

# **How To Open A Dojo**



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## **Preamble**

The intent of this document is to guide you in the process of opening your own Judo Club. It will lay out some of the most important business aspects that you will need to consider to be successful. This guide is written with a business mindset, incorporating terminology familiar to the business world. We suggest you approach your new venture with this same business mindset. If we are to be successful in a market that is full of options for activity, we need to be sure we deliver a top-notch product.

## **1.0 Introduction**

There are currently close to 400 dojos in Canada recognized by Provincial/Territorial Associations. These dojos serve more than 20 000 judo enthusiasts, and there is a large demand for courses offered by qualified instructors who are recognized by their Provincial Association and by Judo Canada.

In Canada, many black belts are acquired annually—close to 200 per year. Since its inception, Judo Canada has registered over 10 000 black belts. Approximately 1 500 are active, and most of these black belts owners choose to manage or assist in management of their own dojo.

The opening of a dojo presents many challenges for those who choose to take the initiative. This document's main objective is to outline the necessary steps for starting a dojo and thereby becoming a member of our growing family. Please remember that this information should be used only as a guideline; certain items will not apply to your specific case, and you may wish to elaborate on others. What is most important is that you are provided the basic tools necessary to start and maintain your dojo.

A dojo can be established in a pre-existing building such as a municipal building, a school, a community centre, a YMCA, or any other facility that offers physical activity programs. A two-party agreement can facilitate the start-up of a semi-private dojo, or you can—if you have the necessary commitment and drive—venture out on your own and open a private club.

The pages that follow will discuss subjects such as: the key objectives of a dojo; the regulations that must be followed; the technical requirements for setting up a dojo; steps to follow prior to opening; the opening itself; and ideas for promotion and advertising. You will also find some useful references and addresses to aid you in your dojo start-up.

Pleasant reading and good luck!

## 2.0 Organization of Judo Canada

Judo Canada is the National Governing Body for Judo and is recognized by the International Judo Federation, Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee, and the various provincial and territorial governments. All clubs who wish to be recognized by any of the above levels of administration must be members of one of the 13 Provincial/Territorial Judo Associations recognized by Judo Canada.

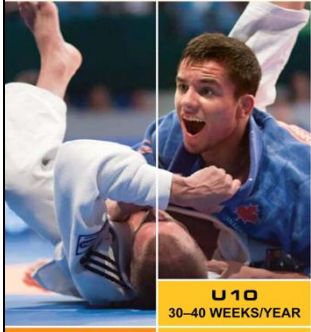


## 2.1 Structure of Judo Canada

It is important to recognize that Judo programs in Canada may follow two streams or pathways: recreational programs and performance training. Recreational programs can support the initial stages of the Performance Pathway outlined below. It is also important to note that recreational programs and performance training often coexist in the same club.

## 2.2 Long Term Judoka Development Model (LTJDM)

The “Fundamentals” stage, “L2T” and part of the “T2T” stage generally cover the recreation stream within the Long-Term Judoka Development Model (see the LTJDM specific nomenclature at the bottom of the graph below). For stages T2T and higher, the model outlines an expected minimum training requirement necessary for athletes to remain on the performance pathway. Majority of clubs in Canada do not offer programming that aims at development of elite level athletes. In such cases the programs for teenagers and adults are considered as recreational and “active for life” level of activities.

FUN	L2T		T2T		T2C		T2W	
					U18 48 WEEKS/YEAR	U21 48 WEEKS/YEAR	SENIOR 48 WEEKS/YEAR	
	U10 30-40 WEEKS/YEAR Technical Development		U14 40 WEEKS/YEAR Technical Development		U16 44 WEEKS/YEAR Provincial - Regional Center		National Centre and Carding	
					U18 48 WEEKS/YEAR Regional / National Center		SENIOR 48 WEEKS/YEAR Tactical / Physical / Technical Training	
U8 30-40 WEEKS/YEAR	Fundamentals	Intro to Competition 5 x year	Coordination and Speed	Intro to Tactical Training	Intro to Tactical Training	Tactical Training	Tactical and Technical Training 2 x week	
Fundamentals	Coordination and Speed	Coordination and Speed	Intro to Mental Training	Mental Training	Mental Training	Mental Training	Mental Training 2 x week	
Daily Physical Activity	Daily Physical Activity	Daily Physical Activity	Intro to Cross Training	Cross Training 3 x week	Cross Training: 2 x week Conditioning; 2 x week Strength	Cross Training: 2/3 x week Conditioning; 2/3 x week Strength	Energy System Training 2 x week Strength Training 3 x week	
Judo or Any Other Sport	Judo 2 x week	Judo 2-3 x week	Judo 3 x week	Judo 4-5 x week	Judo 4-5 x week	Judo 6-10 x week	Randori Training 5 x week	
Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	Healthy Life Style	
<b>FUNDAMENTALS</b>	<b>L2T Learn to Train</b>		<b>T2T Train to Train</b>		<b>T2C Train to Compete</b>		<b>T2W Train to Win</b>	

