Zylis Marketing

NEW AND IMPROVED FOR 2026

4 Mistakes Keeping Your Martial Arts Gym Under $1 Million a Year

How to build a school that makes you proud, pays you well, and leaves you time to enjoy what you've built.



You've put years into becoming a better instructor. Your school should have the students, reputation, and income to show for it. You should be able to teach a packed class without checking your phone between rounds - and go home without another evening of chasing leads.

So, what if I told you most martial arts gyms don't actually have a lead problem... and they actually have a *follow up* problem.

Sound crazy?

You might be thinking, "Well, if I just got double the amount of leads, I'd get double the amount of new students showing up."

That might be true in theory. But doubling the amount of leads you get isn't the same thing as doubling the amount of new students who *show up*.

So, how do you do that?

Let's look at four ways people find your school: walk-ins and referrals, social media posts, in-person events, and ads. These all work.

Walk-ins and referrals are a great place to start if you just opened your gym. Posting on social media is something every martial arts school should already be doing. In-person events, like putting up a booth at a local community event, work too, but take a lot of time and effort.

Ads, on the other hand, reach people in their homes and on their phones. You can get your school in front of thousands of people without having to meet each one in person.

So, this leads us to...

MISTAKE #1

Not running ads... or running generic ads

First things first, if you're not running ads on Meta or Google, do a *brief* face palm, followed by HUGE jumps of joy.

Because you've been missing out on serious amounts of growth. But you also have the *most* room to grow. So this is actually good news.

I'm not here to convince you that you should be running ads. Martial arts school owners use them every day to get new students. And if you found this guide through one of our ads, the fact that you're reading this is proof they work.

The real question is, *how* successful can they be?

Not running ads? Let's fix that.

You can be a great instructor and still struggle to pay yourself if too few people know your school exists.

Let us install our new and improved enrollment engine so you can build a school that pays you well and gives you time back to do more of what you love.

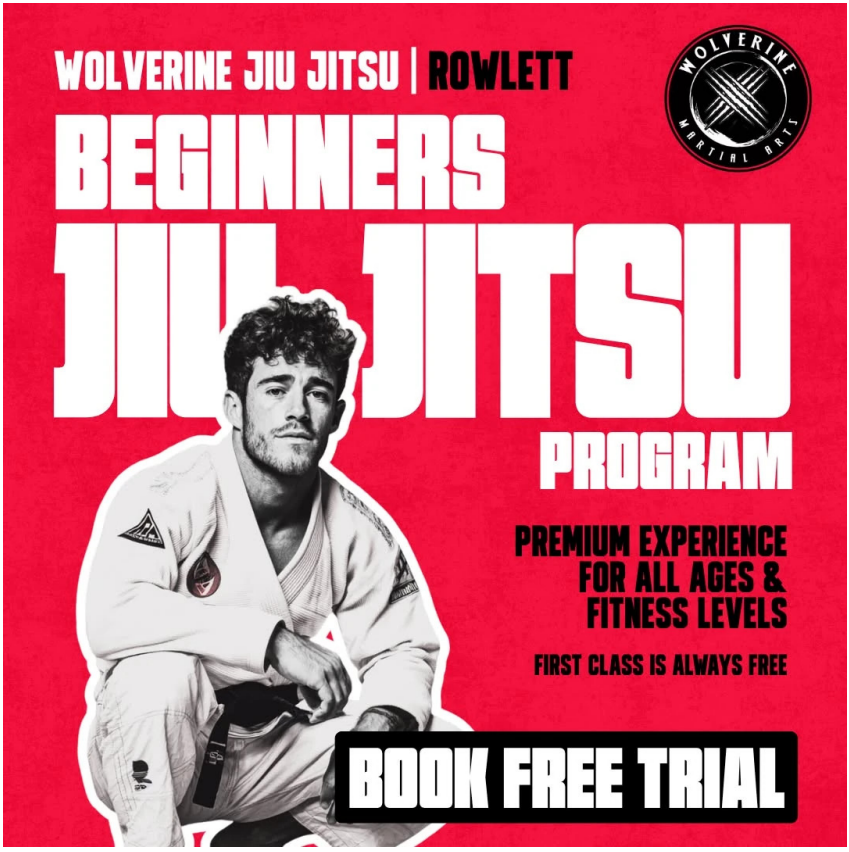
Help me grow my school

Free 30-minute growth review.

