

Golfdom

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"Whispering Campaign" Moves Slow Stock

AT this time of the year the professionals in the eastern and central states are enjoying their biggest business season of the year with a volume of sales, according to reports from representative professionals and manufacturers, that exceeds that of any year in the past. Everything is "hotsy totsy," as the vernacular has it, and the year's bumper crop of new golfers together with the more extensive education of professionals in business management, puts the average pro pretty much at peace with the world.

But the fellow who is content to let well enough alone will soon be lost in the jam at the rear of the procession if he neglects to use his head in thinking one step ahead of the current business. For example:

With the latter part of September the golf season in the northern part of the country is rather definitely concluded. In the larger cities the early football crowds this year probably will draw more from golf courses on Saturdays than ever before for the schedule makers have booked some highly interesting games early in the season. With this counter-attraction luring the golfers who happen to be "off" of their games the pros' active market may run the risk of a sharp curtailment. Whether or not this storm signal is raised with some logical reason for its hoisting, is not so important. What really matters is the suggestion that the pro make sales hay while the sun shines.

Push the Slow Stock

As the golf fever is burning strong in his members the wise pro will make a check-up on his stock and note the items

that he has had in the shop since last season or longer. If the stock has not moved in this length of time it is up to the pro to force it into the market. The chances are that the products are of high merit. Either the shop was overstocked on these particular items, the pro and his assistants did not push them enough by conspicuous display or word-of-mouth, or the members had some groundless prejudice against the items. Regardless of the reason for the stock not moving, the pro's job is to get it sold to a satisfied customer.

The forward looking pro will carry a little stock into the winter as is possible. Not only is it poor business to have his money tied up in this frozen asset when his winter financial requirements are steady and fairly strong, but he runs the risk of having marked changes made in the style of this "dead" stock and thus putting it permanently out of the class of salable merchandise. Stock carried over the winter makes no profits for anyone.

As a general rule professionals are firmly committed to a one price policy, without "sales." Therein lies one of the reasons why the department stores steal away the professionals' business. But with good reason the pros can deviate from this policy along toward the last weeks of the season and cut the price of the goods that they have been carrying too long.

This cut price sale is not an enterprise to be broadcast to the club unless the pro is a man who is a discreet and able merchant. There is too much of a tendency for members to look upon cut price goods as items of intrinsic cheapness and for this reason the pro's entire line may suffer

from a widely heralded price reduction on a few items.

The best method for quickly turning dead stock into money by the sacrifice of a little of the profit is to mention the items offered to selected members who are good buyers and who would be inclined to relay the information to other members as "inside dope" on bargains. Under the circumstances the pro can readily tell the members to whom he talks about this part of the stock, that he over-ordered and wants to do what every other business man does, turn his stock into cash at the end of the season; or that for some reason or other the stock, despite its excellence, hasn't moved and the cut price is solely for the purpose of getting sales quickly.

Protects Winter Sales

What pro in the northern states hasn't opened his shop in the spring and found in the bags of his best customers a number of clubs that were bought from stores by these members just before they started off on winter vacation trips to the south or to California?

With the constantly increasing golfing winter traffic the northern pro who is onto his job will help his members look ahead and buy whatever clubs they may need during their winter vacations in a sunnier clime. A reminder to this effect when combined with the reduced price appeal will

bring into the professional's pocket many a dollar that has been a stranger to him in the past. We heard of one pro who went to the extent that he accounted for some of the dead stock in his shop by selling it to members for delivery and billing as far in the future as Christmas. He worked this on the wives of members and on members who were in the habit of remembering, at Christmas, the rest of their steady foursome. This idea worked well with him for he is an enthusiastic and natural born merchant and while it might not go across in many places it at least serves to show what can be done in making a complete transformation of golf shop stock into cash at the close of the season.

Today is not too early for you to look over your stock and see what dead stock could be moved by a price reduction. Make a list of the items and tell some of your members about the bargains in a way that will let them know you are doing them a favor to put them "on the inside." You can depend on them giving your stock enough free and forceful advertising to move it quickly from its long resting place in your shop. This "whispering campaign" will help you to go into the 1928 season with money enough to buy an entirely fresh stock, and all that there is to working out the plan is to talk about the items to enough of your live and talkative members to get the ball rolling.

Fee Course to Pay for Private Club

NORTH Hills Country Club at St. Louis, Mo., is going through one of the most interesting experiences in golf today and the outcome may have considerable bearing on the operation of other clubs that have land enough and initial financing enough to build two adjoining courses.

Two courses were originally installed at North Hills. Both of them are of championship character. When the club found itself confronted by the necessity of a financial readjustment one of the courses was turned into a fee proposition. Maintenance costs are reduced per course by the division of expense and other expendi-

tures are cut sharply under the figures of a single course and club house.

Of this situation at St. Louis, Alvan J. Goodbar, secretary of the club, tells GOLFDOM:

"The North Hills Country Club was originally promoted with the idea of having forty-five holes of golf, a large and elaborate country club house, an outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, bridle paths, etc. All of these facilities were predicated on the expectation of a membership of 2,000. The promoter succeeded in getting about \$50. In the meantime the work of constructing the forty-five holes of golf was well under way.