

# PRO SHOP PROBLEM SOLVER

ANSWERS BY THE EXPERTS  
TO YOUR QUESTIONS

GOLFDOM welcomes questions, whether major or minor, on any aspect of your pro shop operations. Your questions will be forwarded to appropriate industry leaders and experts for response.

The difficulty with a question and answer format is that it can work only if you support it. This you can do by sending in your questions to: Pro Shop Problem Solver, c/o GOLFDOM Magazine, 380 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. Let us hear from you.

**Q**—I have experienced very slow deliveries of merchandise from many wholesalers. Sometimes I only get half my order or the wholesalers send me items that are not color coordinated with the rest of the order. What should I do?

**A**—This one is tough. In the growing golf market, if a product is selling well, it is difficult to always deliver orders on time. Check your own habits. Are you placing your orders early enough? Are you ordering enough merchandise to carry you, so that you don't have to frequently re-order? Incidentally, did you know that retail stores will not order lines if they feel they have to do an appreciable percentage of their volume by reordering specific colors and sizes? An apparel manufacturer that says the company can ship you whatever you want, when you want it, has made itself suspect. Apparently, not too many professionals want the merchandise it makes.

Ernie Sabayrac  
President  
Ernie Sabayrac, Inc.

**Q**—Here is the problem: A customer

requests I order a pair of shoes for him from the shoe catalogue. The shoes arrive after a considerable delay and don't fit. I am out the freight cost of shipping the shoes back for a pair that does fit (that usually is a \$4 loss). This problem is worse if the shoes are discounted. The situation occurs frequently.

**A**—If a golf professional is stocking golf shoes properly, by that I mean stocking a good selection of styles, colors and varying types of size ranges, he should be able to make a minimum of 70 per cent of his sales out of the stock; possibly as high as 90 per cent. The better his stock program, reinforced by stock selling techniques, the higher percentage of sales he will make from his stock. For instance, if a professional is stocking five good styles and size runs, it doesn't make sense for him to show samples of 10 other styles, attracting mail orders for shoes that he cannot personally fit. If a golf professional learns to sell from his stock, the problem described in the question should not arise too often. There will be less sales from special orders, and in most cases, the individual will have already tried on a pair of shoes from the pro's stock. Basically, we don't think a professional can successfully sell shoes if he stocks six different brands and 15 different styles.

When a pair of shoes is sold through the mail, it has been no investment; that means the golf professional must work on a smaller markup. Even though a professional occasionally will have to absorb the costs of handling a pair of shoes that is not accepted by the member, we do know that some professionals charge their members

for these extra costs. This may not be a good idea, but it cuts down on those members who might abuse the privilege and not accept the merchandise that has been ordered especially for them.

Richard N. Tarlow  
President  
Foot-Joy, Inc.

**Q**—Few professionals can state that they are experts on predicting what styles to anticipate for next year's buying. My shop is small, so I'm trying to maintain a low overhead. Rather than hiring a buying expert, I would appreciate getting a regular mailing which would advise me of current style trends (what is selling and what is not). This could help me predetermine my losses and what I'm likely to be stuck with. I'll know what to push.

**A**—Although there are experts on buying, there are no perfect scores being made, even by them. Your best and safest chance in choosing new fashions, colors, styles and fabrics is to stick to those manufacturers that do a fine job with fine quality retail stores. They already have their lead from the retail store buyers' experience. You must remember that these fashions are selected almost 12 months ahead of showing them to you. As to getting any publication that would give you pre-warnings, it seems to me that your sales rep, with whom you do business, can keep you up to date on what is selling well in pro shops better than anyone else.

To wonder what a retail store is doing doesn't really help you. You have a different clientele who demand a more conservative fashion trend and quality. There is no fine retail store or excellent golf pro merchandiser who can predict fashion, what will be sold in his shop, so that at the end of the year there's no stock left. This just doesn't happen. Your answer, again, is to stick with "winners" in the golf business. Don't take it upon yourself to order from every Tom, Dick or Harry who walks into your shop in the hope that you will come upon a bonanza. This doesn't happen either, and it only will cause you additional problems.

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