

A Report on How Instructors Approach New Members

By Gwyn Brown
(1st Dan, Tauranga Branch)

Phone: 025-587-871
Address: PO Box 10126
Mt Maunganui
Email: ifyournice@hotmail.com or gwyn@nanny.co.nz

Notes

The discussions and recommendations of this report are based on the replies received from the request for information sent to instructors whose email addresses appear on the ITFNZ website. A copy of the request letter can be found in the attachments section along with all information received from instructors. The resulting recommendations made are based entirely on the replies received.

Acknowledgements

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Report summary

This report shows that there is a large variation on the information handed out to potential club members including handouts relating to costs, requirements, rules and general information on TaeKwon-Do (referred to as TKD for convenience sake from here on), both written and orally. There is also a need for assistance to be given to instructors related to fundraising and an updated student handbook showing basic TKD moves, positions, stances and actions should be produced.

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Introduction

This survey was carried out as part of the requirements for grading to a Second Dan Black Belt with ITFNZ.

The objectives of the survey were:

- To find out what information instructors hand out to potential members
- To see if a standard booklet or brochure could be produced for handing out to potential members
- To provide information to instructors on what other instructors are doing in different regions that they might find useful
- To find out what fundraising ideas instructors have tried and to see if they could be used at the Tauranga club where I train.
- To produce a report that will be part of my 2nd Dan TKD grading

Method

A request was sent to Mr McPhail asking if the Foundation issued a standard booklet to instructors for distribution to potential club members explaining what TaeKwon-Do is, what we do, it's history, how to join etc

He explained that while there was no booklet given out, there was a brochure that could be handed out as well as what each instructor wanted to give out.

A request was again sent to Mr McPhail asking to use the email addresses listed on the ITFNZ Website for the purpose of surveying Instructors on what they hand out to potential new members.

37 Instructors were asked by email to provide a brief summary of how they approached new members wanting to join their club and what information, if any, they handed out to them (See Attachments section for a copy of the request).

9 instructors chose to reply and sent copies of the information handed out to new members and also supplied details of how they approached members wanting to join their classes.

Results

The amount of information given out to new members varied greatly from club to club. The following is a summary of the information different instructors give out and the different areas covered.

Lesson structure

Some clubs have a definite structure to their first lessons. They not only give out comprehensive information about TKD (see written material section, pg 7), but they ensure a clearly defined format for the beginners is established in the first lesson by handing out written material on their first grading requirements (see attachments section). This ensures that beginners are taught all the basics and are properly prepared for their first grading. Which in turn forms a pattern of consistency so that beginners know what they have to do to grade, as well as allowing different instructors or seniors to step in and continue with minimal class disruption. The student is handed an information sheet covering the first basic stances and moves, which is taken out of the condensed encyclopedia, along with the theory they need to know. This information is basically what is already in the TKD student handbook, but it also includes diagrams on stances, how to perform kicks, blocks and their positions, and punching.

Fees

Every club offered free lessons to beginners, ranging from 2 weeks of free classes to 2 month's worth. One club did not start charging students until they had purchased a Do-Bok. There was also a great difference in the amount of fees each club charges. Fees ranged from \$18 per month to \$35 for adults, irrespective of where the club was, ie It was expected to see the larger cities charging more than the smaller rural clubs, but this was not the case. Students were cheaper and one club also discounted for senior citizens. Each instructor is responsible for setting their own fees, some charged a joining fee which varied from \$20 to \$50 however most were free to join. There were also fees with some clubs for the training manual while others gave it out as part of the joining fee. Every club also discounted for families and while the level of discounting varied between the clubs, all acknowledged that with more than 2 students per family, TKD could be expensive.

One club organized automatic payments to be set up so they would not have the hassle of collecting money while another club charged extra fees for late payments

Instructors felt it was important that students should not be turned away because of financial difficulties. One club helped members with their fees, allowing larger families time to pay their fees and they also discounted more based on each family's situation. One club also went as far as to ask students to pay per semester or to pay per year up front, an option that included heavy discounting.

Written material

Some clubs give out a large volume of material on TKD in general, as well as information on their club, such as fees (see above), Do Bok prices, club rules, FAQ's (frequently asked questions) and what to expect as a beginner. On all of the material handed out there was a copy of the clubs badge and one club went to the trouble of explaining it's meaning, when it was created, and who designed it. One club covered all of this information by supplying a FAQ section with their club information which also included some personal information about the clubs instructor, where he lived, his phone number, and also made a point of explaining how young he still was. Other clubs offered information on the history of TKD both in New Zealand and Korea. There was also information on gradings, camps, seminars, and combined training's.

Other instructors felt it unnecessary to hand out more than the TKD colour brochure, but they also sighted it as being out of date and in need of an overhaul.

Fundraising

Some of the instructors who sent material included some information on fundraising, some of their ideas that have worked and the ones that did not. Ideas that have worked in one area have not worked in another, although there was not enough response to find a definite reason for this. I have included the following ideas that have been tried by different instructors and also some of the ideas they and the Tauranga club intend trying at some future date.

