SUMMIT 9

REVENUE ACCELERATOR

FREE GUIDE FOR ACADEMY OWNERS

5 MISTAKES THAT KEEP YOUR MATS EMPTY

And the simple fixes that turn quiet months into predictable enrolment, whatever style you teach.

Karate · BJJ · Taekwondo · Kickboxing · MMA · Judo · and more

Edition 1

BEFORE YOU START

GREAT TEACHING IS NOT THE SAME AS A FULL MAT

Most academies we speak to do not have a coaching problem. They have a visibility and follow-up problem. The training is excellent. The growth is unpredictable.

One month the classes are full, the next they are not. Referrals slow down. Social media becomes a second job. This guide covers the five mistakes that cause that rollercoaster, why each one happens, and what to do about it. Every fix can be started this week.

---

1 **RELYING ON REFERRALS ALONE**
Growth that only happens when someone else decides to talk about you

2 **DISCOUNTING TO FILL CLASSES**
Short-term sign-ups that cost you long-term value

3 **HAVING NO FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM**
Enquiries that go quiet because nobody chased them

4 **NOT TRACKING THE NUMBERS**
Making growth decisions on gut feel

5 **DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF**
Marketing squeezed in around coaching, admin and life

How to use this guide. Read one mistake at a time. Each has a short self-check, a practical fix and, where helpful, a worked example. At the back is a ten-question scorecard so you can see where your academy stands today.

1 RELYING ON REFERRALS ALONE

Word of mouth is the best kind of growth. It is just not a plan.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Referrals feel free, trustworthy and effortless, so it is natural to lean on them. But you cannot control when they arrive. A holiday, a school term change or a few lost members can leave you waiting for something you cannot schedule.

The risk is not that referrals are bad. It is that they are the only thing between you and an empty mat.

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- Can you predict next month's new sign-ups?
- Do most new members say "a friend told me"?
- Do slow months leave you worried about rent?

Two or more "yes" answers usually point to an over-dependence on referrals.

THE FIX: ADD A SECOND ENGINE

Keep referrals, and build a reliable source of new enquiries next to them. Think of it as two engines: one you do not control, one you do.

BE FINDABLE	A clear Google listing and a simple page that answers: what do you teach, who for, where, and how do I try a class?
BE SPECIFIC	Speak to one group at a time: parents of young children, teenagers, adult beginners, returning students.
BE CONSISTENT	Keep a steady presence every month, not only when classes are quiet. Stopping and starting resets your progress.
MAKE IT EASY	One obvious next step on every page and post: book a trial class.

THIS WEEK

- Write down where your last ten new members really came from. Ask them if you are not sure.
- Check that your Google listing and website show the same address, hours and way to book.
- Pick one audience you would like more of, and write one sentence that speaks only to them.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT

Our first step with any academy is strategy, not ads. We tailor a plan to your schedule, your hours, your audience and your location before anything goes live.

2 DISCOUNTING TO FILL CLASSES

A deal can fill a class this month and cost you value for years.

WHY IT HAPPENS

When classes feel quiet, a discount is the fastest lever to pull. It works in the sense that people respond. But it often attracts those who were mainly after the price, and it teaches everyone else that waiting is rewarded.

It also hides the real question. If people are not signing up at full price, the issue is usually clarity, trust or follow-up, not the number on the invoice.

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- Do you run a promotion most quarters?
- Do discounted joiners leave sooner than others?
- Do prospects ask "is there a deal?" before anything else?

WHAT A STUDENT IS REALLY WORTH

Judge every offer by lifetime value (LTV), not the first payment. The formula is simple:

MONTHLY FEE	MONTHS RETAINED	VALUE PER STUDENT
$100	× 12	$1,200

Illustrative figures. Use your own average fee and retention.

If a discount shortens the average stay by even two months, that student is worth $200 less than before. Keeping one more month of retention is often worth more than any promotion.

BETTER THAN A DISCOUNT

- Offer an easy, low-pressure first step: a free or low-cost trial class, with the full price clear afterwards.
- Add value instead of cutting price: a starter pack, a free introductory session or a first-grading goal.
- Show proof: real student results, short coach introductions and honest reviews.
- If you do run a promotion, give it an end date and a reason, and measure how long those members stay.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT

We build growth without discounts or gimmicks. The aim is the right students, at the right price, who stay.

3 HAVING NO FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

Most "lost" enquiries were never really lost. They were never followed up.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Someone fills in a form at 9pm. You are teaching, then locking up, then it is the weekend. By Monday they have tried somewhere else, or simply forgotten. Nobody was careless. There was just no system.

Interest cools quickly. The academy that replies first, and keeps in touch politely, usually wins the trial class.

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- Is there one named person responsible for enquiries?
- Do people who go quiet get a second message?
- Do trial students hear from you after their first class?

A SIMPLE FOLLOW-UP SEQUENCE

You can run this with nothing more than a notes app and a calendar reminder.

WITHIN HOURS	A friendly reply: thank them, answer their question, suggest two class times.
NEXT DAY	If no answer, a short check-in with an easy way to book.
DAY BEFORE	Reminder with parking, what to wear and who will greet them.
AFTER TRIAL	Same-day message, then a conversation about joining. Ask for the sign-up kindly.
WEEK LATER	One last gentle nudge to anyone who did not join.

