

Women's Business Calls for Pro Development

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ANY professional who has taken note of the growth of women's golf during the past few years and who has not been thoughtfully planning and acting to control this part of the market has no ranking as a pro business man.

Judging solely from talks with other professionals and observation of the situation at my own club I should say that 1930 saw 25 per cent more women playing golf than we could count as active players during 1929. We professionals have seen this trend growing for the past few years, for I think there are not 5 per cent of the country's professionals who are unable to say that women's lessons have been the biggest part of their lesson income. We are to be censured for not making more of a play for women's business and in excusing our failure I can only say that manufacturers themselves have been equally guilty of negligence in this matter.

I would risk a rough guess that not more than 20% of the women golfers who were playing at the start of the 1930 season have a complete set of clubs of their own. In most cases the women have clubs that their husbands have discarded. I, like most other pros, have cut down the shafts on many a derelict club that some husband has turned over to his wife and I have winced as I turned over the altered club as a reputedly real golf club. We have seen the improvement that matched sets of good clubs have effected in the games of our men members and know that for the most desolate club a good set of clubs is bound to effect an improvement in the score. With the clubs that most women are using I wonder that they can score as well as they do. We know what good clubs will do for our women members for we know are handicapped in showing instruction results by the equipment with which most women attempt to play. Still we seem to be unduly shy about bringing this matter to the at-

ention of the women players. Possibly it is because so many professionals are married men that they hesitate to put on a selling campaign of enough strength. If the pro plants the suggestion of a woman spending \$60 to \$120 for a set of clubs and she begins nagging her husband for the money, the husband won't take kindly to the affair.

When a man buys an expensive matched set a lot of times he will pay cash just to keep the item from going on the monthly bill and being the cause of a family wrangle on the comparative expenses of playing golf.

Installment Buying Helps.

I have found a woman takes to the idea of buying a good matched set of clubs if the pro will pick out such clubs as will provide her with the matched set as the result of a number of individual purchases. When I sell a club to a woman I tell her that I am selling her a certain weight and model so she can add other clubs until she has a matched set that will be exactly like any other expensive set. It not only puts into her mind the idea of buying the rest of the clubs as soon as possible but it also makes sure that she will come to me for the club and not be lured into the purchase of some \$2.45 misfit at some cut-rate store just because the price seems to be a bargain.

This year I have had excellent success in selling matched sets to women on the installment plan, billing them a third of the amount per month. It probably would mean more business to bill them over a four month period, although the pro's judgment of just what terms will appeal to the purchaser dictates the action in this respect. In a year like this one has been I believe that many pros have overlooked the value of an installment plan. My club is rather far out from the center of the Chicago district. We have two 18-hole courses and a big clubhouse with a

good supply of living quarters, the resident members furnishing a good steady amount of business during the summer. The membership is representative of first class substantial business men and on that account naturally would feel the results of market losses and business depression. A couple of years ago, I believe, pros having similar conditions at their clubs would have experienced a serious slump in business. This year, however, business has been ahead practically everywhere. If the pros will sit down and figure out the answer it will be plainly presented as the increased volume of women's business. We are getting to the point where instead of the golf widow being a pathetic figure in American life it is the golf widower.

Counsels Foresighted Action.

In this great development of women's business the pro is having opportunity rap at his door again. If he is slow to open and let this new volume of business to come in he can blame no one but himself. The department—and other stores are handing out to women some of the worst excuses I ever have seen under the name of golf clubs. Anything with a head, shaft and a grip is being put out to women shoppers in the stores, and by people who have not the slightest qualifications as advisors in the buying of correct playing equipment for the individual. The pro, if he steps in now, can absolutely control this great and growing amount of business and make it so a woman will think of going nowhere but to a professional for her full money's worth in golf equipment.

History to Repeat?

A lot of lessons we should have learned in developing our men's business now should be made to pay a profit with women. We have let men get into the habit of keeping their bags until they fall to pieces. We can protect against that by arousing some pride about their bags among the women. The golf bag business isn't 50% what it should be and part of the fault is the pro's. We need not take even half of the blame, at that, for the manufacturers as a general thing have not given the pros a logical and strong display and sales plan that could be worked out in profitable co-operation.

The manufacturers and professionals both can get out to a paying relationship in this women's business if the club manufacturers provide the pros with an exclusively pro-sold line of women's clubs and feature real design and workmanship

The golf club and ball manufacturers' associations are indebted to the officials of almost a third of the country's 9-hole clubs for furnishing information used in the book on small town golf club organization, construction and operation which the manufacturers will issue soon for the promotion of more golf clubs in the smaller towns.

The manufacturers desire to publicly express appreciation to the officials who generally and promptly supplied value data and advice in the preparation of this book.

The book has been compiled and edited by Herb Graffis of GOLFDOM and will come from the press early this winter. It will be available at no cost to those intending to establish golf clubs in small towns.

embracing the finest of bench-made features in the pro line. We have seen what better shop arrangement and display has done in building business in men's clubs. It is up to us during the winter to figure out how we can make our shops still more attractive in making an appeal for the women's business, without sacrificing that distinctive pro shop atmosphere which has the value always attached to the headquarters of a mastercraftsman. I am confident that the professionals who employ their winters to good advantage, planning for 1931 business, will arrange women's special sections of their displays. One of the reasons why more women's clubs weren't sold during 1930 by the pros was simply because more were in stock and displayed separately from the men's clubs.

There is a tendency in the golf business to be content just because each year's business shows an improvement. It seems to me that this lulls us into a false feeling of security and satisfaction. Our volume may increase but still we may be losing out because we are not taking fullest advantage of the vastly increased selling opportunities put before us by the marvelous growth of the game.

As the 1930 season closes in the north every professional may well look back over the year and see how unmistakably the signs pointed to a grand 1931 in women's business for the forward-looking professional who will spend some mental and manual effort in getting all set.