## 2.3 Where Does Your Club Fit in the Pathway?

Clubs often start out with mindset that they want to be a competitive dojo and run high performance oriented judo programs. It is important to understand that any new dojo or program will always start in a recreational capacity. It is possible, over time, to develop a program to a point where it is on the performance pathway. Note that both recreational and performance-stream judoka have access to competitions. The difference between the two streams lies in the volume of training associated with each stage.

*Moreover, from a business perspective, well-established clubs from a variety of sports report that performance-associated programs not only tend to require a much greater time commitment, but also provide little financial compensation compared to recreational programs.*

*The key question to ask yourself at this point is, “Where do I want to fit into the pathway?”*

## 3.0 Objectives of a Dojo

New dojos must be committed to respecting the goals and objectives of the judo philosophy, and to transmitting and encouraging the complete “judo lifestyle” based on the traditional philosophies of judo’s founder, Dr. Jigoro Kano. Judo is many things to many people: a sport, a self-defense, a physical fitness activity, and even a social gathering. The ‘do’ in judo, however, literally means a way or path, and was intended to convey a way of life rather than simply an art to be practiced.

The dojo’s educational values should be conveyed with the promotion of physical, psychological, and moral development of its members. These values should be the club’s top priority. In other words, a judo dojo must not only promote the technical aspects of the sport; it must also encompass the philosophical concepts that distinguish judo from other sports. *Regardless of whether your dojo focuses on recreation or performance (or both), it is important to adhere to the principles and philosophies of Judo.*

## 4.0 Legal Structure of Your Club

Each Province/Territory has its own legislation concerning legal structures. You would do best to examine them carefully and choose the one that offers you the most advantages.

As identified earlier, there are different business model options to choose from. Some of the more common options include **sole proprietorships**, **partnerships**, and **not-for-profits**. The option you choose will depend on several factors including, but not limited to, access to financial and human resources as well as your club objectives.

With each business model there are distinct advantages. You will need to do some research to determine which model is the best fit for you. Talk to people you may know who operate in one of the above models. The more information you acquire, the easier it will be to decide which model best suits your needs and situation.

## **5.0 What You Will Need to Get Started**

### **5.1 Time**

Once you have chosen a business model for your dojo, the next step is to determine how much time you are willing to invest in order to see your dojo succeed. Most dojos across Canada are run as part-time enterprises. A very small percentage of Canadian dojos employ full-time judo coaches.

It is extremely important that you clearly outline the amount of time you can personally dedicate to the project, as well as how much time and help you can expect from others. Most new dojo owners will need to keep their current job or careers while simultaneously operating their dojo. Keeping a balance between your role as a club owner and all other elements of your life will help to ensure a rewarding experience for your new business venture.

### **5.2 Planning**

A solid plan, regardless of whether you are running a sole proprietorship, a partnership, or a not-for-profit, will help you achieve both your short- and long-term goals for your dojo. Your plan can be a simple written document outlining the specifics of your project, or it could be a formalized written business plan. As the saying goes:

*“Failing to plan is planning to fail.”*

### **5.3 Coaching Certification**

Depending on what your long-term plans are as a club owner/sensei, you will require certification in order to operate a club recognized by Judo Canada. Requirements will vary depending on which stream of delivery you operate. Coaching at the performance level naturally takes more time and certification depending on which level of athlete you aspire to work with.

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is a program that administrates and delivers coaching certification in Canada and it is regulated by the Coaching Association of Canada. Whether you are already NCCP certified or require certification, it is highly recommended that you refer to the Judo Canada’s NCCP Policy on Judo Canada’s website and contact your provincial NCCP chairperson.

