

Brainy Handling of Apparel Business Brings Pro Profit

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CAN THE GOLF PRO be an apparel merchant? Can he augment his income substantially through the sale of sports apparel in the pro shop?

The answer is decidedly and absolutely "Yes!"—*if* the pro will make up his mind that he must operate like a merchant. In fact, the more he becomes a modern merchant, the greater are his opportunities for profit.

Analyze for a moment the attributes of a merchant and the methods employed in a successful, up-to-date store. Compare these facilities and methods with your own in the pro shop:

The store is usually burdened with overhead expense—rent, light, heat, insurance, clerk hire, delivery, etc., 12 months out of the year. You have little, if any, such expense.

With all his expense, the modern mer-

chant is satisfied with a moderate mark-up on his goods. In apparel, the customary mark-up is 50 per cent; that is, an item costing \$1.00 will retail for \$1.50, making the gross profit (50c) one third the selling price or one half the cost. Many pros, with a fraction of the merchant's overhead expense, mark their merchandise much higher. This might be okeh on certain items, but it is a mistake as the rule, for customers are shopping-wise these days. They may be willing to pay a "little more" on a golf course, but not an excessive amount as compared with a store purchase.

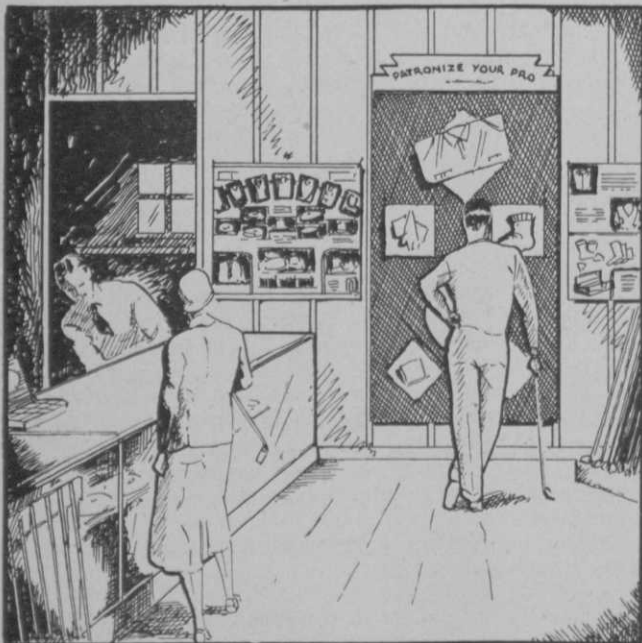
Plan for Turnover

The wise merchant strives for rapid turnover at a smaller profit. The wise pro does likewise. He doesn't have to carry a large stock, but he should have a variety

of useful and smart wearables, popular in price, on which he can realize a fast turnover. On his higher priced items, he might have a sample of each, or order from a catalogue. That is the secret of profit and success—turnover!

The wise merchant holds down his inventory, discounts his bills, guards his credit standing, works closely with his buying sources, and does not abuse the privilege of returning goods. The wise pro is quite mindful of these important phases of merchandising.

The successful store has a "front." It depends on window displays and devotes great care to the proper display of merchandise inside the store. Not every pro shop has windows suitable for display (though back-



grounds can often be built), but there is great opportunity for improvement in interior display of apparel. Merchandise well displayed is half sold. Get it up where people can see it, put a reasonable price tag on it, and your chances for making the sale are greatly increased.

Makes Display Suggestion

In the accompanying sketch, an idea is conveyed for a large wall panel constructed of felt or beaver board on a wood frame. Any "handy man" can build it easily and inexpensively. A wall space, not used now, can be utilized. Black felt, duvetyne, or sateen, make a good background. Contrasting squares or circles of felt can be tacked or glued on to enhance the display, and the various items can be mounted with thumb tacks over these panels. The merchandise can be wrapped in cellophane to avoid spoilage. Most dime stores or dry goods stores carry cellophane. A little price tag can be pinned to each item—socks, caps, gloves, underwear, shirts, etc. Getting a sample of each fast moving item on display this way is bound to help sales.

It is also important to keep cases, counters and shelves neatly arranged. Display items in the case and on it, in thoughtful taste as to item, size, color, price, etc.

Advertise Yourself

The alert merchant advertises, and strikes out into several directions for business. Newspapers, billboards and direct mail are not his only media of advertising. He belongs to organizations, attends luncheons, gets around and makes himself known. If he is a clothier and haberdasher, he looks the part.

You—YOURSELF—are your best advertising medium! What *you*, as the pro, wear yourself, *goes!* You know that. Why not cash in on it? Your members are always ready to spot a new cap on you, a new shirt or anklet or dodad of some sort. And the first thing you know, they want one like it. Phoning and dropping messages to wives of members is smart advertising, and acquainting yourself with hubbies' and wives' anniversaries often leads to a sale of a "gift" item.

Your locker-room is a great place to advertise. Why not put up a sign in the locker-room reading "UNDERWEAR, SOCKS, SHIRTS, etc., FOR SALE IN THE PRO SHOP." Get the locker-room steward to work with you and for you. What is more disgusting than a clammy suit of under-

wear after a shower? Do your members know you carry underwear?

