Ernie Sabayrac, Inc.

President

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.

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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