### **5.4 Human & Financial Resources**

The success of any program ultimately comes from the combined effort of several individuals. Be sure to analyze your own strengths and weaknesses and search for those people who can complement your skill set. Successful business owners surround themselves with others who bring strengths and experience to the table they themselves do not possess.

*“Many hands make for light work.”*

Below is a basic list of personnel who can assist in making your dojo viable and successful. By no means are these descriptions all-inclusive for each role. Roles may overlap and different people may share different responsibilities; however, what is important is that the requirements and responsibilities of each role should be clearly identified.

Remember that the required qualifications of your dojo staff are not limited to the judo grade but has to consider requirements set by the NCCP.

### **5.5 Head Coach/Sensei**

This person is generally the person responsible for implementation of the programs in the dojo. The head coach/sensei is usually involved (along with the technical director) in planning from both a daily and annual perspective.

### **5.6 Technical Director**

The Technical Director usually has extensive involvement in the development of course and program content—both for individual days as well as for the entire season. This role is often heavily involved in scheduling activities, designating personnel and defining roles and responsibilities as well as annual planning and program content, and may also be involved in the daily delivery of programs.

### **5.7 Assistants and Instructors**

More instructors on the mat will always be of great benefit. The most successful dojos in Canada operate with multiple instructors or assistants. An extra set of eyes goes a long way to ensuring not only a constructive environment, but also a safe one.

The general rule of thumb for a teacher/student ratio for beginner judokas is 1 to 10, as one instructor can teach and monitor ten students in an effective manner. At higher ratios, the quality of the program can be compromised. The ratio may increase to 1 to 20 for programs involving advanced judoka whose training focuses mostly on consolidation of already acquired technical skills and on free practice (randori). It is highly recommended that you recruit quality instructors and assistants to develop and grow your membership. Furthermore, try to recruit or involve those who complement you well. Not all of us have the capability to be effective teachers at all levels or ages. Some instructors may be particularly good with kids; some with adults; and others with performance athletes. Having a well-rounded coaching staff increases the chance of success for your program.

### **5.8 Administrators**

Administrator is a very broad title for those who may assist you in a number of ways. Administrators may be responsible for registration of members with the club and with P/T associations, club communications via newsletters, email, and social media; event planning; and business promotion, among other things. Club administrators do not necessarily need to have technical judo expertise, which is a requirement for roles like Head Sensei and Technical Director. Parents or volunteers regularly perform the administrative functions of many dojos across Canada. The more people you involve, the more time you can focus on the delivery of the programs for your students.

*Remember: your students are your 'customers'. How you treat them, and the quality of the programs you deliver, will be the foundation of your success.*



### Recommended Remuneration for Instructors

National Coaching Certification - Remuneration						
	No Background in Phys. Ed			Background in Phys. Ed with Diploma		
Year	Certified Dojo Assistant	Certified Dojo Instructor	Certified Competition Development	Certified Dojo Assistant	Certified Dojo Instructor	Certified Competition Development
<b>0-2</b>	\$12.50/hour	\$15/hour	\$20/hour	\$15/hour	\$20/hour	\$25/hour
<b>3-5</b>	\$15/hour	\$20/hour	\$25/hour	\$20/hour	\$25/hour	\$30/hour
<b>5-10</b>	\$20/hour	\$25/hour	\$30/hour	\$25/hour	\$30/hour	\$35/hour
<b>10+</b>	\$25+/hour	\$30+/hour	\$35/hour	\$30+/hour	\$35/hour	\$35+/hour
	<b><i>Remuneration for administrators ranges from \$15/hour and above</i></b>					

#### 5.9 Location & Facility

With any business venture that involves membership sales, success often depends on great location. Your dojo must be accessible, visible, and attractive to both current and future members. Often the best promotion comes from visibility. Unfortunately, the reality of most new business ventures means we are often budget conscious. As such, many new programs start in small recreation centres, schools, or in partnership with other pre-existing sport facilities. Regardless of the location or facility you choose, you must ensure that programs can be delivered in a clean and safe manner.

