SALES POLICIES

By The Roamer

WHAT OFTEN puzzles me is why a manufacturer will go to an enormous expense to sell the golf professional, and then unsell him through some petty sale for a "direct" order that probably nets him a few hundred dollars profit. I particularly have in mind a recent order for two or three hundred golf bags which usually retail in a golf shop for $15 to $18. This order was placed after the season was well under way by a large corporation that bought the bags to sell to their employes at cost. They bought them, I understand, for around $9, which is about $3 less than a number of pros paid for the same bag.

These pros will be "holding the bags" for some time to come, as several golf clubs are located in the section of this corporation's various plants. Can anyone understand the line of reasoning used by such a company that will nullify for such a paltry consideration all the work they have done to get pro business?

A manufacturer, by smart advertising and promotion stunts, worked himself into a wonderful position to get the pro's business and when everything seemed to be going along fine what does he do but load the market with "drug store" golf balls. The product of this company is as good as golf balls can be and from my observation it would seem that he is losing money by undermining the strong connection he has made with the pros. I hope this manufacturer reads these lines, and if he should, my advice to him is to let someone else make the "junk" and stick to his main line. No manufacturer is going to be able to work both ends against the middle.

The pros are watching policies very closely. Any manufacturer having an indifferent attitude toward the pros this year will find the going much tougher next year for lack of pro support and the murderous price competition in other lower quality golf goods retailing channels.

An eastern specialty manufacturing company has been doing some very aggressive direct advertising during the past six months; in fact, it almost amounts to a deluge. Pros tell me they get a broadside at least once or twice a week, and their aggressiveness has reached the point where they ship goods that are not ordered. These are the very methods that the pro should try to stamp out, as this kind of merchandising is based on the gullibility of the prospect. This scheme is worked on the theory that the pro will not return the goods. Some of the easy ones don't.

A few years ago a manufacturer of neckties tried to work this scheme all over the country. He had a long sucker list and everything went fine until he struck a snag which caused him to sue one of his "customers." The court ruled that inasmuch as the goods were not ordered, the consignee was under no obligation to either return them or give an account of them. If any pro gets goods sent to him in this manner it is well to keep this in mind in the interest of better business.

Another detriment to pro interests, for which the pros alone are responsible, are the "good fellow" orders sometimes given by certain pros who have none too much business experience. For instance, a salesman calls upon such a pro and his "line" registers heavy. Rather than be considered a piker he gives the salesman an order. Three months later the bill becomes overdue and causes him plenty of worry.

Such orders are both given and taken on the wrong basis and invariably lead to trouble. After all the only basis upon which to buy goods is on the knowledge, based upon experience, that the same can be disposed of within reasonable time with satisfaction and profit to both manufacturer and retailer. A manufacturer is unwise who makes an effort to sell the pro a large stock of goods without regard to the possibility of them being disposed of in a short time. Many instances of bad credit can be traced to this source, and it is high time that salesmen were taught that a big order not paid for is less desirable than three or four smaller orders making the same total and paid for on time. The golf professional is losing thousands of dollars every year due to unwise buying that takes his ready cash out of the bank into goods that sometimes remain upon his shelves for months while he loses his discounts. Savings on quantity buying are soon offset by this loss of use of ready cash.

The pro should study the economics of business more carefully and buy to sell and not for good fellowship.