



PerfectMind on Being Agile

STRIVING TO BE AGILE IN TODAY'S EVER-CHANGING WORLD

Andries Pruim | August 2020



MA 2020 Virtual SuperShow showcases local success story

After spending 20 years in the Banking industry I moved to Business Consulting and spent the last 15 years as a Manager of a Software Development Team. We deployed and supported Project Management Tools as well as Telephony Tracking Platforms. Personally, I provided the business acumen necessary to ensure the various applications made business sense, which in turn resulted in my interest in various client management software platforms.

Once I returned to Business Consulting, I started to review the various Student Management software programs and thanks to the recent MA Virtual SuperShow, I noted that the first day sponsor was a local business (at least to me) so I started my research of this software firm. What surprised me the most was that I was aware of the original source of PerfectMind. I knew these people!!

PerfectMind starts as a Martial Arts idea

While the business side of me immediately saw the benefits of the PerfectMind application for the Martial Arts industry, my research uncovered the fact that I had previous knowledge of the Karate founders of PerfectMind, who I remember as the Champions Dojo. I had both competed against and judged many of their quality students during my long competitive career. The Champions Way members were considered some of the toughest competitors and all of us knew of its determined world champion head instructor Master Farid Dordar.

It was that martial arts dedication that allowed Farid Dordar to teach himself not only how to establish and run one of the most successful martial arts school in the city, but this highly qualified martial artist entrepreneur also taught himself software development. It was the desire of a gifted Martial Arts Instructor trying to better serve his student base that led to the development of PerfectMind. With this new goal in life, Master Dordar decided to aggressively tackle the Software world with the same passion as he did the Martial Arts industry!

It was Master Farid Dordar's passion (once he moved to Vancouver from his native Iran) that drove him to create a martial arts empire that stretched from MA Schools, Member Management Software to Business Consulting and Support services. It was the listening to others that has driven the team at PerfectMind to create one of the most interactive (and user friendly) platform in the student management software space, a philosophy instilled by Master Dordar.

As Master Dordar was developing his new software platform and while it was successful for his personal business needs, he also discovered that his vision could be leveraged for other similar industries. Once he realized the potential of his development, Master Dordar did what any true martial artist did and started to put together a team of the best.

This is how PerfectMind was conceived ... fast forward to 2020 and we now see PerfectMind serving a myriad of industries while its core focus continues to be the martial arts. The main reason for a continued focus on the martial arts industry is that it is a perfect template to support all types of membership and facility management industries ... like the Parks and Recreation sector.

The success of PerfectMind has resulted in its recent acquisition by TSG, an International conglomerate of health and fitness related businesses. The transition in ownership has allowed Master Dordar to finally retire and enjoy more time with his family. Fortunately, Ali Sanei easily stepped into the CEO shoes, being Master Dordar 's COO (2IC) for many years.

Coincidentally, Ali and I actually worked for the same corporation before his move to PerfectMind and we had, in fact met on a project. This allowed me some frank and earnest discussions with this new CEO which quickly reflected a passion similar to the founder's vision. Ali Sanei's business experience made him the perfect person to now lead PerfectMind into the post COVID globalized world.

It will be Ali's responsibility to transition PerfectMind through this acquisition, but in the end, he feels the benefits being provided by this new partnership will do nothing but enhance the service PerfectMind can bring to their customer base.

TSG is a global leader in the health and fitness industries and recently acquired PerfectMind due to its capacity to service many industries in this space. Not only will this relationship bring sizable financial support to PerfectMind and its customers, but the experience they bring will allow PerfectMind to be a truly international provider of membership and facility management solutions.

As noted, while PerfectMind was serving the Marital Arts Industry, it became readily apparent that the constantly updated software platform would be useful in other industries. One of the first non-martial art business that signed onto PerfectMind, was the Richmond Oval (in Richmond, B.C. Canada). As the site of the 2010 Olympics Speed skating venue, it has been converted to a multi-sport facility containing numerous basketball courts, racquet ball rooms, fitness centers and other sport-based halls. In fact, the Canadian Provincial and National Karate (WKF) Championships are held annually in the Richmond Oval and it is PerfectMind's platform that facilitates its successful outcome.

When asked about its on-going relationship with the martial arts, Ali Sanei expressed it best ... "Yes, we are a true health and Fitness provider ... even though martial arts are in our DNA, as our business started with the martial arts and it evolved around the martial arts."

The PerfectMind platform supports all aspects of Membership and Facility Management and for this reason many other industries can leverage PerfectMind's flexible platform. This allowed the company to obtain both the New York City and Boston City Parks contracts. In Canada some of the largest cities on both coasts are now using PerfectMind's various products and they have recently signed on the University of B.C., one of the largest universities in North America.

Then COVID-19 Hits the Martial Arts Community Hard

It is well known how badly the COVID Pandemic has affected the Martial Arts community and it has affected PerfectMind's business just like almost every other business out there. In PerfectMind's case, it was their development pipeline that was first affected. Companies like PerfectMind maintain a "Product Roadmap" on which the company's development priorities are listed.