#### 5.10 Equipment

The most obvious need beside location comes in the form of mats. Mats represent your most essential and costly equipment purchase. It is highly recommended that you use tatami mats for your programs, although there may be other options available. The surface you choose must meet the safety provisions for running judo programs. Mat density is of premier importance to ensure that participants are protected during program delivery.

If you need more information on the tatami, you will find it in the “tatami” section on the following website: <https://www.ijf.org/documents>

The following is a list of some of the equipment and teaching aids commonly used in dojos across Canada:

- tatami*
- crash mats*
- bean bags*
- stability balls*
- hula hoops*
- belt ends*

- *agility ladders*
- *climbing ropes*
- *chin up bars*
- *strength training equipment*

It is important to note that the above list is not all-inclusive, and it does not include first aid and emergency equipment. Please refer to section 6.0 of this document for information on Safety.

Every business venture has start-up costs. Purchasing tatami and paying rent can be two of the biggest you will encounter. You may want to approach your provincial body ahead of time to see if there are mats that can be borrowed or rented at a fraction of the purchase price. Access to enough tatami can often be a roadblock for new programs.

Although business financing is not within the scope of this document, be aware that there will be different financing options depending on which business model you decide to pursue. Not-for-profits, sole proprietorships, and partnerships will offer access to different forms of grants and/or bursaries to fund your initiative. Do your research wisely!

### **5.11 Membership**

It sounds like an obvious statement, but having an adequate number of members is fundamental to staying afloat.

*“A business that doesn’t make enough money, does not stay in business long.”*

A carefully crafted business plan will take into account the breakeven point for your program based on your overhead costs minus your potential income. Your membership numbers must be able to provide enough income to cover the costs of operating the dojo.

It is equally important that you provide a great service to your members and ensure their satisfaction with your programs. Over time, their referrals and ‘word-of-mouth’ will help grow and promote your club.

### **6.0 Safety**

High safety standards must be in place to ensure a safe teaching environment for participants. Judo Canada offers a guide that outlines recommendations for the safe practice of judo. It is strongly suggested that you include these recommendations as part of your safety standards.

*A Safety Manual* can be found on the Judo Canada website.

## **7.0 Civil Responsibility and Insurance**

### **7.1 Civil Responsibility**

Like any other citizen, the coach is not covered against the possibility of a civil lawsuit. He is bound to the laws that dictate safety, and common sense should be foremost in all matters concerning his students and other clients.

The quality and strictness of the standards you impose demonstrate this diligence. There is the possibility of negligence if there is a relaxing of the safety standards and a participant sustains injuries as a result. The link between cause and effect must be demonstrated if this occurs; this is less likely to happen if you maintain and enforce dojo rules and standards.

Your standards will be evaluated through comparisons to standards common to your surroundings. Published standards—including those of your Provincial Association, Judo Canada, and the Coaching Association of Canada—will be closely scrutinized. Those that are not published, but are generally accepted will also be evaluated. Such is the case with common sense: if it was used before, it should be used again in a similar situation.

In each Province/Territory, the laws are aimed toward the Technical Director of the dojo. It is your responsibility to be knowledgeable of these laws.

To obtain further information pertaining to the laws and your responsibility, we encourage you to contact someone who is competent in this field, i.e. a lawyer, other club administrators, or facility managers.

### **7.2 Liability Insurance**

In Canada, it is difficult to obtain liability insurance for athletic coaches. Your broker may be able to refer you to an organization that will assume the risks inherent with participating in sport. Certain Provincial Associations provide this coverage. Inform yourself about this early in the planning process.

*The best way to avoid civil suits is to act as a responsible citizen and develop high safety standards to minimize the chance of accidents and resulting lawsuits.*

## **8.0 Technical Specifications of a Dojo**

### **8.1 Training Space**

It is important to offer participants a practice surface that will provide for their physical safety. Judo is a sport that addresses the needs of all individuals, young and old, and at all levels of participation, from beginners to elites. We do not want our participants to stop practicing our sport because of injuries sustained due to inappropriate equipment installations.

The training surface should be covered with tatamis or equivalent materials. This surface should provide energy distribution and shock absorption without becoming deformed under the weight of the participants. It is also important that this surface provide adequate grip for shifting, not limiting movement or becoming too slippery. The materials used should be tight-fitting, leaving no gaps and providing a uniform and homogenous surface. Lastly, the surface materials should be placed and secured so as to avoid shifting. The use of non-skid tatamis is an excellent solution.