Let's take a look.

This is the ad that Wolverine's previous agency was running.

GENERIC AGENCY AD



A beginner program.

- A headline about the class.
- Little sense of who you'll train with.

View full-size ad

OPENING LINES

ROWLETT - The best decision you'll make this year: trying one Jiu Jitsu class.

If you've been curious about Jiu Jitsu - but unsure, intimidated, or worried about getting hurt - this is exactly why our Beginners Program exists.

Our Fundamentals classes are built from the ground up for people who have never done Jiu Jitsu before.

🥋 Structured lessons that teach you step-by-step
💪 Coaches who actually take the time to teach beginners
👊 A community that pushes you forward, not down

And right now, we've made starting easier than ever:

✅ Free first class
✅ Beginner-only program (you start with

other first-timers, not advanced students)

You might think, "Looks *okay* to me." And you're right, it does look "*okay*."

But let me ask you a question. Do you want to run an "*okay*" martial arts school? When someone asks a student about your program, do you want them to say, "It's *okay*"?

You put time and effort into helping your students get results and learn the magic that is martial arts. Your marketing should get that same care.

Now, here's the ad we ran head-to-head against it.



ZYLIS / OUR AD



People you can see yourself training with.

- Real people from the school.
- Reasons to start beyond the class itself.

View full-size ad

OPENING LINES

🚨 ROWLETT ADULTS 🚨

What if getting fit was something you actually looked forward to?

Forget wandering around a gym alone wondering what to do.

At Wolverine Martial Arts, every class gives you a plan, experienced coaching, and teammates who help you improve.

You may come to get fit, but you may stay because people know your name, notice your progress, and care whether you show up.

At Wolverine, you will:

🔥 Burn calories and build strength
🥋 Learn practical self-defense skills
🧠 Clear your head and blow off stress
🤝 Train with people who encourage you
🌟 Leave class feeling proud of yourself

Head-to-head at Wolverine · Adult BJJ campaigns

162% more leads. 87% more booked appointments.

Generic agency

26 leads

15 booked appointments

Zylis

68 leads

28 booked appointments

Same gym. Same dates. · Aug. 4 - Sept. 11, 2026

So why did this work?

An adult isn't lying awake thinking, "I need a beginner martial arts program."

They're thinking...

> *"Why do I keep putting off getting in shape?"*
>
> *"How do I let go of all this stress?"*
>
> *"Am I really going to keep doing these boring workouts alone?"*
>
> *"Could I protect myself or my family if something happened?"*
>
> *"Will I be judged because I don't know what I'm doing?"*
>
> *"Can I stick with this and finally become the person I know I can be?"*

We show real people from the gym and talk about what they want to change.

Find out what they want. Then show how your classes help them get there.

Want us to take a look at your ads?

Get a **free 30-minute ad audit.** We'll review your ads and give you changes you can use right away. We'll even make a sample ad and send it to you after we meet.

Not running ads yet? We'll look at your school, your budget, and how many new students your first ads could bring in.

Book your free ad review →



What about kids?

GENERIC AGENCY AD



Leads with a discount.

- Talks about the program and the offer.
- The parent's problem takes a back seat.

View full-size ad

OPENING LINES

🥋 ROWLETT & GARLAND |
BACK-TO-SCHOOL JIU JITSU SPECIAL

Start Jiu Jitsu this fall with everything you need to step onto the mats confidently.

🔥 30% OFF
🥋 Uniform Included
✅ Structured Beginner Classes



ZYLIS / OUR AD



Starts with what the parent wants.

- Less screen time. More friends.
- Shows a real child at the school.

