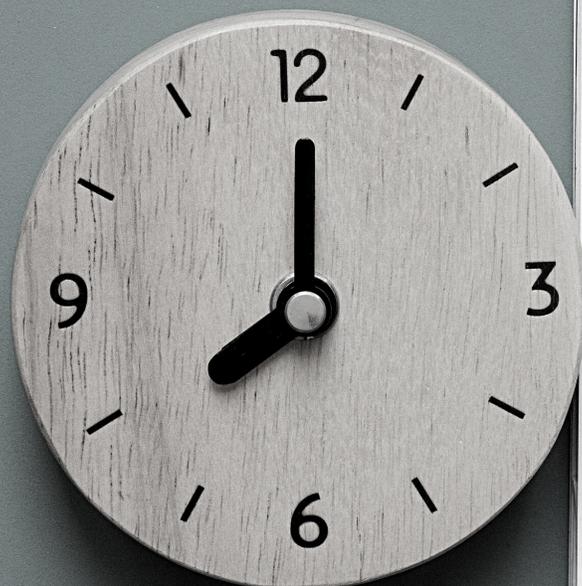


# EVENT STARTER KIT



No matter what time of year it is when you're reading this, it's never too late to get your events calendar going and your event planning underway.

Start with these 5 steps to create events that grow your business each and every time.

## STEP 1

## CREATE AN EVENTS CALENDAR

First, make note of all the major federal U.S. holidays and celebration observances. See below for a list. Most calendars reference these holidays.

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Third Monday in January)
- St. Valentine's Day (February 14)
- President's Day (Third Monday in February)
- St. Patrick's Day (March 17)
- Easter (Varies year to year — typically a Sunday in March or April)
- Mother's Day (Typically the second Sunday in May)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)
- Father's Day (Typically the third Sunday in June)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Halloween (October 31)
- Veteran's Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday in November)
- Hanukkah (Varies year to year — 8-day holiday that typically starts in December)
- Christmas Day (December 25)
- Kwanzaa (December 26 – January 1)



Determine which calendar holidays make sense for your business. Even if you do not host an event for St. Patty's Day or Halloween, it's important to reference all holidays on your calendar, so that you are aware of each and can avoid scheduling conflicts.

### ▶ **Check your local school district's calendar**

If you provide martial arts programs and curriculum for children, review your local school district's calendar to incorporate teacher in-service days and seasonal breaks — times when the majority of prospective students within your community will have off from school. Your local school district's calendar will also provide ideas and opportunities for you to partner with the district through picnics, dances, and other community activities.

### ▶ **Check local online news sites**

Online news sites usually contain event listings — additional occasions where you can team up with local businesses, charitable organizations, and your local school district.

### ▶ **Beyond the standard calendar ...**

Not all events need to center around a calendar holiday or theme. In fact, most martial arts schools realize huge success by creating their own.

For instance, buddy days and buddy weeks are an extremely popular and effective way to generate a constant flow of new enrollments.

Consider pairing your buddy events and other themes with no-school days. For example, many schools close the third Monday in January for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This day may be an opportune time to host a buddy day given that parents will be looking for activities for their children.

NationalDayCalendar.com tracks nearly 1,500 national days, national weeks, and national months. Check out their Calendar at a Glance. You might just find a holiday or two you want to recognize at your school or gym like "National Superhero Day" on April 28th, "American Heart Month" in February, and "National Bullying Prevention Month" in October.



## STEP 2 ESTABLISH YOUR EVENT AGENDA & LENGTH

Layout a list of activities that will take place during your event. For instance, if you are hosting a birthday party, you may decide to run an hour-long martial arts class, then break for pizza, cake, and gifts which take up another hour.

Setting event times and establishing specific activities help you determine staff and event material needs, as well as details to promote to your prospective registrants.

## STEP 3 DETERMINE YOUR MARKET & MESSAGE

Remember your market and what resonates with them. Going back to the birthday party example, most parents are extremely busy and looking for a unique and memorable way to celebrate their child's birthday. A key selling point to your audience may be offering to take care of all the details for them — decorations, cake/pizza ordering, and invitations. Remember to include these key selling points in your marketing materials.

## STEP 4 SET YOUR EVENT FEE (OR KEEP IT FREE OF CHARGE)

Many martial arts businesses choose to keep their events free to maximize participation. The choice is up to you. Your best bet is to determine your overall event objective and tally up the expenses incurred to guide your decision on whether or not to charge.