Tatami dimensions are usually 1m x 2m and 1m x 1m with a thickness of 4cm and 5cm (with the 5cm recommended for concrete floors) and a density of 250-300psi.

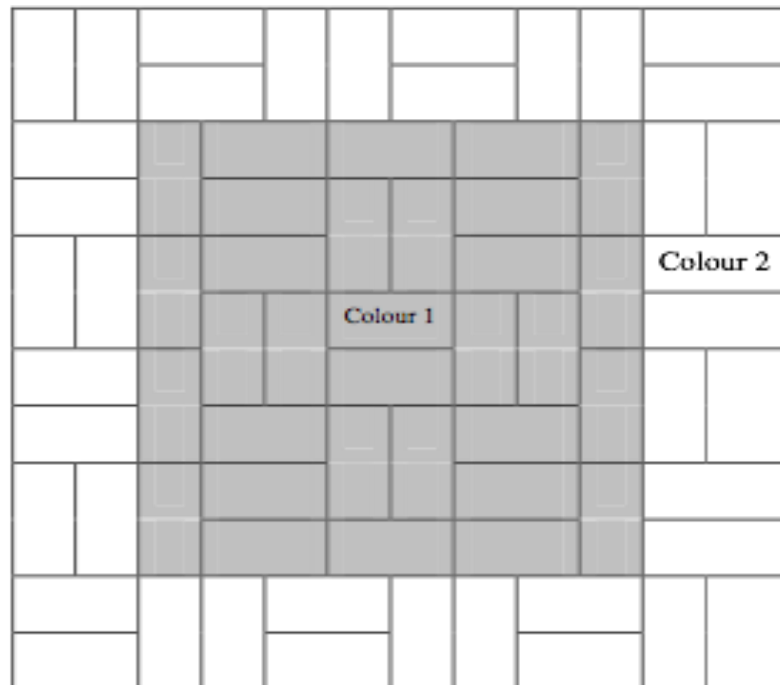
The size of the practice surface required for each participant is estimated to be a minimum of 3 square meters. Therefore, a dojo with 60 meters square of tatami surface offers as safe participation area for approximately 20 participants practicing free movement drills at the same time.

It is the responsibility of the head or lead sensei to ensure a safe practice environment. This includes a space in which potential obstacles are either minimized, safely covered, or eliminated altogether.

Judo places strong demands on the body, especially on the musculoskeletal system when a participant falls. In order to diminish the risks of trauma caused by impact vibrations from the floor, it is of extreme importance that the surface meets training requirements.

The surface must have an absorption potential that fits the needs of the participants. It is evident that the needs of a child differ from those of an adult. As well, the anticipated volume of training should be considered when choosing the surface. Tatami offer a certain absorption factor; we can modify this capacity, however, by adapting the floor or the lay of the tatamis. We can do this by fabricating a false floor which rests on a layer of wood, soft hockey pucks, old tatamis, springs, or any other system that would allow for a better distribution of impact forces.

A surface with an optimal absorption capacity is indispensable for those who engage in more than 5 hours of high-level training a week. On the other hand, a simple surface of foam-filled anti-slip tatami placed on a wooden floor can be sufficient for children who practice judo less than 3 hours a week.



The training room must be well-lit, well-ventilated, and allow the participants to train safely and comfortably. The ceiling must be at least 2.5 meters high (8 feet), measured from the level of the practice surface. Lighting should provide 200-300 lux at the height of 1 meter from the floor. Temperature of the main room should be maintained at about 18°C. The training surface should be obstacle-free within a perimeter of one meter. If this is not possible, all obstacles should be padded. Emergency exits and access to these exits must be identified and free of any obstacles that would impede a rapid evacuation.

Access to a well-stocked emergency medical kit and ice are a must for any dojo. All NCCP Certified Dojo Assistants or Instructors are trained in the protocol relating to the Emergency Action Plan for the dojo or facility in which your program operates.

