

Toot Your Own Horn

Just recently I was thinking about all the things that go on at our schools. I thought to myself that there isn't a person in the world who couldn't benefit from all we do. I also thought to myself that if this is the case, either we are the world's best kept secret or people really don't know the power they have at their fingertips. While I was writing this, I thought "Will people think this is bragging?" Then I realized that our students and the families in our schools know us and realize that we are sincere about what we do: how could anyone think that? So I decided to write this. Considering all that I do and all the times people have said to me that I have changed their lives. I thought maybe it was time to talk about it. I know it sounds as if I am tooting my own horn: some may even say I am cocky or bragging, but to be honest, sometimes things appear to be obvious but in reality they are not. I believe that all school owners should take the time to educate their students and the parents on the reasons why the Martial Arts is so special, but most importantly why *you* are.

Here are a few things I wrote and sent to my students: this example may help you.

Did you know?

Did you know that we have promoted hundreds of Black Belts in the last 15 years?

Did you know that this November 9th will be our 18-year anniversary?

Did you know that Jared, one of our Black Belts, started training with me 16 years ago at the age of three and just left for college this year?

Did you know that we have 100 active training Black Belts and that some of them started as young as three years old?

Did you know that most of the Black Belts you see teaching started as children or young adults in our program and that it takes a minimum of five to six years to acquire a Black Belt in my school?

Did you know that all of our Black Belt instructors and all of our under Black Belt instructors have gone through our rigorous 10 - week Instructor Training Program?

Did you know that Sensei Frank Olmeda is a fourth-degree Black Belt and holds the title of Renshi and has been training for over 17 years with Kyoshi Allie?

You get the point, right? The goal here is to educate the students and parents about the important things going on within our schools. If you don't let them know, then how will they find out? Not all of them have the time or desire to become investigative reporters and researchers. Simply put, they only know what you tell them. You can also use this method to pre-frame your clients for special events and seminars. This is a good subtle way to market future events, create a culture within your school and build excitement.

Here is an example of how you can do this:

Many activities go on in our school and sometimes even I am amazed. In the last 14 months we have had some of the top Ultimate Fighting Champions - UFC, Pride, and Fightzone champions - teaching at our headquarters school in West Islip, N.Y.

To name a few, we have had the privilege of training with Frank Shamrock, Dan Severn (twice), Rigan Machado, Bart Vale, Cung Le (twice) and as if that wasn't enough we also had other world famous instructors such as Sensei Okada from Japan, Ian Thomas of the United Kingdom, Randy Weekley from Colorado and from Long Island we had Soke John Olshlager, Shihan Andy Stigliano, Renshi John Busto and Sensei John Broncato. Wow ... all right at our school! Can you imagine? My good friend John Olshlager has said "to touch the hands of a master will change your life forever. My students are the luckiest in the world.

You may then go on to reinforce what your school represents by stating facts and reinforcing your goal. This is how I wrote about my schools:

Fact:

L.I. Ninjutsu Centers International is the largest Ninjutsu School in the world. L.I. Ninjutsu Centers has had schools in Costa Rica, Bermuda (still), Michigan, Puerto Rico, Brewster N.Y. Kyoshi Allie has been training in the martial arts for 40 years (as of 2008), starting at the age of three. L.I. Ninjutsu Centers is one of the largest martial arts organizations in the world. We are still one of the only classical Ninja Schools in the world with over 1000 students.

Goal: Our goal is to help all of our students achieve what they desire in life. To say the least life-skill that is matched by no other activity. I have seen the results firsthand and know that what we teach enables people to "gain the power to change their lives forever."

The more you communicate with your clients the better it is for both you and them. Believe it or not, there are so many things that they do not know about you and will ever know unless you tell them. Heck, half of them don't even know how hard your task is and how many hours you work. If they did, many would treat you differently. There is nothing wrong with educating them. Education

is the key to success – a more educated client is a better client. In our schools we teach “in order to get respect you have to give respect.” Many parents may be respected in their particular fields of business, but they may not realize how hard you have worked to become who you are. They may see you as a fighting machine or a part of the killer elite. They may not see you as an expert in child development or a specialist in physical fitness. The more you educate your clients and establish yourself as a professional and an expert, the better you are understood. The goal is to continually talk about what you do and how well you do it. You should also take time to talk about your staff, telling the students and their parents how skilled they are or possibly about how they have become who they are, what training they went through, etc.

The ultimate goal is to build your credibility and create a desire in people to want to be with you. It all boils down to marketing. If you don't market you will remain the world's best kept secret. It is your duty to continually educate parents, students and clients alike on the many benefits your school has to offer. So I say don't be embarrassed “Toot your own horn.” *Beep, beep ...*

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