

The Cape Fear Martial Arts - Management System

Background

Grandmaster Janicki has practiced and taught martial arts for over 30 years. Two months ago he decided to sell his business, the Cape Fear Martial Arts, and retire with his wife to Tennessee so that he could spend more time enjoying life and pursuing one of his other passions—golf. Before leaving for a warmer climate, Grandmaster Janicki sold the Cape Fear Martial Arts to two of his black belt instructors, George and Judith.

Currently, the Cape Fear Martial Arts has 35 students of various ranks, ranging from white belts (beginners) to advanced black belts. Each student pays to take a specific number of adult or children classes per week and then can attend any of the classes that are scheduled Monday through Saturday. Classes are led by a black belt instructor and are 60 minutes long. Based upon an individual's progress, a student can schedule a day and time to test for their next higher rank or belt after filling out a testing form, paying a testing fee, and getting permission from one of the black belt instructors. Kids' classes are for children ages six to 12, while adult classes include people from all walks of life who are 13 years of age or older. The student base is primarily male with about 30 percent females.

Each student signs a contract that also includes personal information such as name, address, phone number, birth date, etc. The contract also includes a liability waiver. This information is kept in a file folder in a filing cabinet next to the main desk near the front entrance way.

As mentioned, students prepay in advance for a specific number of classes a week. Discounts are given for the number of classes a student signs up for a week and the number of months.

<i>Number of Classes a Week</i>	<i>Number of Months</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1	3	\$120
2		\$240
3		\$360
1	6	\$228
2		\$432
3		\$612

The system is paper-based and simple. Each student has a 3x6 inch class card that is kept alphabetically by last name in a file box. When attending a class, a student will take their card from the file box and place it in a tray near the entrance of the dojo or workout area. After each class, one of the black belt instructors takes all of the cards from the tray and writes their initials in a blank space that corresponds to the date the student took a particular class. If a student completes eight classes, the instructor will circle their

belts begins with white belt and then progresses through orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, and black ranks.

Running the Business

Just about everyone who enrolls at the Cape Fear Martial Arts aspires to become a black belt. However, this journey requires a great deal of personal commitment, dedication, and hard work. Although many black belts received their rank within four or five years, the amount of time invested is no guarantee anyone will receive this advanced rank. In fact, perhaps one out of 100 students who enroll at the Cape Fear Martial Arts will eventually earn a black belt. George and Judith do not want to compromise the high standards set by Grandmaster Janicki by promoting students who are not ready or who do not deserve to be promoted to the next higher rank. Many of the students and instructors who train together consider themselves to be like a second family.

Since George and Judith took over the Cape Fear Martial Arts, their number one priority has been to stay in business by retaining their current base of students while attracting new students. However, they understand the reality of student turnover. They also realize that much of their competition is not from other martial arts schools, but other outside interests. For example, kids and teenagers tend to drop out because of their involvement in other sports such as soccer, baseball, or swimming. Adults and many teenagers often find difficulty maintaining a regular training schedule because of work, family, school, or other personal commitments and responsibilities. There are two other martial arts schools in the area and one martial arts club at the local university. The classes at the Cape Fear Martial Arts are priced competitively.

The Cape Fear Martial Arts also has a small shop where students can purchase school uniforms and shirts, sparring gear, patches, and, with an instructor's permission, various martial arts weapons. This retail component has been viewed more as a convenience for the students since people have a greater selection and perhaps better pricing from the larger martial arts stores or online retailers.

The Need for a School Management System

George and Judith believe an information system offers an opportunity to help them manage the day-to-day operations more efficiently and effectively. However, their knowledge of technology is limited to using their smart phones, surfing the Web, using email, and keeping up with friends and several of CFMA students on a popular social networking site.

George feels that the CFMA needs to hire someone to build a custom application system, but neither he nor Judith has the knowledge and skills to develop and maintain their own system. On the other hand, Judith has researched several school management software systems designed specifically for martial arts schools. Some of these software packages can be purchased and installed on a workstation, while others are subscription-based and hosted by a third party through the Web.

George and Judith are willing to spend the time, money, and resources for this project only if they believe that CFMA will receive a reasonable return on this investment. Judith has mentioned that she doesn't want to buy a computer system and pay consultants "to just automate the existing file card system." Moreover, George has stated plainly that anything you recommend must pay for itself and provide tangible benefits; otherwise, he will be reluctant to change from its paper-based system.