The model shown here requires 72 tatamis of a traditional size (32 of one colour for the centre and 40 of another colour for the safety zone). This layout allows for the practice of realistic competition tactics and strategies as well as defining the training zone. The fact that we vary the orientation of the tatamis allows for more stability to the anti-slip surface. However, with the availability of roll-out tatami, the colours and layout of your dojo may be customized to-order from the equipment supplier. The model of the surface for your dojo may be very different from the model presented, depending on access to and configuration of space. Current International standards for a competition surface require a minimum of 3 meters of the safety zone (colour 2 below). However, your dojo does not have to meet the competition standards as long as participants in the program are aware of the discrepancies between standards required for the competition and standards of the dojo.

## 8.2 Layout Variations

The layout of your dojo or surface will ultimately depend on whether you operate a dojo where the surface is permanent or transient. Dojos that pick up and put down mats on a regular basis will have a little more flexibility in the layout and size of their surface. The downside to this model is that these mats will wear out faster over time than mats which are laid permanently.

## 9.0 Timelines

The most important part of starting a new business venture will be creating a solid business plan. One of the key components of this plan is a series of timelines or deadlines that you will need to meet in order to keep your plan on track and ensure that your dojo doors open on schedule. These timelines will vary according to your plan and the challenges that you encounter. Like your business plan, your timelines are somewhat fluid and flexible; however, in order to meet the opening day deadline, you will need to keep the plan moving forward on schedule.

The timeline below is an example of some key milestones you may need to meet in order to keep your project on schedule. It by no means represents everything you'll need to consider; rather, it should serve as a guideline as you develop your own plan.

### 9.1 12-18 Months before Opening Day

Ideally, opening a dojo has been in your mind for some time. Every great business venture starts with a vision and a solid **business plan**. In order to meet some of the deadlines, it is imperative to have your plan laid out approximately 12-18 months ahead of opening day. This ensures that you will have enough time to secure **financing** or apply for grants for such things as tatami and other equipment. Many grants and

funding applications have strict and/or tight deadlines. Missing an application deadline can delay the opening of your dojo. Your first step should be to contact your **provincial/territorial judo association**. They may be able to help answer many of the questions you have. They may also have resources to aid you in your business venture.

Although there is no strict timeline associated with determining a **location**, the sooner you can narrow down a potential location, the better your chances will be to secure a venue. Whether you are searching for rental space, a retail space, or a community-type centre, you will need to begin the search early. Finding a suitable and affordable space, as well as negotiating and signing leases, can be very time consuming. If you are targeting a community centre or school type space, you will likely be competing with other sports and activities. Community centres generally book space to groups at least 3-6 months before the start of September (when most programs begin).

### 9.2 12 Months before Opening Day

A **budget** is an important part of your business plan. Understanding where your major expenses will come from helps identify the breakeven point for your dojo. You will want to avoid going out-of-pocket for expenses to keep your doors open. Although many businesses do not make money in the first couple of years, it is important you don't plan to lose money!

A solid market analysis is something else that will help you achieve success. Here are a few of the common questions that you will need to find answers to:

- *What will the market bear in terms of the price of my programs?*
- *What are other martial arts clubs and other sports charging?*
- *Where are my competitors located in respect to my location?*
- *What separates or makes my program unique from other programs?*
- *What is my target market? Kids, adults, or both?*

### 9.3 6-9 Months before Opening Day

Regardless of the robustness of your business plan, you will want to include both a plan and a budget for the **promotion** of your new dojo. Promotion helps ensure that your dojo will be the first thing potential customers think of when considering the available programs and clubs in your area. There are many different forms of promotion; some common ones are listed here:

- direct mail outs
- newspaper advertising
- window signage
- radio announcements
- school / mall demos
- word of mouth
- custom logo and brochures
- social media advertising

Regardless of the method of promotion/advertising you use be sure that your communication answers these key questions;

- *Who* you are (i.e your credentials)
- *What* you are offering
- *Where & When* you are offering it
- *Why* they should choose your program

You may also investigate a possibility to utilize existing web applications to advertise the program and later use it for management of it.

### *Coaching Certification*

At this point, if not sooner, you should have all your coaching credentials in place. You will want to have an NCCP Certified Instructor to access insurance coverage for your dojo and your students. You will want to contact and connect with your provincial judo association to let them know of the progress you have made towards starting a new program. Your provincial association can help answer any questions you may have.

