

PROMOTION EQUALS SALES

How much money does your pro shop put in your pocket? What items produce the greatest volume of sales and profit? Most professionals sell golf balls, golf clubs and gloves, but how about sport jackets, shirts (not necessarily golf shirts), shoes and full sets of clubs? Perhaps you've found that soft goods are your biggest moneymaker, perhaps you've discovered women are your best customers and perhaps you have room only for the basics. Each of you, of course, is faced with a unique situation and some of you must feel you're already exploiting your shop size and clientele fully. But suppose "Madison Avenue" came to your shop—do you think their techniques could increase your buying expertise, educate you in display techniques or help you promote your shop to your members?

How important are such things as correct buying for the tastes and life styles of your members? How valuable is a merchandise display that stimulates the person in the shop to buy? How can you advertise yourself to your members and their guests?

All these questions are important, but the last one is what promotion is all about. The better you become in letting people know what you have, the better your chances are of selling it. Let's look at some of the ways you have of generating interest in your merchandise.

ADVERTISING

Billboards and television commercials might be a little beyond your means, but fliers shouldn't be. You can easily design a one-page

Having trouble "moving" your shop merchandise? Here are some tips on helping your members "see" what you have to offer

by PARKER SMITH



A color or patterned coordinated golf ensemble display encourages members to think about buying a "total outfit."

promotional piece that highlights merchandise you want to sell. Suppose it's the end of the season and you're offering a special on this year's club models you've been unable to sell. You can cut out pictures of the sets from the company booklets, paste them onto a piece of paper, put the original asking price and slash through it, marking the sale price in bold black numbers. Print on the mock-up, "See So-and-So at the Pro Shop" or "This month only in the pro shop—get a top-line set personally fitted to your game at a tremendous saving." Mimeograph your mock-up. Now, you've got copies for every locker in the club or one to put on every cart (especially useful for public courses).

As a back-up or an alternative, you can request space on a prominent wall in the locker room. Put up a bulletin board and keep your members informed of specials or of recent purchases you've made that you think they'd like to know you have available.

At King's Inn, a successful resort complex on Grand Bahama Island, director of golf John Mickle heads an operation that is geared to sales. Although a concession format, its techniques can and should be implemented at your club whenever possible. King's Inn is a gigantic, multi-level business that uses each facet within that business to promote its other segments.

In the hotel lobby, in a spot where it can't be missed by any guest, golfer or non-golfer, there's an easel display panel advertising the many types of clothes available in the pro shop. This ad is aimed as

much at the tourist looking for a sports jacket as it is at the golfer who might be persuaded to buy a coordinated golf outfit. There is also a wall-panel display in the hotel hall. This contains a complete golf ensemble on a mannequin, a set of clubs in an expensive bag, a couple of dozen golf balls, an umbrella and other accessories. Everything is color-coordinated. The objective of this kind of display is to get the customer thinking about an entire outfit rather than an individual item. As a result, "...many wives will come and shop in the pro shop rather than going to stores in the downtown shopping complexes." The shop also uses its street window to attract attention by featuring a mannequin in a brightly colored, coordinated outfit.

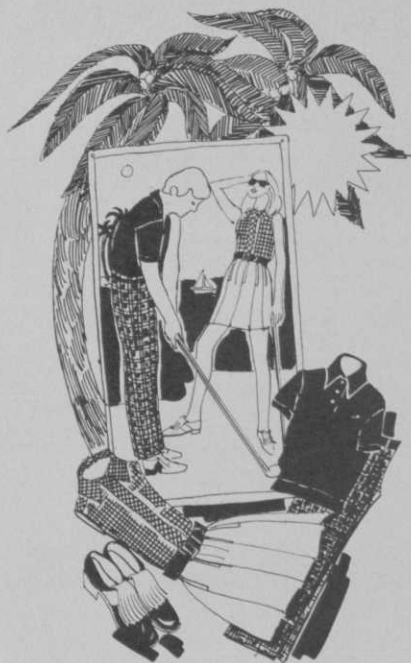
I would suggest, then, that you explore your clubhouse, your carts and your locker rooms for available space to carry out potential promotional activity. You might even try posting a reminder at the turn house if your course has one.

IN THE SHOP ITSELF

Display techniques depend upon what you're trying to sell and to whom, but there are basic laws that apply to every selling situation. The more attractive your pro shop is, the more enticing its merchandise becomes to those within it. People buy clothes because they want to look good in them, so you've got to make the clothes look good before members put them on.

Most of the resort courses openly capitalize on the drabness of northern pro shop displays. They successfully operate on the thesis that bright colors will catch the buyer's eye simply because he's seen nothing but blues, grays, dark reds and greens up North. King's Inn, which does a large convention business through travel agencies, gears its ads and displays to "school" colors. To follow this successful approach, merely display outfits incorporating the colors of your club's emblem. Don't be afraid to be a little jazzy, either. You want to attract attention, to get members to stop and look around the shop.

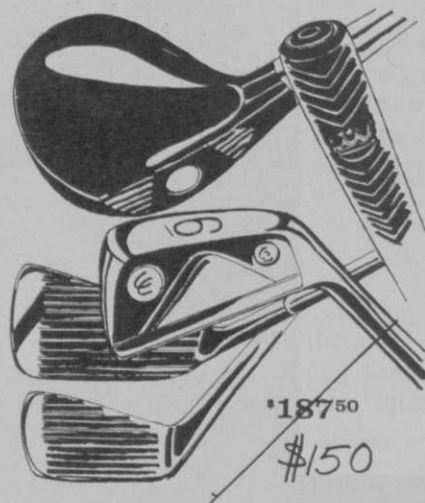
Many shops find that a round or



Northern pros can capitalize on members' Southern vacation trips by featuring brightly-colored, tropical apparel.

semi-round interior helps to immerse the buyer in the merchandise. Display experts also consider concise areas better than large areas. These two approaches "surround" the buyer and fill his eyes with your wares.

