong and it has worked for you? If so, I'd love to hear from you – because, after asking this question for some time, I haven't found any martial arts school owner for which direct response marketing has actually worked. If you have found an approach that provides positive return on investment, I'd really like to learn about it so please call my personal cell phone at 262-893-3839]

Why direct response marketing doesn't work for martial arts

The following statistic is going to be a bit hard to accept --- but it is true, none-the-less.

**Only 3-5% of the U.S. population
has a positive view of martial arts**

The rest of Americans either have a negative view (it's too violent) or have no idea what martial arts is really all about (it's just kicking and punching).

I know **this statistic is hard to stomach** but it has been demonstrated over and over again in surveys and almost every martial arts marketing expert will tell you (sometimes, just in private) that their advertising experience bears it out.

For example, if traditional advertising normally generates a 1% response rate then, in the martial arts industry (if the above statistic is true), it should only generate a 0.05% response rate (since less than 5% of the population would even consider responding).

So, if you send out 2,000 direct mail pieces, **instead of getting 20 responses you might only get 1.**

As I said above, my guess is that you've had a similar experience, if you've tried direct response marketing (again, if I'm wrong, please call me at 262-893-3839).

That has certainly been Chan Lee's (my co-partner in the Martial Arts Marketing Network) experience at his five schools in Milwaukee. He has spent a fortune over the years with every possible form of direct response marketing and he has never gotten much of a response.

In fact, in an effort to test our conclusions about direct response marketing not working within martial arts, we created a new Money Mailer flyer that Chan thought was the best piece he had ever put together. Professionally-written copy, compelling offer, clear deadline, excellent graphics – all the hallmarks of a great direct response piece.

Then, through Money Mailer, **we distributed the flyer to 90,000 homes** within the Milwaukee area. **The response? --- 3 calls.** Chan's initial thought is that we had a timing problem (somehow, it was a bad month of advertising) so we ran the campaign again two months later **with no better results.**

The reality is that our industry has a perception problem. The vast majority of Americans either don't understand what martial arts is really all about or they associate martial arts with mixed martial arts (MMA) and can't imagine getting their kids or themselves involved in such a program.

Again, hard to stomach but – still – the reality.

What does this mean for your school's marketing?

The above analysis suggests there are two distinct market segments of the U.S. population relative to their views about martial arts:

- **Those who have a positive view of martial arts** (3 to 5% of the population) due to direct prior experience with martial arts or knowing someone who had a positive experience.
- **Those who have a negative view of martial arts** (95 to 97% of the population) because of their lack of knowledge of what martial arts is really all about or because they associate it with the violence they see on television with MMA.

Given there are two distinct martial arts marketing segments means **you should have two radically different approaches to your marketing.**

For the segment with a positive view (what I call the "predisposed segment"), standard direct response marketing should work --- but **you need to be very selective in your marketing** to reach this segment, if you want to get a positive return on investment.

For the other segment, **the sad reality is that any promotional campaign that mentions martial arts will be ineffective.** In other words, any ad that pictures someone in a martial arts uniform or discusses the benefits of martial arts will be largely ignored by this segment.

How to market to the predisposed segment

The only way to cost-effectively advertise to the predisposed segment is to target your marketing **directly** to this group. Otherwise, 95 to 97% of your efforts will be wasted and you will never get a positive return on investment.

But, here is the challenge --- how do you target your advertising just to this group? People predisposed to martial arts don't wear a sign saying they are part of this segment, so how do you reach them?

There is only one way – catch them right when they are looking for a martial arts school.

And, where do people go when they are looking for a martial arts school? Two places:

- To the Internet
- To the Yellow Pages

As you probably know, the Yellow Pages are dying (or are already dead in some communities) -- - **so the Internet is where you should focus your efforts.** That's why we developed our Digital Enrollment Director (to learn more, read our free report titled: "The 8 mistakes that make 99% of websites a total waste of time and money).

How to market to the non-predisposed segment

The very best way to market to this segment is via direct interactions with prospective customers.

