W.J.K.A. NEWSLETTER 09

Leveraging a Life time's worth of Work Experience

By Andries Pruim - Canada

After 38 years in the corporate world, I was ready to retire from this highly stressful environment of business and finance. I was employed as a Commercial Lender for an International Bank for many years as well as a Senior Business Consultant for a huge Telecommunications firm for the last decade and a half of my career.

While not my ideal career, especially considering the stressful and competitive business atmosphere, it did provide me with a wealth of business experience and something I now hope to leverage in my second (or post retirement) career.

As most people who work in high stress careers, you need something to offset this strain and for me it was my Karate. I started training in Shotokan Karate in Victoria, B.C. (Canada) when I was only 13 years old. I am now 62 and have experienced a life time's worth of Budo over these many years.



While I started my Karate training with a non-affiliated instructor, the Shotokan I was taught, as I later found out in Japan, was of high quality. Nevertheless, after 20 years of somewhat isolated training, I decided to accept an invitation to attend a Budo Seminar being held at the International Budo University (IBU) in Katsuura, Japan.
It was here where I first met the incredible Shotokan Master, Hirokazu Kanazawa. I was enthralled watching the late Kanazawa Soke and his leading student perform an unbelievable demonstration. I immediately starting training with Soke as these Budo Seminars allowed us to train with a number of Budo Masters. That was in 1991 and I still train with the Kanazawa Honbu Dojo instructors to this day. I usually try to get over to Japan every couple of years, but COVID has put a damper on any travel lately, as it has on almost all aspects of our lives, including our Martial Arts business.



Of course, I was still fully involved with my Banking career at that time so after going to Japan and experiencing some of the finest Shotokan Instructors in the world, when I returned to Canada,
I decided to seek out similar quality mentors locally and is when I started training with Hanshi Don Owens Shihan in the mid 1990's.
I soon altered my working career and was hired as a senior Business Consultant with a Telecommunications firm where I developed and updated business processes for a team of highly technical software developers. It was after a decade and a half of working within the IT Industry where I felt that 38 years of corporate life was enough and decide to take some time off.

During this time, I started to closely analyze the Martial Arts Industry and actually travelled to Las Vegas on a number of occasions to attend a sizable (and annual) Martial Arts Business Convention. In my last position in the corporate world, I was part of a department which was called Professional

Services where we provided Project Manager, Business Analyst and Software Developer services. It wasn't a stretch to expand on this premise and call my new business "Martial Arts Professional Services (MAPS) …. where we provide similar but expanded list of services to the Martial Arts Industry.

Leveraging both Financial and Business experience, together with the fact that I ran two separate full-time Karate studios while working full time at my "Day Job", we have tried to assist several Martial Arts school owners in professionalizing their business. This is because when a dedicated Martial Artist wishes to turn their passion into a profitable career, they must be ready to treat their new school first and foremost as a business!

Today's Martial Arts Industry

The Martial Arts as we know it today is considerably different from what was being taught as little as 40 years ago, including the method on how the Martial Arts is imparted to the new generation of enthusiasts.

In fact, up until the mid-Eighties, there was not a true Martial Arts "Industry", with most schools being of the "hobbyist" variety. It was the generation of Karate Kid movie fans that eventually led to the Martial Arts Business becoming an actual Industry. When this happened it also allowed the industry to start tapping into the traditional Financial Resources as other well-established industries are able to.

When I first started Commercial Lending in a Major International Bank, there was little appetite for financing of any Martial Arts facility unless it was attached to a well-known Fitness Centre and even then, the focus was on the Fitness Industry more so than the Martial Arts Industry.

Before the onset of the COVID pandemic, there was a sizable pushed in the Martial Arts Industry to bring the business of running a school into the 21st century. While our motives as Martial Artists may be altruistic due to the uniqueness of the Service (or Product) we provide to the consumer, we must remember that if we are going to make a livelihood from this endeavor, then you have to run your school like a traditional business.

