

PGA SHOW: WHERE PROS GO WRONG



PRESIDENT, ERNIE SABAYRAC, INC. MIAMI, FLORIDA

Ernie Sabayrac's enormous and colorful exhibit at Professional Golfers' Assn. Merchandise Shows has become an annual institution among the various booths in Florida. From this unique vantage point, he has seen professionals repeat year after year the same kinds of buying errors. Poor pre-show planning, Sabayrac believes, is at the heart of the matter.

Drawing from his years of experience, Sabayrac offers the following tips to help make the professional's attendance at the show this year a more profitable experience.

● The better professional merchants have already taken their inventories almost as of the date they left their shops to attend the show. They have copies of the items they have ordered from the salesmen before that point. On a separate sheet of paper they have listed all the colors and sizes in their present inventories and have added what was ordered (also broken down by size and color), so that they know exactly what their total stock picture is. The professional should carry these statistics with him when he works the show. This advance preparation seems to be the weakest point in the professional's buying program, and unfortunately 80 per cent of our customers say, "Gee, I forgot what I bought in this particular item."

● Secondly, the golf professional should bring with him that sales person who is entrusted with the final retail back home in the pro shop. Of

course, we hope it is the "Gal in the Shop." To be a successful merchant, one has to love what one is selling, and for that reason the retail clerk should have a voice in what the shop buys for resale. (The expense for the trip can be charged off by the golf professional.)

● When the professional arrives on the scene, he should go immediately to those specific suppliers he wants to work with and make an appointment with each of his local salesmen. To walk by the booth and chance that the salesman the professional wants to see will be available is not a good business practice. Set up appointments immediately and *keep them*. Many diversions happen at the show, such as meeting old buddies here, there and everywhere. Remember, the supplier wants to see the professional and do business with him. This is the main purpose for being at the show. Try to confine social business to breakfast, lunch and after the show. The professional who does this will get his money's worth from the time that he has invested in attending the show.

● When a golf professional buys from a new supplier, he should check the profit markup carefully and not be overwhelmed by a large discount. Get down to specifics, such as the cost and the suggested retail, and then take into account whatever discount is enthusiastically stated. The professional could very well find out that he will not make the amount of profit which he now

Many elements at the PGA show compete for the professional's attention. Advance preparation and scheduling appointments, says the author, can help make the show pay off

by ERNIE SABAYRAC

makes on an item that is a proven high markup retail seller. Remember, I said, "proven."

● It is also smart when buying from a new supplier not to go overboard. Be somewhat cautious at the outset. There are too many unknowns, such as the delivery record, the length of time the supplier has been in business and the reliability of the salesmen. To fully commit oneself to something untested, then afterward find out about all these failings can be disastrous for the immediate season ahead. It is not easy for the golf professional to go into the market and buy merchandise and expect it to be filled completely in May or June—by that time it has become impossible.

● In conclusion, the apparel industry is very fashion oriented. This is no longer a business of a majority of basic items in your shop. Fashion rules the roost. This is where the profit and the turnover are. If there was trouble getting reorders last year at the peak of the season, then consider what the present inventory is and what has been bought. Then take a better and heavier position on the opening inventory so it will last longer through the season. No apparel manufacturer that has had real success with its merchandise selling at retail in the pro shop can deliver later in the season the colors and sizes a professional reorders. Ninety per cent of pro shop sales have to come out of the stock on hand and not out of some manufacturer's bin. □