The PerfectMind team had to quickly adapt to the reality that most of its client base both in martial arts as well as the health and fitness industries in general had closed or were being forced to close by governmental decree. This required the PerfectMind Development team to re-think their client's immediate needs. This included new features like Bulk Registration or Mass Refund capabilities.

PerfectMind immediately reached out to its client base to determine their needs and continued to do so over the past few months. In addition, there was a number of existing features that PerfectMind discovered were extremely helpful to Martial Arts school owners during this pandemic (See Sidebar for an example list).

One of the more unique features is the recent rollout of PerfectFace, a facial recognition platform which facilitates touchless attendance tracking. Together with on-line registration features, which includes both the tracking of Class limits and automated Wait Lists, the on-going developments initiated by PerfectMind ensures the health and safety of school owners, their staff, their students and parents.

PerfectMind also feels that an important factor in the success of any martial arts school is the relationship between the Instructor and their students. The automated communications tools features in PerfectMind allows the Instructors to remain in contact with all their students via either email, SMS, Text or any type of Social Media and all in real time. Overall, this provides the level of communications (and in turn safety) necessary in today's COVID world to allow martial arts school owners to survive these unique times.

The PerfectMind Team leverages Agile principles

Being agile in Software, Business and Life can lead you to success in these unique times. Being a software development company, PerfectMind leverages a delivery methodology known as Agile. Just as the name connotes, an Agile team is very customer focused so they are ready to make changes to any development should the customers' requirements change. In other words, they have to be very agile in their ability to quickly change directions (See Sidebar for some Agile definitions).

Over the past 10 years, PerfectMind has used this Agile philosophy to successfully satisfies its customer's needs more than ever by constantly engaging with their client base, especially their Martial Arts customers.

"You have to realize that our business was built by a martial artist who owned a martial arts business so we understand the needs of the business and we also understand the needs of the customer", explains Ali Sanei as to why they continue to place so much emphasis on their martial arts owner relationships.

PerfectMind discovered that like the myriad of Martial Arts styles out there so too were there a number of different ways of running a martial arts business. This constant communications with the community forced PerfectMind to become more flexible in how its features worked. This is the philosophy of being “agile” and what PerfectMind has been reinforcing to their entire client base.

One of the strongest features of PerfectMind is that the entire solution is built on a portable platform which means others can use this platform as a service and in turn they can fully customize for their own unique requirements. This allows PerfectMind to turn around a development request in weeks as opposed to months or even years in some cases. This Agile philosophy is why all the new COVID related features were available to the school owner in time to service today’s unique requirements (like the Mass Refund feature).

PerfectMind and the Re-Opening of the Economy

With the slow re-opening of our economy, the Martial Arts School Owner continues to struggle to regain business. Ali and his team have been working the phones to their clients daily;

“... It’s very painful to see our really good customers dealing with this situation and having a challenging time ... we have seen many martial arts schools going out of business and it’s so sad to see.”

These closures occurred even after PerfectMind attempted to assist the school owners either financially or through extraordinary technical support. PerfectMind has been extremely proactive in their support of their client base by deferring payments or providing a vast amount of resources (Webinars, Whitepapers, etc.) free of charge.

In addition, one of the benefits of PerfectMind’s new relationship with TSG is its ability to leverage other products and services from its new parent company. This includes a service called “True Coach”, a features-rich platform for on-line classrooms, seminars or basically all types of on-line educational requirements. Together with a fully dedicated support team, PerfectMind used every possible avenue available to them in order to assist with the customer’s businesses.

PerfectMind feels that their existing library of features together with the new features being deployed during this pandemic should provide all the support needed to allow most martial arts schools to re-open. Ali truly feels that his company and team are ready to assist:

“The challenges they may face (during re-opening are many) ... some of their staff were furloughed or may have been laid off we will help train new staff or retrain the people they currently have” ... to ensure the business can get back to some level of normalcy as soon as possible.

Partnership together in the Post COVID world

Going forward into the post COVID world, PerfectMind fully understands that the re-opening of our economy will be a slow process which may cause many martial arts businesses to lose faith in continuing under these somewhat dire circumstances. Nevertheless, the Perfect team have put together a plan centered on Education and other Knowledge based resources being made available to all PerfectMind clients with new Webinars being produced regularly. PerfectMind will reach out to their customer when new Webinars might be relevant to their business needs.

One of the most unfortunate and unexpected business downsides caused by the pandemic, other than having to close your doors was the sizable increase in on-line hacking (of all types) against everyone's platforms, whether it be your website or Member Software installment. With this in mind and considering my interest in FinTech's (see [Budo Banker Blog on FinTech's](#)) and other on-line businesses, I asked Ali about PerfectMind's security protocols, especially considering the high degree of hacking going on these days.

One of the first tasks assigned to Ali when he joined PerfectMind 10 years ago was to lead the Company to the Cloud. Ali and his team decided to move their platform to AWS (Amazon Web Services) and were one of the first users of this extensive platform in Canada. The reasons were simple, after Ali investigated this new Cloud provider, he realized that once they moved to the Cloud, AWS could provide security, scalability, robustness and availability at all times.