When I was a Commercial Lender, I would review new Business Plans all the time and Martial Arts businesses were no different. I would review their Revenues streams and expenses as well as the Management ability of the School Owner. Initially most Owners of these business were what we called hobbyists as we felt they were not serious enough with their business side to make a profit. Fortunately, that has changed over the years, with most School Owners following a more professional process when operating their business. This includes getting knowledgeable about how other similar industries (like the Fitness Industry) become successful, as well as learning more about those larger organizations like the WJKA and business focused consulting firms like my company ***MAPS Advisors***. In fact, in America there are a sizable number of



Martial Arts Business Associations (e.g.: MAIA, Kovar Systems, MATA, etc.) who have designed very successful systems that they are now disseminating across the industry …. with substantial success.

This is where you as a Martial Artist must make a decision if you are looking to leverage your Budo in order to make a decent living …. or are you only going to be a hobbyist who uses your Martial Arts school as a "side hustle" but still needing a second (or 3rd) job in order to provide properly for your family. When examining the Business Model of some of the more successful Martial Arts schools, there is a similar strategy and it's based more on the business side as opposed to the style of the Martial Arts being taught.

When you as a Martial Artist see your Karate (or MMA, Tae Kwon Do, etc.) as the service you are trying to sell to the general public, you are on your way to developing a business plan that could provide you with a successful and profitable career. In fact, you should develop an actual Business Plan similar to if you were trying to sell your idea to a Banker or to Investors.

This means, you need to fully review every step of your school processes, from teaching to getting new students to taking care of the administrative side of the business. This is where a good consultant or mentor can provide value as it is always best to have a fresh set of eyes reviewing your entire operation. While every school is unique, the similarities are also prevalent so it's best to keep an open mind when reviewing your existing processes.

For example, the way you have taught your Martial Arts is probably similar to how you were taught and even how your instructor was taught. Unfortunately (or fortunately in some cases), this is not acceptable in today's less tolerant society. For this reason, you must update every aspect of your curriculum including how you treat your students. We at MAPS Advisors have created a sample Martial Arts Curriculum Strategies Blog which doesn't rely on a certain Martial Art or even Karate style, but rather the demographic that you are teaching. In other words, you don't have to change what you are teaching but you may need to change how you teach it.

Another example is Risk Management. With our society becoming more litigious with each passing year, you must learn how to manage risk and in turn prevent any activity that could lead to lawsuits and financial damage to your business. In order to counteract these safety concerns, you should carefully review all of your business risk areas. Again, we here at MAPS Advisors have put together a synopsis of factors that you should be implementing into your day-to-day operations. Our Martial Arts Safety Governance whitepaper lists all of the areas of concern that you need to take into consideration when operating a Martial Arts school in today's business climate.

As you can see from the few examples I have described above, if you truly wish to start your own fulltime school, you need to first and foremost look at your operations, your staffing, your student management systems, your Marketing requirements and even how you use your Social Media platforms, through the lens of a businessperson first and as a Martial Artist second.

In other words, you could be the greatest instructor in your city, but without students you will never get your message across. If you don't have the experience to start up on your own, then look to leveraged the myriad of assistance available, either on-line (free … but time consuming) or hire the services of a Coaching or Consulting firm. Your career could depend on it!!

Karate Training Tips Preventing Injury

By J.S. Copeland – USA

Wouldn't it be great if someone had taken you aside as a child or young adult and actually taught you all of the things you would need to know to prevent many of the martial arts and other injuries you have sustained over the years? Think of all the people you know who can no longer participate fully in their chosen activities due to bad knees, hips, backs, etc.

What if someone had taught you how to best condition your joints to minimize injuries? What if they had taught you that hopping from a squatting position weakened your anterior cruciate ligament causing instability of the knee and requiring surgery? How nice it would be if your first sensei had medical knowledge of anatomy and sports medicine and could have given you the tools to keep your body in the best possible condition through your life.

For those of you who are past 50, there is still the potential to improve, but many conditions by this time of life are not totally reversible. We can't return to the shape we were at 21, but there are things we can do that may slow the process of degeneration. For the younger students, you can do quite a lot for yourselves , not by training more, but by training smart. Since we have limited space , I will give you some of my "Pearls of Wisdom" , based on my karate training and on my experience as a chiropractor treating athletes for the past 44 years.