### **9.2 6 Months before Opening Day**

By this time, your location has been determined and you will potentially be getting ready to ***sign a lease or rental agreement***. Be sure to check the details and make certain you haven't missed any required milestones. Keeping to your business plan will ensure that you have not missed any important items. Along with securing mats, you may also want to partner with a judo equipment supplier. They will be able to provide you with judogis as well as other training aids to make your dojo complete. Links to the suppliers within Canada can be found in the appendix of this document.

### *Human Resources*

You will want to have your key personnel in place at this point. If you foresee the need for assistant instructors and/or administrators, you will want to have recruited them by now, or be in the process of recruiting them. Parents of your students are often an excellent resource to help fill these roles. Reach out to them well in advance and be sure to clearly layout your expectation, your needs, and any benefits their assistance may bring them. These benefits can include discounted memberships, coaching education for assistants, and/or financial compensation. Parents are often glad to help, and many will do so in a volunteer capacity.

### **10.0 Registration Day**

The registration period follows the opening of the dojo. It is usually done annually, though is sometimes conducted more than once a year. Most clubs offer 2-3 sessions a year and hold a registration period before each one. Other clubs accept registrations throughout the year, offering privileges to those who register during a specific time frame at the start of the season.

It is imperative to keep the registration process as simple as possible for both your customers and yourself. The more options for payment or registration you offer, the more administration time required. Be sure you have a plan on how to handle this part of your business. The last thing you want is to not get paid for services delivered. You should have a clear and well-communicated policy on fee-payment procedures.

Registrations can take place at the club or even at a booth set up in a public place. No matter where registration occurs, those conducting registrations should be able to provide basic information on schedules, courses, costs, and methods of payment. They should also be able to explain the difference between judo and various other martial arts. It is important for these people to pass out information on judo (available through your provincial judo association) and the club. Your club representatives should also have

registration forms. The use of a video can be especially effective in promoting your club. Parents or adult registrants should be offered a “guide to judo” that would offer basic information about the programs they are about to enter. Various options of such a guide are available from Judo Canada.

### 10.1 Typical Judo Season

- Fall Session (begins late August / early September)
- Winter Session (begins end of January)
- Summer Session (begins late May / early June)

Judo seasons are generally 10-12 months long depending on the age of the participants and the stream of judo in which you operate. It is important to use the Long Term Judoka Development Model (LTJDM) as your guide in deciding the frequency & length of your judo programs. *If you have a signed lease, your business plan must include how you will cover the expenses in the off-season months.*

### 10.2 Registration Fees

Your costs will vary significantly depending on your club bylaws and status. The financial reality is very different based on the type of support you may expect from your municipality and community groups, or when you open a dojo as a private business. Regardless of the situation, you must not disregard your financial obligations.

When determining your costs, be sure to consider the following factors:

- rent
- salaries
- honoraria
- maintenance
- permits and insurance
- National and Provincial Association registration fees
- publicity/promotion
- professional costs (accountant, lawyer)
- taxes
- competitions/events

### 10.3 Registration and Data Management

A manual or automated registration system that keeps records of your members allows you to quickly acquire member profiles and better communicate with these members. A computerized registration system facilitates the tracking of grades and sending of renewal notices. Such a system may also help to foster a sense of belonging—imagine sending a card to your members wishing them a Happy Birthday or a Merry Christmas.

A good management information system allows you to trace the statistical evolution of your members and determine their profiles in terms of age, gender, and origin. This information can help you better target your advertising and aid in the development of programs that better fit your specific clientele.



Whatever membership system you choose, be sure to use it to its full potential. The information you collect represents an important resource for your dojo; you must have access to this information and use it as often as possible.

Your registration management system will be part of your data management system. A good data management system will track crucial aspects of your business such as:

- gradings
- attendance records
- fee management
- injury reports
- medical information for your students
- contact information
- competition stats

This represents only basic data collection. The information you collect will be entirely up to you; however, the success of your dojo will be impacted by how well you manage this aspect of your business.

Consistency pays dividends. The success of some of the most iconic products like Coca-Cola, Tim Hortons, and McDonald's comes from an ability to produce a consistent product both from a taste and quality perspective. It will be extremely good practice for your program to be as consistent as possible—with gradings, fee collection, attendance tracing, and so on. Making informed decisions about your business will come from proper data management. Having the information well-documented and available will assist in making changes where necessary and in figuring out what has worked and what has not.

Below is a list of **Common Good Business Practices** that will guide you to being the best Judo Club in your area—and perhaps even in your province.

