



JKA/WF Americas 1st Dojo Seminar

Santa Fe, New México

June 13, 2009

Not an Official Minutes Page

In Attendance:

Mr. Nariman Afkhami, President; Mr. Yasuaki Nagatomo, Director of Mountain States Region; Mr. Neeraj Dhawan, Director of Central Region; Central Region; Guyana Region; Mountain States Region; South Atlantic Region; Western Region

*This list represents those who were in attendance at the Dojo Seminar; it is not meant to be a complete list of those who were in attendance at the 3rd annual JKA/WF National Camp and Tournament.

*The thoughts listed in the following document are meant to represent the gist of the meeting.

- Mr. Nagatomo is the Director of the Mountain States Region and the Chief Instructor for JKA New Mexico (Web Page: <http://stancefinder.com/>).
 - Self Presentation: How you present yourself as an individual is a direct representation of who you are as an instructor or as a sempai; it also is a direct representation of your dojo:
 - Business orientation: black belts, when not in a gi, should do their best to always dress in professional attire when at the dojo.
 - Do not wear t-shirts or shorts.
 - Remember, this may be your first impression to a potential student.
 - Always comport yourself in a professional manner and provide a good example.
 - You want to represent your dojo well to outsiders
 - You want to provide a good example to junior students.
 - Senior students, although higher ranking should remain humble.
 - One way to help maintain humility is to have them help clean the dojo (not just a job for beginner students)
 - Implementing Ideas:

- If you wait for just the right time to implement things, you will never implement anything.
- Don't wait, just implement your ideas (however, if you are under a Sensei, check with them before you implement your idea in their dojo).
- Action makes a huge difference!
- Kinder Karate (Web Page: http://stancefinder.com/index_files/Page494.htm)
 - Kinder Karate is a great way to increase membership of future students.
 - Kids are ages 3 to 6 years of age when they begin, so you will have them as full time students when they turn 7.
 - The fee structure makes it easy for families to join.
 - For three months the charge is \$135.
 - Or you can pay by the month at a rate of \$50.
 - There is also a \$25 initiation fee.
 - They will be charged the regular rate once they become actual members.
 - Parents attend with their kids; they will more than likely join your dojo when their kids join.
 - Although the Instructor leads the class, the parents are the ones teaching their own kids.
 - Since the parents have learned the same techniques as their kids (such as Taikyoku Shodan) they will be more likely to join the dojo themselves.
 - This also helps to spread responsibility for class instruction, and saves time in the end.
 - It is not a typical dojo instruction, it should be age appropriate.
 - Class instruction is guided by monthly themes
 - 'Throwing and catching a ball'
 - Each part of the action of throwing a ball is broken down into steps.
 - Breaking it down into steps also helps teach counting to the young kids.
 - Other themes may include: soccer balls, tennis balls, dodge ball
 - Kihon (basics) when taught is kept very simple
 - Age uke, gedan barai
 - Oi zuki, mae geri
 - Kata when taught is kept very simple
 - Taikyoku Shodan
 - Although class is kept simple, kids are taught important lessons:
 - How to see
 - What to see
 - When to see

- Perhaps they have been missing class due to an issue that can be easily resolved with a phone call.
 - Give post cards to students when they first join your dojo.
 - Keep track of birthdays with birthday cards.
 - The sensei can mail notes to students that are doing well in class.
 - Keep track of student's anniversaries with annual anniversary cards.
 - You might include a reminder of upcoming dues ☺ on this card.
 - When students miss class, you might mail them a 'miss you' card.
- A monthly dojo newsletter is a great way to build internal camaraderie (Visit JKA New Mexico's website: http://stancefinder.com/index_files/Page369.htm)
 - Newsletters allow for advertisements of future events.
 - It provides scheduling for when class will be closed.
 - It allows for student recognition.
 - Student of the month.
 - Academic achievement.
 - Easy way to award this type of achievement is writing your student's name in Japanese on their belt gi.
- Job-Lists are a great way to promote responsibility in your students; these are tasks or daily chores that they are assigned to do at home.
 - Parents sign off whenever the student accomplishes their assigned tasks.
 - If they do it for a week they get a belt key chain as a reward (made by cutting up pieces from a belt and attaching it to a key ring).
 - Students are awarded different gifts for different amounts of chores accomplished for the week.
 - Gifts should be modified based on the age of the student.
- Even instructors without the assistance of employees can do things to help promote retention of students:
 - Make packets containing information about your dojo for potential students and parents to take home with them.
 - These packets can be simple enough for students to make.
 - Packets don't have to cost too much money
 - \$2 dollars to make a packet may seem like a lot of money, but think of it more as an investment with a huge return!
 - Many people come back after receiving the packet- more so than if you relied solely on word of mouth.
- In lieu of a packet (or in addition to a packet), a quick sheet of things they need to know is a helpful way of communicating ideas efficiently and effectively.
 - Have them pre-made so you have a ready supply for when you need them.

- Telephone inquiry forms ensure that no matter who answers the phone, they will know what to say and what information to gather from potential students.
- Mr. Nariman Afkhami is the President of the JKA/WF Americas Organization and has 38 (+) years of experience, he is based out of Arizona.
 - Dojos should be run like a business and not a cult.
 - A good manager and bad manager are separated by the process by which they operate.
 - If you have two managers who are both good at the business aspect, but one is unable to relate to people interpersonally, the one who lacks interpersonal skills will eventually lose out.
 - You should look at your students as your customers.
 - If you respect them and they will respect you.
 - You should take the time to find out what they like.
 - You should not focus on their negatives.
 - Discover what they do well and bring this out.
 - You are always attracted to things you are good at.
 - You are motivated to do things you are good at.
 - Remember that the customer is always right, they are your 'bosses'- you have to keep them happy.
 - You should view your assistant instructors and senior students as your employees and partners.
 - If you treat them well, your company will do well.
 - Respect them and they will respect you.
 - You must work as a team.
 - Don't be concerned if your amount of employees or senior students is sparse in the beginning.
 - It takes time to build a company (or a dojo).
 - It takes consistency.
 - You should make the time to meet with your company or dojo as a group.
 - You need open communication.
 - Frequent meetings are best.
 - Monthly meetings are needed to go over issues.
 - Consultants:
 - If you hire a person to be your consultant, you are saying you believe he or she is competent.
 - If you believe they are competent, you should listen to their point of view.
 - Retention of employees or students is key!
 - Once you get a customer, you better keep them!
 - It is much easier to keep a customer than to get a new one.
 - Action

- If you want things to get done you have to be willing to do it yourself, and then do it.
 - There should be no job that you are too good for.
 - If people complain about this, you do not need them on your team.
 - The set up is easy
 - The implementation and follow through is hard
 - Have responsible people on your team to ensure successful implementation and follow through of ideas.
 - Sharing ideas with other organizations can be beneficial, so don't worry about people "stealing" your ideas.
- Excellent Ideas from other students:
 - Mr. DJ (Student of SAKA): There should be a way to have each other's e-mail to help communicate ideas and share resources.
 - Ms. Mahogany (Student of SAKA): Another idea is to have a forum available for people to share information.
 - Passwords (Ms. Tina Hanson)
 - Linked from the JKA/WF Americas website (Ms. Tina Hanson)
 - Different sub-group categories could be available through this forum (DJ).
 - Mr. Boyd Ammons (Student of SAKA) mentioned that all the resources could be changed into a PDF format so that other people can use it (like post-cards, birthday cards mentioned earlier by Ms. Tina Hanson of NM).
 - Mr. Nariman Afkhami (President) mentioned that the above ideas are good, but it is not enough to have ideas, -you have to implement them.