Pearls of Wisdom

Nutrition:
Minimize your intake of drinks such as carbonated beverages, coffee, tea, and alcohol. Take antioxidant vitamins daily, such as Vitamins C, E, and A, as these are our cell protectors and prevent premature breakdown of all of the cells of the body. Massive doses are not necessary, just regular intake. Remember the stories of British Sailors in the days of sailing ships? Many men on board these ships developed Scurvey, a condition associated with a lack of Vitamin C. They found if they ate citrus fruit , they cured the Scurvey. Since limes were the fruit they relied on and these have Vitamin C, they had made an amazing discovery. This vitamin is necessary for the body's production of a protein called Collagen, that holds the cells of all our connective tissue (skin, muscle, ligaments, tendons and bones) together. If you over exert your body day in and day out, you need such nutritional support to help keep your connective tissues strong.

Cross training:
This is imperative if you want to reduce the possibilities of soft tissue injuries. Rather than train in karate every single day, you should skip a day every few days and do some activity that is completely different. Examples: Swimming, weight lifting, running, biking. Instructors, change your workout routines each month to emphasize different skills.

Martial Arts Training

Training as we age:
When we are young and are strong and fit, we can't relate to those older karate practitioners who are 30 or 40 years older and seem to have become more susceptible to injury and illness. Many of these changes are not preventable, but many are if we train smart while we are young. We will list some activities of training, including some of those previously mentioned that should be left out of training.

1. Makiwara training in children's classes. Years ago, it was believed that no harm would come of this conditioning and training procedure, but we know now from x-ray studies, that we were wrong. It is just that some people will be affected more than others. Osteo-arthritis is the main consequence later in life. In children, growth plates on the ends of certain bones can be damaged causing a lack of growth of those bones.

2. Excessive kicking hard objects with the shin or instep (top of foot). I have seen x-rays of karate students showing evidence of fractures of many of the bones of the feet as well as broken bones that would not heal and degenerated further causing the student to be unable to train again ever. I have also seen constant trauma to the shin bone end up causing blood clots. While clots may seem unimportant to young students, but they can result in stroke or death.
3. Poor diet, excessive intake of sugars, fats can impact our ability to train and our over-all health.
4. Excess alcohol consumption, weakens the entire body and can predispose the body to physical problems later in life.

Karate Training Over 40:
This is the time to begin modifying our training. This is the time to add more variety into our training. Less time standing in our basic stances performing basic techniques for hours and more time in developing movement and practical application of all we have learned over the years. This does not mean we should neglect basics, but spending quality time learning what comes after basics.

Training Techniques to Avoid or Limit:
(For adults) Deep knee bends, squatting on the toes.
(Children): Punching makiwara, knuckle push ups on hard floor, over stretching, spending too much time in any specific stance (can cause stress on ligaments, tendons and the joints themselves). Avoid deep stances in all children under 12 to 14 years of age.

