

SALESMAN'S SLANTS ON pushing pro sales OVER STORE COMPETITION

By JACK DILLON

I HAVE been interested in reading the articles pro and con as to whether or not the pros should cut prices, and I thought a few words from the salesman's point of view might have some practical angles.

I might say here by way of introduction that I have been selling pros and stores for the last 10 years; the past three years since I started my own company I have been selling the pro almost exclusively. Before that I was a pro myself, so have a slant at the situation from both sides.

My idea is that the pro should not let the bars down and start to cut prices. If he is not selling 10% of his members, why cut his profit on the other 90% to get the business of that 10%?

I cannot see where the pro can compete by cutting prices with his limited sales. He would have to buy cut price merchandise, and to sell this would kill his sales on his standard merchandise, and injure his own reputation.

A pro should handle standard nationally advertised goods, and he will seldom see the price cut on these by stores if makers can help it. The stores must buy merchandise of inferior quality or the well-known makes under private brand for sales.

The pros have a legitimate objection to handling merchandise from manufacturers who make the same model clubs for stores under private brands for sale purposes. The pro should not buy from manufacturers who deliberately sell wholesalers who give discounts off to any industrial house, bank or anyone who comes along, as well as houses who sell by mail order at cut prices.

Most of the merchandise so sold is not nationally advertised standard goods. The merchandise that is sold that way can easily be traced by a pro commission and put up to the manufacturer.

One of the worst evils a pro has to combat today, worse than cut prices by retail stores, I believe, is the fact that the manufacturers are selling so many jobbers

today that many people have a connection with some wholesale house or another, or have a friend who has. Take, for instance, a small town; most members of the country club are in some business or another buying from some wholesale house that is handling golf equipment. Naturally a member sends away for his set of clubs. This is the situation that is hard to control for bargain hunters can get standard nationally advertised merchandise that way.

Many customers are lost to stores through merchandise bought on a sale. Again, the clerks do not know golf clubs and will sell clubs not suited to the purchaser, thus eventually making a customer for some pro.

The pro has a limited clientele, usually between 300 and 400. His best opportunity lies in his personal attitude in developing the friendship of these members, getting them "for" him, and anxious to patronize him. Let him sell himself first, and the rest will be easier.

A Market Survey

At this time of the season, here is a tip for some young pros who are not versed on all merchandising methods as yet. Go through each member's bag and list what he lacks in his bag. If there is no three iron in Jones' bag, get in a discussion with him and bring up the usefulness of a three iron, and so on down the list, then look at the bag. Pros are losing opportunities on bag sales because they do not think they can get this business. They can if they go after it.

Co-operative buying, I think, is not going to be the panacea of all ills. Supposing you can get 10% better buying co-operatively, that will be nearly all eaten up in administration and carrying charges. A 5% cut on your resale price isn't going to attract very much more business. I believe in organization; I believe the pro should be much better organized, he may try some co-operative buying, but I believe he is unduly alarmed about price cutting.

loss of much business. I think he is doing as much business as ever; making more money today than ever. Times have changed; there are many more golfers today and consequently there is an opportunity for stores to sell a lot of golf goods. We must not forget that they have a legitimate right to do so. I can see a big change even in the last couple of years in pro merchandising, and I think we can thank our good friend GOLFDOM for instilling some of the ideas.

Of course, the pro has made rapid strides in personal appearance; most of them dress better than their members. This is an important sales help. The pro who is slovenly today—well, it is just too bad.

He has likewise made the same studies in the dressing of his shop, and the pro today who is not paying attention to the arrangement and cleanliness of his shop for a back number and losing money every day. The pro can forget price cutting, but check up on the manufacturer who caters to cut price stores. The pro should give service rather than price. A lot of this won't apply to pros at public parks; they have a different situation and could probably run sales to their advantage.

Live Ones Are Awake

Some pros are overlooking opportunities for money making. Jack Patterson was in my office recently, and we were discussing raincoats. He said he had sold 78 raincoats in one day at a tournament, last year; at another tournament he sold 43 because that was all he had or could get, and he said he could have sold twice as many. Jack runs all of his tournaments on rainy days and so has sold, I guess, more rainjackets than anyone in this district.

Jack Daray keeps himself well stocked on "sidelines," consequently doesn't lose many sales on sweaters, leather coats, hose and items of clothing that find a ready sale in the larger shops.

Eddie Gayer at Twin Orchards is one pro who is awake to the possibilities of sales of leather coats and golf bags. He sells many more than the average pro because he keeps them on display in a clean, well-arranged shop. The St. Louis boys also are up to date in merchandising, and the Harrison boys, Johnnie Manion, Ed. Duwe, Jim Pairman, Fred Clarkson and the rest, have clean well-stocked shops, and have nothing to worry about except the Cubs.

Down in Rock Island, Tom McQuarrie is staying right on the job and reads about the tournaments in the papers. Tom is good enough to get in the money in some of them, but is sure of getting in the money at home, as he gets what his members want. They are all "for" him, and wouldn't buy anywhere else if they could get it cheaper.

Elmer Biggs of Peoria in the off season is a bond salesman, and a man clever enough to sell bonds has a lot of good sales ideas for his shop. His fine increase last year shows that results can be obtained with the proper methods, because he has some nasty competition to overcome in his town.

Bill Gordon at Rockford, Ill., never worries about competition; he never lets customers get away from him, and they don't try very hard.

Recently I called on a few north side (Chicago district) clubs. Al Lesperance has made a wonderful change in his shop and should attract many more sales. It is wonderful what a little paint mixed up with a little intelligence will do. Alex Cunningham at North Shore is a newcomer to the district, but an old-timer in the game. Alex looks like a young colt raring to go. He was a little worried about an extra couple of inches on his waistline, so bought a reducing machine, and this machine will make Alex a strong addition to the local playing pros.

Terry McGovern was busy painting his shop at the new Meadowbrook C. C. and didn't have more than half the paint on himself. One guess as to the color Terry was using. You're right.

Give us some hot weather and the boys in the Central states won't have time to worry about competition.

Pros: Pitch in for the Common Cause

THE professionals' main problem as I see it is to raise the boys out of their lethargy and stamp out whatever selfish individualism may exist. I think if a pro is so good that he does not need protective measures it is all the more reason why he should pitch in and help his less fortunate brother. No pro is bigger than the profession, and in most cases he owes the profession for everything he has.

—Willie Ogg.