Push Caddie Outfits

Caddie outfits can be made a source of added revenue. Many clubs have a caddie fund—members drop a dime in a box after each round, and the accumulated sum goes for caddie outfits; or the caddie buys the outfit himself. A distinctive caddie sweater or sweatshirt, and cap, is an asset to the club's appearance, and also is helpful to the caddie in gaining recognition for "hitching a ride" to the club. The pro can work with the caddie-master on caddie outfits.

After all, the whole problem is pretty well up to you. If you were located in a store with fixed overhead, you'd make it your business to sell a lot of goods. Why not, then—with the advantages of little or no overhead expense—make an intensive effort to sell more sports apparel! It has been done. It is being done. It can be done—and you can do it if you try.

Buy wisely and cautiously. Don't overload yourself, but have a variety of *useful* items. Be satisfied with a reasonable mark-up, and meet competition. Above all, strive for turnover. Don't try to become a merchant. You are one. Be a good one!

Pros Make Good as Merchants

You need not think that you are stepping out of your field as a merchant when you are selling apparel. The reason for your selling is entirely service to your members; otherwise not even your desire for profit would warrant your operation in this field of merchandising.

There are many pro merchants who have been so decidedly successful in this apparel selling that there can be no doubt of the wisdom of having apparel stocks in pro shops. The main risk element is the merchandising ability and effort of the pro who is responsible for the shop.

Let me cite the comments made by two successful pro merchandisers of apparel, James K. Thomson of Mohawk (summer) and Ormond Beach (winter) and Paul Erath of Edgewood CC (Pittsburgh district).

Study Your Members

Erath says:

"The pro must make a special effort to show that he is interested in helping the members in their selection of sports apparel as well as in the proper selection of their golf playing equipment.

"He must have inviting displays of apparel, and not have practice bags, tees or golf balls scattered among the apparel items. He must select stocks suitable to all groups of his members, and not simply the colors and styles that would appeal to a dressy young pro.

"A pro must have merchandise in his shop to sell. Many of the fellows don't carry enough of well-selected lines. Telling a customer about what you can get for him doesn't interest him as much as having in stock what he wants.

"The pro must be cautious in the selection of his employees; unless they have the right personality or training they can ruin business when the pro is not in the shop.

"I feel that if the policies I have outlined are followed the pro's earnings will be greatly increased, not only in the apparel line but in his other business relations with the members.

"The members figure that if they have been properly and expertly treated in the purchase of any small item they will gladly patronize you in the future with larger purchases and boost the pro in most enthusiastic fashion to friends and fellow-members."

Jimmy Thomson Sells

Jimmy Thomson is the fellow who patented the buggy-whip limber-shafted club back in 1925 and kept campaigning his idea until the whippier shaft idea took the spotlight. Thomson is a merchant and knows the pro business.

His idea about apparel sales in the pro shop is this:

"I always am looking for something that will sell, and something that *does* sell. Apparel answers these two tests.

"When boom times were on I carried supplies of imported hose, sweaters and other highest quality merchandise. Today I stock with a studied regard to the present condition of pocketbooks.

"At Ormond during the winter I have to have different stocks than at Mohawk, for there are no stores at Ormond carrying golfers' apparel. I select stocks that any player can wear at any club in the country and feel well dressed. Here I stock up with everything I figure golfers will require. They come into my shop and while looking at the apparel items a fellow always can use, they see my club and assortment, which includes all of the standard brands. At a resort to which people come from all over the country I don't think it advisable to stock just one manufacturer's brand.

"The wise pro merchant is bound to make money out of the golf apparel business because after all the pro shop is supposed to supply conveniently what the

golfer wants. The golfer doesn't want to go out shabbily dressed.

"From my observations in Florida this season I am confident the pro business is going to greatly improve this year.

"The whippy shaft idea will get loads of golfers who are in the market for clubs going to pros for expert advice on the proper shafts. I am confident that George Jacobus' idea of making teaching a headline subject is going to stimulate lesson business and that will mean business all along the line for the pros. I have had plenty of experience myself in pushing lesson business as the basis for sales in the pro shop, and I know that more lessons is going to mean more sales of clubs, balls, bags and apparel."

PGA Plans for Pro Short Course

THE FIRST short course in pro department operation will be held at Morrison Hotel, Chicago, during two days the last week in March, says R. W. Treacy, sec. of the PGA.

Suggestion of the short course, as mentioned in February GOLFDOM, was received with keen interest by midwestern professionals. It is planned to restrict attendance at the course to 40 members of the PGA. Assistants who are members of the PGA and are working for PGA members also will be permitted to register for the course. Registration fee is \$5. The reason for limiting attendance to 40 is to enable the lecturers and discussions to handle subjects brought up at the short course.

Applications for admission to the short course will be handled by the PGA headquarters, First National Bank Bldg., Chicago. It is suggested that applications be sent early, as the demand for places in the first pro business short course is almost certain to exceed the number of places available. Applicants will be filed in the order received.

Program of the first short course will present a number of nationally known business authorities. On the first day's program will be lectures on shop layout, display, advertising, sales policies, accounting, club schedules and greenkeeping. The second day will be devoted to golf instruction methods. Several of the outstanding teachers will figure in this part of the program. The PGA plan for research and development of effective instruction will be discussed.