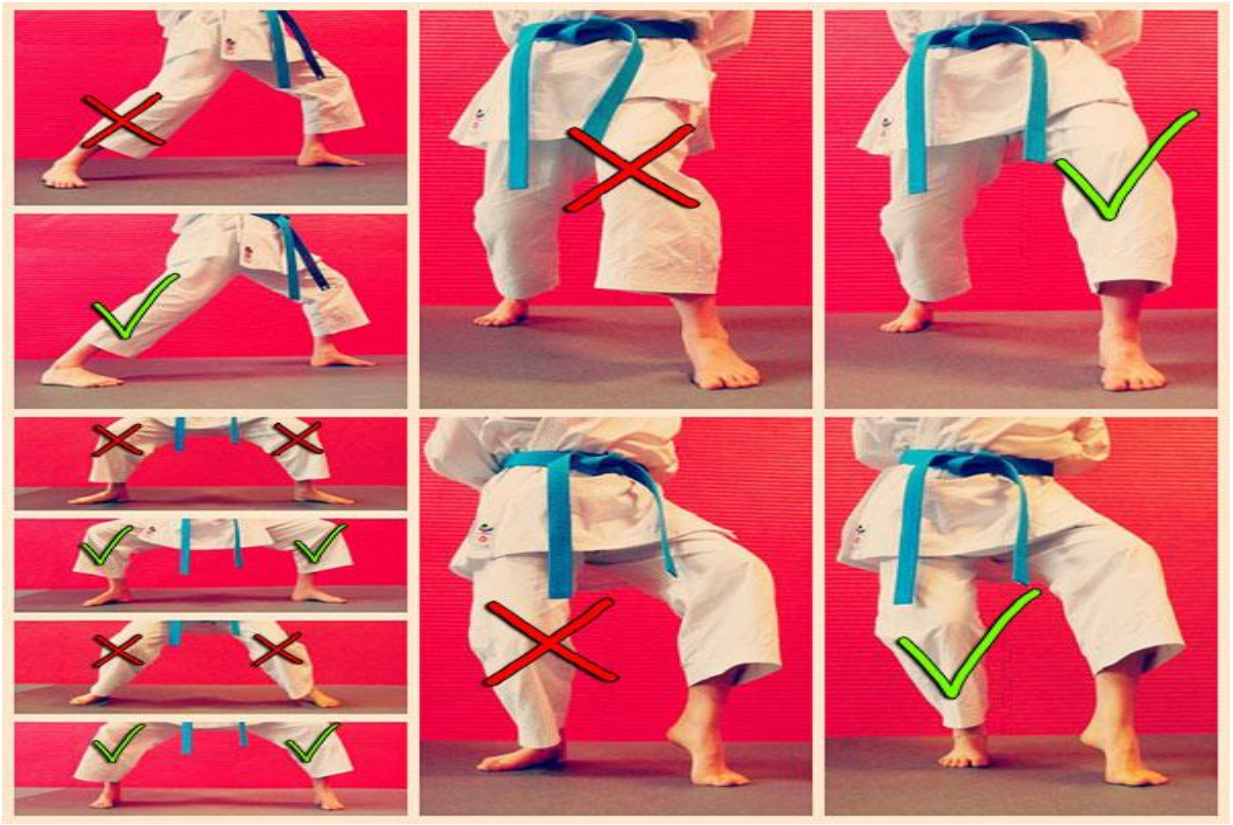
Excessively deep stances can be harmful to all ages.

Below is an example of a stance that will ultimately cause damage to the knees and other joints:



In this photo, we see a front stance with the front knee too far in front of the toes. This will later cause excessive wear on the knee. While this practitioner is still young, he will likely begin to feel the results of his deep stances in another 10 to 15 years. Best position for the knees in this stance would be directly over the first joint of the large toe.

Here are pictures of good and bad stances . This is something that should be part of all students file or notebook.



News of an Organization in the WJKA

Photo's from Iran WJKA Karate Ass







WJKA Mylestom Karate - Australia

- **02-12-2021 Bryan Downes has passed his WJKA 3rd kyu exam**





General news and information from HQ

Dear All

We are very sorry to tell you that the 8th WJKA World Championships & World Camp that was scheduled from 30 June / 03 July 2022 in Cherkasy - Ukraine has been postponed, due to situation in that country, to 2024.

Request to all Instructors & Members

Dear All

If you would like to publish an item (Technical or a General Nature) in our newsletter, please do not hesitate and send it to us by email info@wjkahq.com and we publish it.

We hope to receive many items from all of you.

Membership

WJKA membership is OPEN to ALL Grades.
At least 1-year membership is compulsory to all 1st Kyu's to have the possibility for grading and registration Shodan.

The cost for lifetime membership is € 30, -
For affiliation view: http://www.wjkahq.com/affiliation.php

Lifetime membership will continue if a karateka is an active member of a WJKA Dojo.
Where the Dojo leaves the WJKA, members will be allowed to continue as individual members.
Such members must however inform the WJKA of their intention to remain as members within a 3 months period, failure to do so they will result in them becoming inactive.

Contact WJKA HQ

- **WJKA Administration: admin@wjkahq.com**

WJKA Website

Have you visited the new website yet? ?
Please have a look at www.wjkahq.com
There are lots of information available on the website.
Photo & Video Gallery + Reports

Please send us a report, photos & videos when your event / seminar / examination etc. is finished so we can upload it to the website. This is for promotion of your organization & WJKA.
You can send everything to our email info@wjkahq.com or if it is too much to send by email please use www.wetransfer.com (max 2 GB)