MAKE IT STICK

- Write your standard replies once, then reuse them. Consistency beats cleverness.
- Give every enquiry a status: new, contacted, trial booked, trial done, joined, not now.
- Ask every trial student about their goal, and mention it when you follow up. It shows you listened.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT

Our focus does not stop at the enquiry. We turn the planning into an executed strategy, with first enquiries typically arriving within 24 to 72 hours, and help smooth the path from enquiry to trial to enrolment.

4 NOT TRACKING THE NUMBERS

If you cannot see the funnel, you cannot fix the leak.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Coaches go into martial arts for the art, not the spreadsheet. So growth decisions get made on feel: "it seems quieter lately." But feel cannot tell you whether the problem is too few enquiries, too few trials, or too few joiners. Five numbers, checked monthly, are enough.

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- Do you know what one new member costs you to win?
- Do you know your average retention in months?

THE FIVE NUMBERS

NUMBER	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Enquiries	Is enough interest coming in?
Trials attended	Are enquiries turning up?
Trial to member	Is the first class converting?
Cost per new member	What does growth really cost?
Average retention	How long does a student stay?

A worked example (illustrative numbers only)

SPEND	ENQUIRIES	TRIALS ATTENDED	NEW MEMBERS	COST PER MEMBER
$600	30	8	5	$120

With a student worth $1,200 over their stay, spending $120 to win one is a healthy return. The numbers also show which stage to improve next: more enquiries, better trial attendance or stronger sign-up conversations.

START SIMPLY

- One page, one row per month, five columns. Fill it in on the first of each month, and set one target for the next.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT

Targets first. We align with your own personal goals, then monitor intake, performance, spend and capacity, so your new students get a consistent quality of class and the mats stay full.

5 DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF

You are the best coach in the building. That does not make you the best use of your time for marketing.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Most academy owners are coach, cleaner, accountant, receptionist and marketer. Marketing is usually squeezed into the gaps, so it happens in bursts and stops when life gets busy. Then the bursts and the stops become the growth pattern.

The cost is not only enquiries. It is your energy, which belongs on the mat and with your students.

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- Is marketing the first thing to slip in a busy week?
- Do you post only when you remember to?
- Are you reluctant to take a break in case classes drop?

WHERE YOUR HOURS SHOULD GO

List everything you do in a week and sort each task into one of three groups:

ONLY ME	Coaching, grading, building relationships with students and families.
COULD BE A SYSTEM	Replies, reminders, booking, reporting. Write it down once and automate it.
COULD BE SOMEONE ELSE	Design, campaigns, ad management, optimisation. Hand it to a specialist.

The goal is not to do less. It is to spend your best hours where only you can add value.

DELEGATING WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL

- Keep the final say. Approve anything before it goes out.
- Define success in numbers: new students per month, not "more activity".
- Start with one task, prove it works, then add the next.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT

The model is simple: we think, we build, we launch, you teach. You confirm everything before a single person sees it. If it is not right, it does not fly.

SELF-AUDIT

YOUR ACADEMY SCORECARD

Tick every statement that is true for your academy today. Be honest. No one else will see it.

01	We have at least one dependable source of new enquiries besides referrals.	☐
02	I can say where each of my last ten new members came from.	☐
03	We have not run a discount in the last six months to fill classes.	☐
04	I know my average student value (monthly fee × months retained).	☐
05	Every enquiry gets a personal reply the same day.	☐
06	People who go quiet receive at least one polite follow-up.	☐
07	Trial students hear from us after their first class.	☐
08	I review enquiries, trials and new members at least monthly.	☐
09	I know what it costs us to win one new member.	☐
10	Marketing continues steadily, even when I am busy or away.	☐

0 TO 3 TICKS

Plenty of upside. Pick the two lowest-scoring areas and fix those first. Small changes will make a visible difference.

4 TO 7 TICKS

A solid base with leaks. Your biggest gains are likely in follow-up and tracking.

8 TO 10 TICKS

A strong foundation. The next step is consistency and scale: more enquiries, same quality.

WHAT NEXT

EARN THE INCOME YOUR ACADEMY DESERVES

Fixing even one of these five areas can change how steady your enrolment feels. Fixing all five is a system, and building systems is what we do.

STEP 01

WE THINK

A strategy tailored to your schedule, hours, audience and location.

STEP 02

WE BUILD

Your assets designed, scheduled and tailored. You confirm everything first.

STEP 03

WE LAUNCH

Planning becomes an executed strategy, with first enquiries often within 24 to 72 hours.

STEP 04

YOU TEACH

We monitor intake, spend and capacity so the mats stay full and quality stays high.

Whether you want a few more students on the mat, or you are ready to make your academy your primary income, the first step is the same: a quick, informal 15-minute conversation about your academy, you and your goals.

We are honest about fit. If we are not 100% confident we can help you build a thriving business, we will not offer to work with you.

LET'S TALK SHOP

Pick a time that suits your schedule. No pressure and no hard sell.

CALENDLY.COM/THESUMMITPROJECT/FREE-ACADEMY-GROWTH-ANALYSIS

Email partnership@summit9.net · Phone [phone number] · [website address]

© 2026 Summit 9. All rights reserved. Worked examples are illustrative.