View full-size ad

OPENING LINES

🚨 ROWLETT PARENTS 🚨

Too much screen time for your kids?

What if your child found something active, social, and fun they actually wanted to do?

At Wolverine Martial Arts, kids get moving, make friends, learn new skills, and build confidence in a safe, structured setting!

Your child will:

📵 Spend less time on screens
💪 Stay active and burn off energy
🥋 Learn fun self-defense skills
🤝 Make new friends, even if they're shy
🌟 Build discipline, focus, and confidence



Head-to-head at Wolverine · Kids BJJ campaigns

53% more leads. 67% more booked appointments.

Generic agency

32 leads

6 booked appointments

Zylis

49 leads

10 booked appointments

Same gym. Same dates. · Aug. 4 - Sept. 11, 2026

So why did this work?

A mom isn't waking up at 2 a.m. thinking, "I need 30% off a jiu-jitsu program."

She's lying awake thinking...

> *"Am I a bad mom because I let my kid spend too much time on an iPad?"*
>
> *"Does my kid know how to stand up to bullies?"*
>
> *"Am I doing everything I can to make sure my child is prepared for life?"*
>
> *"Why does my kid give up when things get hard?"*

We dig into the pains parents are feeling. Then we show how martial arts can help.



Try this with your next ad

1. Ask three students or parents, "What made you start looking for classes?" (or look at your Google reviews)
2. Write down their words. Use those words in your ads.
3. Show people from your school who are laughing and smiling.

Okay. So the ads are working and the leads are coming in. What happens when someone fills out the form while you're teaching a class?



MISTAKE #2

Taking too long to follow up

Picture this...

Someone's on Facebook, scrolling. They see your ad, click, and actually put their info in.

And the only thing they get? An automated text asking what program they're interested in.

No call. No one building trust and rapport.

Now, don't get me wrong. Automated texts and emails are great and an important part of a good follow-up sequence. But they can't be the *only* part.

Every new lead still needs a phone call. Yes, every single lead.

So assuming you *are* calling people... how long does it take you to call them?

A few hours? The next day?

< 5

minutes to call every new lead.
That's the minimum acceptable standard.
Ideally, less than one minute.



Did you know?

391%

higher sales conversion when the first call came within **one minute.**[2]

That's what a study of nearly **3.5 million leads** found.

Velocify lead study

See the full strategy →

Why? One study of web leads found you were **100x more likely to make contact at five minutes or less.**[1]

It's called "speed to lead" for a reason!

Now think about what you're doing when that lead comes in. Teaching a class? Driving home? Spending Saturday with your kids?

If you're the only person who can call, what happens when you're busy?

So before you spend more money trying to get more leads, look at how long you're making the ones you already have wait.

Check this today

1. Open your last 10 leads. Check when each came in and when the first call went out.
2. Pick who will call during class, after work, and on weekends. Have a backup.
3. Set an alert for each new lead. Make the first call in less than five minutes.

And yes, fixing this can have a huge effect on sales. Another study estimated

128% more sales conversions from its call and email timing strategy.[2]

What that could look like

$10,000 → $22,800

You could more than *double* your revenue by keeping everything else the same and just implementing a speed to lead follow-up system.



What could your leads be worth?

Put your numbers into our free calculator. See what more bookings, more show-ups, and more new students could mean for your school.

Try the free calculator →

Don't know your numbers? We'll walk through them with you.

So you called in less than five minutes. They didn't answer. Now what?



MISTAKE #3

Giving up too soon

You call once. Send a text. Maybe try again tomorrow. Then decide the lead was no good.

But did they say they weren't interested? Or did they just not answer?

People are busy. They're at work. They don't know your number. They're putting their kids to bed.

One missed call doesn't tell you if they want to join.

You need a plan for what happens next. And "I'll try again when I have time" isn't much of a plan.

Here's the one we use...



Six calls. Eight texts. Six emails. That's **20 contact attempts over four weeks** for leads you haven't reached. If you're not doing at least that many, there's room for improvement!

