

SHOWMANSHIP *and* OTHER TIPS for BOOSTING PRO SALES

By HERB GRAFFIS

HARD work and showmanship; these are two elements difficult to beat for their importance in a pro's success. The more I see of the pros who are making the real money, the more I am of the opinion that showmanship and salesmanship are almost synonymous in the smart pro's operations.

Recently Jack Redmond, the trick shot performer, sat down in the office to talk things over. This Redmond boy is a worker. Up to a little while ago he carried along a whole show of country club entertainment. In addition to his trick shot exhibition, his night golf exhibition, playing an exhibition round with the local pro and putting on his golf movie talk in the evening, Jack staged a show of a Russian band and some singing and dancing girl numbers. There's a load to manage and an overhead that drags heavy on the roll. The show went over big at the country clubs, but difficulty in getting the right sort of advance management proved too tough for Jack to cope with and he disbanded his bunch, keeping on with his own exhibition stunts.

Here are some of the words of wisdom from Jack's tongue:

"If the pro works hard and stages his stuff right he can stir up things every new year at his club so he'll sell a raft of new playing equipment, despite any competition in the world. I get bookings out in the sticks every once in a while, and I never have to worry about making good dough out of them. At these small clubs where there are no pros I sell enough of the stock I carry to run the profit up to where no pro would sneeze at it.

"I'd a whole lot sooner take bookings with a guarantee of around \$150 than hold out for a hundred more. You can get those \$150 dates so you work every day in the week. With the \$250 over guarantee you have skip stops and when you're not working you are spending money. If I show at every club in the country it will take me 15 years to make the rounds and I have to make the price fit the trade. That's how Ford got rich.

"The pro who isn't afraid of hard and steady work and who puts showmanship into his selling is in a mighty good business."

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That reminded me of something Bill Hoare told me of his experience as a pro. He used to have clubs displayed on his first tee Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. And Bill was on the job at that spot himself. With the crowd waiting to get off there were always plenty who would examine Bill's display and remember it when they had several bad shots with the same club during the round. The player usually blames it on the club and the rest was smooth sailing for William.

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Bill handed me another hunch that is hereby passed on to the boys. In emphasizing the importance of a pro being on duty at the first tee during the heavy play times, Bill mentioned that he used to watch his members for their glaring errors in making shots. When they got through and Bill had a chance to talk to them he would diplomatically hand them pointers on correcting the faults. The golfer appreciates free advice from the pro and it's a great thing for showing the pro's interest in his members. The outcome of these cases was a very profitable booking of lessons.

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Lessons are plenty of work but if you can find anything that brings in money without work you have made the discovery that no one else has been able to do. In most clubs if it were not for the lessons the women take the pro's calendar would be just a long column of blanks. That's something the boys must overcome for there's no feeder for shop business like the lessons, and the lessons in themselves pay nicely with no stock investment. Notice a lot of the boys you know who really are making a good thing out of pro golf and see how they are playing the lesson theme to the limit.

Tommy Mulgrew at Northmoor in the Chicago district is one fellow I call to

mind in citing conspicuous examples of how plenty of lessons are the foundation of pro fortunes. Tommy always receives honorable mention when the boys get to talking about pros who have jack salted away in bulging and comforting lumps. Tom never lost an opportunity to build up his lesson business, to study the best methods of developing pupils and showing a sincere and persistent interest in the games of his pupils.

The result was that Tommy's lessons were so much in demand that some of his members tried to get him so completely booked up by a comparatively small percentage of the club's entire membership that the rest of the members complained. At the start of the year Tom's calendar was clean and available to anyone who registered up to a certain limit. The registrations of the first few days of the season were nearly a sell-out for the year. If the members don't show up at the practice tee at the time they have reserved, or don't cancel their reservations far enough in advance to allow others the time, they have to pay for it. Tommy doesn't have time for tournament play, but he is reconciled to the loss every time he looks at the old bank balance.

The Harrison brothers at St. Louis are the same way. George Sargent is another and he has been that way for years. You'll find him at the lesson tee at the same early time every day, one hour out for luncheon and then back again to give lessons until 4 p. m. He is as regular as a clock in his work, getting to the shop early and going over the work with his boys.

The lesson habit isn't the easiest thing in the world to get established at your club, but when you have it planted right, you're made as a substantial money-maker.

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Day by day, in every way, the pro outlook gets better and better, and don't let them discourage or fool you.

Here's one indication:

Looking casually over tonight's newspaper I saw a full page advertisement of an establishment that heralds itself "the bear-cat bargain center." From its golf goods feature at the top of the page I quote: "Nationally known brands and professionally autographed models go on the BARGAIN COUNTER this week. *Brand names we dare not mention*, but the supreme value you can not fail to recognize." The italics are ours. A couple of

years ago the chances are very strong that the brand names would have been mentioned, pros beaten out of some business, and the manufacturer, if he protested, would have been told, "We paid your bill, didn't we? Then what t'ell are you kicking about."

But those were in the days before the pros' unity and market-making power was made known in print and vocally in no undecided manner. That's a decided achievement to the credit of the pros, and you'll pardon us if GOLFDOM horns in for a bit of the glory and responsibility in this recent and solid progress.

These days no wise manufacturer of first class golf goods would permit demoralization of his price structure and risk of his pro trade and good will by letting his name be mentioned in such advertising. He might get rid of some cheap stuff or antiquated goods by selling them to such outlets. These outlets have their virtues. Their cheap stuff helps to attract new players to the game and money helps the manufacturer. The reliable manufacturer has to thrive if the pro is to prosper. That is the manufacturer who is going to protect the pros against cut-price competition and while so doing protect his own brand name, for it is the most valuable thing he has. The apt Shakespearean lines apply:

"Who steals my purse steals trash * * *
But he that filches from me my good
name, * * *
* * Makes me poor indeed."

N. E. Greenkeepers Issue Monthly

UNDER the editorship of Guy C. West of the Fall River C. C., with Frank H. Wilson, Jr., and James McCormack assisting, the Greenkeepers' Club of New England is issuing a monthly "Newsletter" of 4 pages, containing contributions from members on subjects of interest to the club and brief resumes of advances in greenkeeping technique.

As a means of keeping the association members in close touch with the activities of the organization and also tipping them off to the newest tricks of the trade, the *Newsletter* fills a useful niche.

PROS

If you have changed clubs, send us your new address so you won't miss an issue of GOLFDOM.