Because multiple sales are the key to selling large numbers, it's a good idea to offer "package" bargains. "If you buy this complete outfit (glove, shirt, slacks, socks and shoes), get this cap free." "Buy a set of clubs at this special price, and we'll give you a dozen balls abso-



Mimeographs of this simple, handmade promotion flyer can be displayed wherever club members congregate.

lutely free." Don't be afraid to give a little to get a lot.

There are other ways to increase sales in the shop. Employing a woman is one of the surest means of increasing sales. She knows how to talk to other women and an attractive one will flatter a man into a purchase. She can also offer valuable assistance when it comes time to do your buying.

You should always try to feature that which you want to dispose of. If you're having trouble unloading clubs, make up a sample set from which people can take a club or two to the practice range and/or the course. You can also offer to anyone who buys a set of those clubs discounts on golf bags.

Make the most of your shelf space. Don't overload it, but display a sample of each type of item you stock. This serves two purposes. It makes the buyer feel he must have the "last one" of that item in that color, which is an inducement to buy, and it makes him request similar items, thereby making you go and "find" them for him, creating a sense of obligation to "pay" you for the time you've taken with him. Notice I said "him," for this obligatory feeling is most often aroused in the male.

One more suggestion. Run fashion shows using club members whenever you get in a new line of clothing (such as spring). And you might try "equipment" shows where you take the newest clubs, such as the graphite shaft, and schedule a clinic in which everyone who comes gets a chance to hit a few balls.

BUYING

Buying also comes under the heading of promotion, because you can't sell something that someone can't use.

Returning briefly to the resort courses, they buy apparel in bright colors because bright colors aren't sold in the North during the winter. Why not sell some "traveling clothes" for your southern-bound members this coming fall? You should at least stock shirts that match the fall colors created by the trees on your golf course.

Buy with an eye toward multiple sales—buy color-coordinated out-

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ature rises above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, we'll irrigate our perennial ryegrass-bermudagrass plots every morning at the station, three times weekly in the 70's and 80's, and once or twice a week when the sky is overcast."

Cool-season grasses such as the new perennial ryegrasses can survive the summer along the coast generally with one or two irrigations a week and with daily irrigation inland, according to Spaulding. "We aren't far enough along to talk about their survival in our desert areas," he added.

Spaulding is probably most intimately involved in the station's turfgrass research the past ten years as staff research associate for Dr. Victor M. Youngner, UC Riverside professor of agronomy and turfgrass expert.

Most of the some three acres in turfgrass plots at SCFS are a part of Youngner's research projects. Others are cooperative studies being conducted by him with other UC researchers and Cooperative Extension

specialists and farm advisors with turfgrass responsibilities.

Some past SCFS turfgrass developments, Spaulding notes, are much in evidence today in Southern California. There's the Santa Ana variety of bermudagrass, a tough, smog-resistant, salt-tolerant turfgrass used on athletic fields, playgrounds, golf-course tees, and other heavy-use areas. It's in demand today. Southland turfgrass nurseries have more acreage in this SCFS-developed variety than any other bermudagrass, according to Spaulding.

More recently, he adds, a new strain of dichondra has been released. Containing four individual dichondras, two medium height and two low height, it can be mowed short or left uncut. Current dichondra plot work at the station also is focused on disease and pest problems.

The station's turfgrass nursery, started in 1950, today has a worldwide reputation as a source for pure propagative materials, according to Spaulding.

He has a lot to say about all of the turfgrass research going on at the station. Discussing the Zoysiagrass plots, he noted that an evergreen Zoysia will be available for coastal areas, one that equals Santa Ana bermudagrass on color retention during cold months and which is smog-resistant, like the Santa Ana variety.

Bentgrasses developed at the station for saline soils — a problem in many Southern California areas — now are being tested under actual use conditions as golf course putting greens.

And Spaulding is enthusiastic about the new UC strains of tall

fescue. The present stock from commercial sources, he explained, has the appearance of pasture grasses. The UC strains have finer leaves, are thicker, and are more cushiony than presently available tall fescue.

He sees new tall fescues as practical substitutes for bermudagrass in many Southern California turfgrass applications. One such application could be school athletic fields, if top-quality turf is desired. "Bermudagrasses are a high-maintenance grass," Spaulding explained. "Unlike tall fescue, they are dormant or inactive during most of the months when the schools and their athletic fields are in use."

Turfgrass Meeting, Oct. 7

Members of the New Jersey Golf Course Superintendents Association are holding their annual turfgrass supplies and equipment field day, October 7. It will be at Montclair Golf Club, 25 Prospect Ave., West Orange, N.J.

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fits rather than individual shirts and slacks. And don't be afraid to include sports jackets. One hint about color-coordination. Buy one outfit from the same manufacturer, because the dye lot will be the same. Items with a high profit margin require less sales to make more money. That's an obvious point, I grant you, but many shops concentrate only on the staples and don't ever explore the possibilities of related merchandise.

Always keep the tastes of your members uppermost in your mind. Note carefully what they've purchased down South and what they wear on informal occasions off the golf course. If you want to get more technical, you should note also their body shapes and buy clothes that enhance their appearance.

Put a little of your capital into experimentation. If worse comes to worse, you can offer this merchandise as part of a "package sale" as previously mentioned.

In the long run, attractive, carefully-selected and well-displayed merchandise should be able to "move" itself. But promotion gives it a chance to get to the customer before the customer comes to it. And that spells s-a-l-e-s. [

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