- Public demonstrations
- Mail drops
- Local television adds
- Newspaper adverts
- Free Newspaper Editorials
- Posters
- Warehouse sausage sizzle
- Pizza selling
- Chocolate selling
- Raffles
- School paper advert
- Offering free lessons at schools combined with demos
- Attempting world record for dismantling a house by hand and foot (safely!)
- Woman's self defense classes
- Car stickers
- T-shirts and other clothing with local club information
- Woman's refuge (leaving posters and offering free classes for confidence)
- Contacting large employers and offering discount weekend self defense courses (eg Warehouse)
- Exchanging self-defense courses for First Aid courses with St Johns etc or any other organization, restaurants, hotels etc for services that can be raffled off as prizes.
- Website
- Radio talkback
- Guest instructors from other codes (helps to make things interesting and fun at club)
- Organizing outings and putting up signs for the public to see and read

Results discussion

There seems to be no set standard of information given out to new members. Most clubs gave out some form of information, either the TKD pamphlet or something of their own design, but the amount as well as the quality of information given varied greatly. Some clubs gave nothing out but instead spent a lot of time talking to new members.

The national brochure that some clubs give out contains excellent information on what TKD is and the benefits resulting from using TKD, not only physically but also mentally, and in particular the philosophy of TKD. But it contains no room for each club to include information about itself. It would be prohibitively expensive to include this in a published form as club details change from time to time, but there could be some provision for instructors to hand write their phone number, training nights, costs etc. This would result in a cost saving to some clubs that produce their own material who could then give out the brochure only, should they choose to do so. The savings could possibly be used for purchasing training aids or sponsoring club members etc.

Speaking to potential members, especially the Mums and Dads of these new members is crucial, and all the instructors that replied to this survey made a point of emphasizing this. They recognise that this is probably the single most important part of a new members first training session.

Instructors can become stale if they spend all their time at one level of TKD. Handing out information to beginners on their requirements for grading to yellow belt or yellow stripe helps to ensure a consistency amongst different instructors. This helps so that when needed, instructors or senior belts can be rotated which is particularly important with larger clubs. No instructor would enjoy teaching only at the beginners level, so for those clubs that are able to rotate assistant instructors or seniors this is a good idea.

Each club charged different fee rates with some covering every scenario from senior citizens to families of 5. Several clubs notified their members that they were a non profit organization and the instructor received no commission. This lets them know that the fees raised were used to pay for training gear, hall hireage costs, and to assist club members with sponsorship for travelling to gradings, attending courses and in the case of the black belts, grading fees.

Obviously the larger the club, the more money that is available for these things.

Fundraising is something that any club can do, and all the clubs and instructors that I contacted did some form of fundraising. In the results section under the subtitle of fundraising there is a list of ideas that have been tried or could be tried by any club. This kind of activity should be encouraged not only as a source of revenue for the club but because it brings club members and their families together out of club time and helps to build and strengthen relationships. Organizing a Warehouse sausage

sizzle is easy, all it takes is a few volunteers in the weekend or even during the week to give some of their time. Most parents are only too keen to get involved with their children's activities and this is great for making the club members feel like they are one big family.

Recommendations

- 1 There is room on the brochure for space to be made available to instructors to fill in their own information to include training session times, costs etc. The cost, feasibility and implications of doing this should be looked at
- 2 A course conducted by the marketing committee for instructors to attend on ways to increase their club membership could be held for little expense in the same way the judges and referees seminars are held. Those instructors that wanted to attend would then gain some valuable knowledge from this. The marketing committee would also have the opportunity to speak with each instructor and gain knowledge with what is happening in each area. This could help focus the committee's overall strategy. A number of instructors commented in their replies to me that they found it hard to get new members along and they felt they had exhausted all avenues. There is clearly a need for marketing help to be given and the costs, procedures and means of providing assistance in this area should also be looked at. It could include topics covering advertising, both paid and unpaid, how to obtain free advertising, and what other instructors have tried and have found to work. This will also encourage the sharing of information among instructors.
- 3 One of the clubs handed out quite valuable information aimed at the beginner student covering stances, blocks and punching techniques, and how to perform some of the kicks. This is usually only available to members with access to the condensed version of the TKD encyclopedia, a book now selling for \$200 approximately and really only brought by practitioners that become serious with their TKD. Having written material on these techniques helps and encourages beginners to practice at home, reinforcing what has been taught in class and keeping the students interest at a high level. They are able to quickly refer to their handout on how a front kick is performed and the attacking area it is used for. There is currently nothing available to beginners in a cheaper version than the encyclopedia. A standard booklet that can be made available showing these basic techniques would be of real value to beginners and also perhaps younger students up to the green blue-stripe level. This would allow them to have reference material available at home covering things that most instructors try to teach in class, allowing the student to practice the technique correctly.

Attachments

Dear Instructor,

I am carrying out a survey of the information given out to prospective members that are interested in joining TKD around NZ for my 2nd Dan thesis.

I would appreciate it very much if you could email me any on line copies or scanned pamphlets that you give out to new members informing them about your club, training hours, and /or perhaps general information on TKD.

Otherwise just a few lines about how you approach new students and a brief summary of the information given to them.

If you do not give out any information in a written form I would like to know that as well, in fact anything you can tell me about how you go about enrolling a new student would be of great help.

Yours in TaeKwon-Do

Gwyn Brown
(Tauranga)