

Stingrae Database Services

Case Study - ABC Martial Arts

Introduction

Sarah was tired. It was almost 10pm and the last class had finished over an hour ago. But she couldn't go home yet, not until she had completed the books ready for her meeting with the accountant in the morning.

She dreaded this. At the end of every month she had to sit down and constantly go between her two systems to ensure that all the kids who had been dropped off out the front by mum or dad (who then drove off only to come back an hour later), had actually had their classes paid for.

And for those who were behind in their fees, she then had to painstakingly work out by how much, print off invoices and then mail them out, hoping that the parents would not only pay the invoice, but hope that the address in her database was accurate.

If only there was a simpler way, she thought. Every few months she would look for a better system. But almost all the ones she could find were too expensive, or too complex.

Surely there had to be something out there that was affordable to a small karate school, but that would enable the instructor to return to doing what they loved to do – teach karate – and not have to spend so long chasing payments and maintaining two systems; one for the classes and the other for the payments.

Then one day, an acquaintance in the industry told her of Arnold, a simple system designed by a database programmer, who also ran his own martial arts school.

She had a look, and was impressed. It focussed on the important things, and kept it simple. Records of names, class bookings, keeping track of gradings. But then she saw it also had its own built in Direct Debit System. And it could print invoices directly, and send emails.

And ... it was affordable ... under \$50 per month, with free support, and she could even take it home!

After the first two months of using Arnold she was happy running her dojo again. When the kids were dropped off, she could see immediately who had not paid their fees and printed off an invoice for them to take home.

Her friends noticed that she was more relaxed, and seemed happier, from having to spend far less time doing the things she disliked in her business, and was able to spend more time doing what she loved to do ... teaching kids and adults karate.

Focus 1 – Members

The old system used by ABC was designed and built in the USA. It did all the basic things ok, such as taking down names, and emergency contact details etc ... But there was just something about the look and feel of it that made it cumbersome. Even though Sarah set the date format to Australian, some of the dates on the screen would still be in US format, along with the address format and some spelling.

It was one of the first things she liked about Arnold. Australian designed and built, it made sense. The zip code was called postcode, and the Australian suburbs would be populated meaning she never had to lookup a postcode.

There as also a new benefit too that she had never fully utilised in her old system, because again it was too complicated – the Account Source.

Up until using Arnold, she had never truly known where her new members came from. But now every new member who joins ABC has their referral source recorded and broken down into three levels.

This was a major benefit that she hadn't recognised. Now, she was able to know if her advertising was actually working or not. Plus, it was easy for her to identify the top members who would refer new members, and she was able to thank them.

Having this new information meant she was able to provide extra service to her best customers, which in turn brought in new business and helped her business grow.

Focus 2 – The Financial Side

As mentioned in the introduction, Sarah would have to spend several hours a month reconciling between her US-based gym database, and the local Australian based Direct Debit Billing Company.

But with ABC using Arnold now, it's all in the one system.

She can now easily setup fortnightly or monthly direct debits quickly from the Arnold Member screen, and then every time the member comes into the dojo, she can enroll them into the class, and it automatically checks to see the payments are up to date.

And, whenever she likes, it takes about 3 clicks of the mouse to produce a report of all members and see their account balances.

This one feature alone, has saved Sarah many hours a month and means that Arnold has more than paid for itself through recouping formerly lost income.

Focus 3 – Support

Like the vast majority of martial arts clubs around Australia, ABC Martial Arts is a small business, run by just two people. It is not a large, multi-franchised McDojo nor a large scale gym with state of the art equipment and thousands of members.

So this meant that when Sarah had a problem with either of her two previous systems, then she never really felt overly important to their support team. Especially, given that for her gym database, the system was designed and supported in the USA, so with the time zone, it was often 18 hours at best before she got a response.

But with Stingrae Database Services, she feels like she counts. On several occasions she has reported small issues and they've been resolved almost same day, sometimes within the hour!

And the big win for Sarah – she has actually asked for new developments within Arnold, and Stingrae have gone ahead and developed them!

It feels like she has her own IT Support staff to help in her business, and that she's not just another small business to be treated like all the others.

Editor Note:

This is a true case study. Only the name of the business, and the name of the instructor were changed. If you wish to contact "Sarah" of this business for clarification and a reference, please contact us at Stingrae.