"In today's cybersecure world, it's not a matter of if (you get hacked) but when and with AWS you have some of the most secure on-line platforms on the market."

Leveraging the on-line support of AWS, together with the highly trained 24/7 support team employed by PerfectMind, the resource available to today's martial arts school owner is unprecedented. PerfectMind has committed itself to an on-going and strong partnership with Martial Arts business owners and feel that together they will success into the Post COVID-19 World.

"Martial Arts is going to remain our main vertical" Ali stresses that PerfectMind strives to service the true needs of the school owner regardless of their size. This why the PerfectMind team is looking forward to next year's MA SuperShow (which hopefully will be held without restrictions) where they plan to not only meet their clients face to face (maybe the first time in months), but all those other school owners looking for a Leading edge, Cloud based and fully automated Student and Operational Management Tool to ease the school's back office requirements.

When asking Ali about PerfectMind's new priorities, now that he is CEO and heading into uncharted waters, his impassioned response was reflective of the company's original vision.

"Our **#1** priority is to make sure ALL the businesses (we serve) are fully operational POST COVID", with the full commitment of both PerfectMind and its new Partnership with TSG to ensure this happens. Being Agile in today's business climate is going to be as necessary for today's school owners as facemasks are these days ... Yes, it will take some time getting used to it, but to succeed (or stay healthy), you need every tool available to you and that is exactly what PerfectMind is prepared to offer today's school owner.

**THE AGILE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY IS BASED ON CERTAIN PRINCIPLES:
(and how relevant they are to today's Martial Arts School Owner)**

1. Ensure Customer satisfaction by early and continuous delivery of product or service.
 - *The Martial Arts school owner knows this only too well. Being flexible in when and how you teach your art form will ensure more of your Members are enjoying their experience.*
2. Always welcome changing requirements, even in late development.
 - *Having to quickly adapt to Remote Classes is a perfect example of a changing requirement embraced by the MA School owner.*
3. Ensure close and daily cooperation between business people and developers
 - *This is similar to the relationship between Instructors and their students. For to be an effective team or school, the instructor must nurture the relationships with students on a regular basis*
4. Projects are built around motivated individuals, who should be trusted
 - *Like any MA School the quality of the Instructors and Staff are paramount so when it's time to delegate responsibilities, the more successful school owners have staff they can trust to ensure a safe and enjoyable learning environment is always maintained.*
5. Face-to-face conversation is the best form of communication
 - *This is a no Brainer! Every school owner and Instructor knows that the best way to teach is with your students in front of you. Remote classes are convenient, but can never replace the personal touch.*
6. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design
 - *This principle is something constantly stressed in almost every Martial Art Business Seminar. In addition, regardless of what exceptional technical upgrades made to your business (also a good thing!), your personal and school's martial arts technical ability must also be constantly improved (which includes your curriculum).*
7. Simplicity—the art of maximizing the amount of work not done—is essential
 - *This is both for your business and for your curriculum. Using a leading-edge software tool will simplify your daily business processes. Keeping your curriculum simple and safe in today's litigious society is just smart business.*
8. Regularly, the team reflects on how to become more effective, and adjusts accordingly
 - *Constant communications between you and your staff is the best way to ensure quality and motivation. Having regular staff meetings or Instructor seminars will keep your team sharp and agile. If in the future, we need to once again adjust our processes (and classes) to ensure the viability of the school, ensure your business is agile enough to continually embrace change.*

SURPRISINGLY HELPFUL TOOLS TO FACE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

ONLINE BOOKING

When you start adding up all the small in-person interactions you have in your studio each day, you might realize that there are many conversations, questions and inquiries that you could address with online booking instead. Especially during this time where you want to reduce in-person interactions as much as possible, online booking is a fantastic tool. PerfectMind's online booking software allow your members or students to book themselves in for classes, appointments, or any other service applicable to your business.

CONTACTLESS SIGN-UP INTEGRATIONS

Remember, the less contact, the better. Many of us are familiar with contactless tap-to-pay methods on point-of-sales systems, but minimizing most of, if not all, contact is ideal. This is where contactless check-in methods for students or member can be extremely helpful. PerfectMind's feature PerfectFace captures and stores the faces unique characteristics while never storing a personal image and simultaneously using advanced encryption.

CLASS LIMITS

If you are integrating online booking into your operations, you will want to make sure you are limiting class capacity as well. You will want to make sure members or students can have at least two meters of space around them comfortably, and set your class limits accordingly. Using PerfectMind, easily limit class sizes to ensure that students are able to safely stay distanced apart for the duration of the lesson.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

You've always worked with students and members in person, because it's what you know and what you've always been great at. So, adding virtual classes to your schedule won't just save room in your studio, but it will also make your services more accessible for more people. PerfectMind will help you determine the best video conference platform for your needs.

DOCUMENT HANDLING

Finally, digital tools will offer a helpful hand in this time. If your members or students need to access, print, or sign documents, they don't need to go in-person to your facility anymore! Not only will this cut down on the risk of community transmission, but it will also save time and effort for your team. Use PerfectMind to create, save, print, upload, and organize your documents for your organization securely in the cloud.