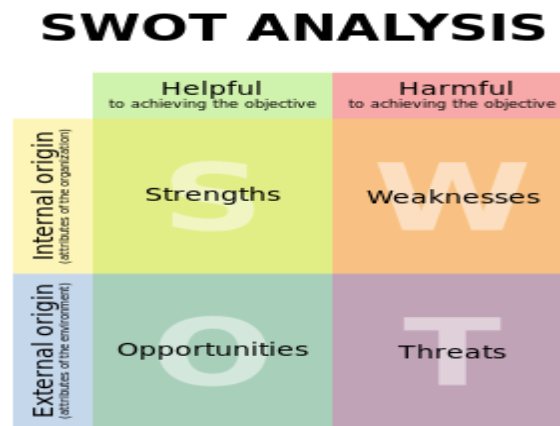
Once you choose the method of data collection, please ensure that the personnel responsible for this aspect of your operation is familiar with the “privacy of information” law of Canada.

### **11.0 Best-Practice Tips**

Visit the website of the Ottawa Judo Club <http://www.ottawajudoclub.com> or the Shidokan Judo Club website <http://www.shidokanjc.ca> for a sample of a best practice model and a marketing of a judo program.

### 11.1 Self-Assessment

A good start to self-assessment is to do a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Knowing your own strengths and weaknesses should be your guide to surrounding yourself with others who will complement you. The image to the right is an example of a SWOT Analysis diagram.



### 11.2 Self-Improvement

In the current NCCP model, **Competency Based Education Training (CBET)** is based on the principle of continuing education and constant self-improvement. As a Judo instructor and coach you will want to continually seek to improve in some way. This improvement can take many different forms: from technical sport expertise, to business knowledge, to improved interpersonal skills, just to name a few.

*"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."*

*~John Wooden*

### 11.3 Mentorship

Surround yourself with a network of like-minded professionals. Having someone who is successful in business, especially at running a judo club, will help you immensely. Being able to share your challenges with someone who has been there, and who has perhaps already learned from similar mistakes, will potentially help you avoid making the same ones. Never be afraid to surround yourself with people who are better at what you do than you are!

### 11.4 Your Product

The quality of your product stems directly from how you handle several aspects of your business:

- *The quality of your programs*
- *The consistency of your product*
- *The ability to track and manage the administration of your dojo*
- *The ability to remain current with Judo trends such as rule changes*

### **11.5 Knowing Your Market and Competitors**

Often your competition will come from sports other than judo. It is crucial to know what different programs you are up against. Know what they charge, what they deliver, how they deliver, and how you can differentiate yourself from them. You need to be first in your customers' minds when it comes to choosing what is best for them and their children.

### **11.6 Recognizing Opportunities**

Seeing opportunities outside of your day-to-day operations can make a substantial impact on your overall success. For instance, it can be extremely difficult to fill all the hours in a day teaching judo. Most Judo programs operate in the evenings, in fact. When you are leasing a space, this can represent significant lost revenue potential. Running an after-school program or renting the space to fitness/yoga programs or other martial arts can be a great way to offset the cost of rent.

### **11.7 Planning, Planning, Planning**

Success is never accidental. Planning will be your largest asset down the pathway to success. You should not only take the time to plan, but also to revisit and revise your plan. Remember that your plan is a fluid document and should be used as your guide. It should by no means be set in stone; it must remain flexible to accommodate you as you learn your way through the business of operating a Judo Club.

Good luck!

## **Appendix A - Judo Organizations**

### **Judo Canada/National Training Center**

4141 avenue Pierre-De Coubertin  
Montréal, QC  
H1V 3N7  
Email: [ec.leroux@judocanada.org](mailto:ec.leroux@judocanada.org)  
Tel: 514-255-JUDO (5836)  
Fax: 514-360-0243

### **Provincial and Territorial Judo Associations**

<http://www.judocanada.org/provincial-federations/>

### **International Judo Federation**

<http://www.ijf.org>

### **Coaching Association of Canada**

<http://www.coach.ca>

## **Appendix B - Equipment Suppliers**

### **Judokado**

<http://www.jukado.com>

### **Hatashita Enterprises**

<http://www.hatashita.com>

### **Matsuru**

<http://www.matsuru.ca>