People who have a negative view of martial arts can easily discount an advertisement they see or a direct mail piece they receive. But, **it much more difficult for them to ignore the direct experience of what martial arts is all about via such activities as school presentations, demonstrations, birthday parties, buddy days, and the like.**

That's why we so strongly emphasize within the Martial Arts Marketing Network that our Network members devote most of their time and energy to "**face-to-face**" marketing -- the name we give those marketing activities where there is a direct interaction between a martial arts instructor and prospective students.

Similarly, referral-focused marketing, where current students are effectively a proxy for the martial arts instructor, can also be effective in turning people within the non-predisposed segment into martial arts students.

Again, **the key is personal interactions** -- where you and your staff are given an opportunity to educate people about martial arts that just isn't possible via an advertising campaign.

The challenge

Once you realize the marketing realities described above, you understand why burn out is such a problem in the martial arts industry.

Face-to-face requires a lot of work -- and, if you want to grow your school, that work never lets up.

Sure, you can get several new students every month off of the Internet with very little work (if you do things correctly – again, you should read our report titled: "8 mistakes that make 99% of websites a total waste of time and money").

And, if you are not worried about getting a return on investment, you can get a few more students each month by implementing an aggressive direct response marketing campaign (but, that can only last so long before your business is no longer viable).

But, you are still stuck with doing a lot of "face-to-face" marketing month after month and year after year – if you want to grow your school.

That's why we are investing within the Martial Arts Marketing Network so much time and money in **experimenting with new and innovative ideas** to see if we can come up with non-face-to-face marketing programs that really work for the martial arts industry.

The good news is that our investment has paid off, which has resulted in the creation of our **Automated Marketing Programs** – proven promotional programs that actually work.

Unlike the other offerings from the Martial Arts Marketing Network, these programs are new and, as a result, have not been fully proven to work -- consistently and reliably.

That's why we are actively seeking school owners who are willing to try something "non-traditional" and work with us to perfect these programs in their local area.

Over time, we expect to develop a large number of such Automated Marketing Programs that we can offer our Network members but, for right now, we have three:

- Automated Enrollment Director
- Get Paid To Advertise System
- Online Martial Arts Shopping Cart

If you are interested in learning more about any of these programs, I encourage you to contact us. Just call **888-893-8952** and ask to talk to one of our Automated Marketing Programs staff. That person will explain the program in more detail and determine if the program is right for your school.

If you decide to go forward with any of these programs, you should know that – just like with all of our services – they are covered by the **Martial Arts Marketing Network TRIPLE GUARANTEE**.

- **Guarantee #1: 90-day pay nothing if you aren't thrilled**

You can use the Digital Enrollment Director for 90 days and, if you are not thrilled, we'll give you a 100% refund. The truth is that, if our services aren't working for you, we really don't want your money.

- **Guarantee #2: Cancel anytime with no penalties**

The Digital Enrollment Director has no long term contract. Therefore, you can cancel at any time and the monthly charges will stop that month. You are never "locked in" to any long-term commitment.

- **Guarantee #3: No risk / unconditional**

There is NO fine print. You are either happy with the Digital Enrollment Director during the first 90 days or you get your money back - PERIOD. Then, from 90 days to forever, you can cancel at any time with no penalties.

Bottom line, we're taking all of the risk. You have a lot to gain (access to a non-face-to-face marketing program that actually produces a return on investment) and nothing to lose!

Conclusion

I hope this report opened your eyes to the untold reasons why most advertising doesn't work for martial arts.

Certainly, if you have any questions after reading this report, I encourage you to give us a call.

Thanks for taking the time to read this rather lengthy report. Again, I hope you gained some real benefit from it.

Allen Oelschlaeger
Co-Founder, Martial Arts Marketing Network

P.S. Once again, if you are interested in learn more about our Automated Marketing Programs, please call our Customer Support Center (10 AM to 9 PM CST Monday through Friday; 10 AM to 3 PM Saturday) at **888-893-8952**