Let's take a look at buddy days as an example. Creating a fun, positive event for your students and introducing non-students to your school (your students' friends) is usually the end goal of buddy events. In this case, keeping the event free of charge will increase your event turnout, and the new student enrollments you gain as a result, will in most cases make up for the time and expense invested into the event planning and promotion.

On the other hand, larger events such as tournaments and camps usually warrant charging a fee. The time and expenses incurred to coordinate and promote are greater, as is the opportunity to drive a significant amount of incremental revenue through registrant volume and merchandise sales.

## STEP 5 CREATE YOUR MARKETING MATERIALS & GET MARKETING!

After you've determined your event themes, dates, and price points, it's time to get the word out.

Due to its time-sensitive nature, event marketing is most effective when done online. There are many benefits to taking your event registration and promotion process online.

First and foremost, online registration and marketing typically increases event turnout. Registrants can easily spread the word to their friends by forwarding an event link, and can register and pay for the event at their convenience online.

Online event registration tools also make management easier on you, the event administrator, by eliminating time-consuming data entry and fee collection.

Online event registration tools, such as our Event Manager software, also make it extremely easy to build a custom online event form with a unique link. Think of the link as the foundational piece of your marketing. Once that link is created, you can post it in multiple places — on your website, in emails, on social media, on community event boards, in digital ads.

Remember that repetition is key in event marketing. Don't give up on spreading the word. The more communication channels used, the better your event registrations. Be continual and consistent in your messaging through your website, in email, and on social media — particularly as the event date nears.

Also, don't underestimate the power of paper flyers. Though we live in a digital world, a paper flyer is a good supplement to online marketing. Post flyers at your school. Give flyers to instructors to pass out at class. Ask parents to distribute flyers at their workplace. Provide flyers to local businesses to give to customers.

## INCENTIVES FOR EVENT SIGN-UPS

It's natural for people to wait to act until urged to do so. We recommend enhancing your event marketing by adding extra incentives and deadlines. Here are four ideas for consideration:

## ▶ 1. Special payment plans

If you're charging a fee of \$99 or more, consider offering a payment plan for your registrants. Payment schedules add convenience and reduce financial strain for prospective participants.

## ▶ 2. Pricing discounts for multiple registrations

Adding a 2-for-1 promotion, or "buy one, get the second 50% off" adds value and encourages multiple registrations. Consider a special sibling and/or friend promotion. Tie the discount to an expiration date to create urgency.



## ▶ 3. Added bonus for early sign-up

You'll see most events offer an early bird price break for those that register by a certain date. This is an effective tactic used to get people to take action early on, rather than waiting to register days before the event. As an alternative, you could provide a tangible gift — such as a T-shirt — to those that register by a specific date. Either way, an incentive tied to a deadline is almost guaranteed to give you a nice spike in event registrations.

## ▶ 4. Set a capacity and promote limited availability

Put a limit on the number of spots available at your event to get people to take action right away. Rather than waiting, prospective registrants are more likely to register since there's a good chance they could miss out on the opportunity if they stall. Advertise how many spots are left as the event date draws near by posting about it on social media and sending email communications to past participants, leads, and members.

# EVENT INSPIRATION



## 3 Tips for Creating a Fun & Effective Member Appreciation Event

Ways to make your member appreciation moments memorable and increase member loyalty.



## Anti-Bullying Education & Martial Arts: Ideas & Activities for National Bullying Prevention Month & Beyond

A list of anti-bullying resources to incorporate into your martial arts lesson planning and bullying prevention events.



## 14 Fall Event Ideas for September & October

Outside-of-the-box autumn-themed event ideas for martial arts schools, gyms, community groups, and organizations.



## 8 Fun & Easy Holiday Event Ideas

Bring your community together with these classic and novel event ideas.

# SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS with Event Registration Software



**MORE**  
Sign-Ups

**STRONGER**  
Relationships

**BIGGER**  
Growth

Events are a sure way to bring in new leads and supplemental income for your business. Set yourself up for success with feature-packed event registration software. Built-in tools include:

- Mobile-Friendly, Customizable Forms
- Secure Online Payment Functionality
- Conditional Form Logic
- Waitlisting
- Group & Family Registration
- Digital Waivers & eSignature
- Marketing & Automation
- Flexible Pricing Functionality
- Website Integration
- Real-Time Reports

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