And no, we aren't spamming people. We strategically time calls, texts, and emails

while maintaining a professional brand image and respecting stop requests.

Calls are for building trust and rapport. Texts make it easy to reply. Emails give them a reason to choose your school by showing reviews, student stories, and what to expect.

They should work together. Just like martial arts works as a system, so should your follow-up.



Want this 4-Week Follow-Up System for Your School?

We'll install the same 4-week follow-up system we use to turn leads into booked classes, with calls, texts, emails, and reminders all working together. In 30 minutes, we'll show you how we'd run this for your school.

Book My Free Growth Review →

See the full strategy first



Your follow-up plan

When	Calls	Texts	Emails
Day 1	2	2	1
Day 2	2	1	0
Day 3	1	1	1
Day 6	1	0	1
Day 7	0	1	0
Weeks 2-4	0	3	3

On Day 1, make the first call within five minutes. If there's no answer, try again about an hour later.



Okay, they answered. What do you say?

Don't rush to get them booked. Find out *why* they want to start.

Keep these questions beside the phone

"What benefits are you/your child hoping to gain from martial arts?"

"Have you tried anything in the past to achieve [insert benefit]?"

Then listen. Repeat back what you heard:

"So it sounds like you have [specific pain], want [benefit], and have tried [previous thing]. We hear that a lot and have several students who say the same."

Then explain how your program can help with *that*. Show them what's different from what they've tried and why it works.

If a parent says their child is being picked on, talk about how your classes can help them stand up for themselves. Don't launch into a speech about your class schedule.

Now they have a reason to come in beyond "the first class is free."

Put it to work

Take your last 10 leads who never answered. Check how many calls, texts, and emails each got. Wherever the follow-up stopped, that's your first fix.

So they answered. You found out why they want to start. You booked the class.

You're done... right?

MISTAKE #4

Thinking "booked" means they're going to show up

Getting someone to book a class is one thing. Getting them through the door is another.

They forget. Something comes up. They get nervous.

Think back to your first class. Did you know where to go? What to wear? Who to talk to?

You've walked through that door a thousand times. They haven't.

So help them feel like they've been there before they ever arrive.

Before their first class

- ☐ Call the day before. Confirm they're coming.
- ☐ Send a short, personal video on the day of their class. Use their name.
- ☐ Show where to park and which door to use.
- ☐ Tell them what to wear and when to arrive.
- ☐ Introduce the person who will greet them.
- ☐ Explain what will happen in their first class.



Show them what to expect.

Here's a welcome video we had filmed for Wolverine. About 60 seconds. A quick look at the school, the team, and what to expect in their first class. We send this **the day before their first class.**



Watch the Wolverine welcome video

Then, on the day of their class...

Flip the camera around and send them a quick video **before they arrive.** Use their name. No edits. Nothing fancy.

Your same-day video can be this simple

"Hey [name], it's [coach] from [school]. Looking forward to seeing you today. You can park right here and come through this door. I'll be here to meet you. Wear [clothes] and bring [what they need]. We'll show you around, introduce you to the coach, and help you get started. You don't need to know a thing before you come in."

Now they know where they're going and who they'll meet. That's a lot less to worry about.

Getting bookings, but a lot of no-shows?

Let's look at what happens between "booked" and "showed up." We'll review your reminders, welcome messages, and follow-up system, then show you what we'd fix first.

Get my free show-up review →



One last question...

Who's going to do all of this while you're teaching?

Maybe you're thinking, "Okay, I get it. But I don't have time to call every lead, send all these messages, book classes, and chase no-shows."

That's where we come in.

Our team handles the ads, calls, texts, emails, bookings, confirmations, and follow-up. You get to spend more time with the students in front of you.

Let's start by looking at your school. We'll review your numbers or help you figure them out. We'll show you where we'd start, what we'd change, and what working together could look like.

Book your free school growth review →

30 minutes · Your school · A plan you can use

More students who show up, pay, and stay.

Read the guide online