

Pro Must Plan His Public Relations Work

By JOE FRASCA

Pro, Augusta (Ga.) Country Club



Joe Frasca

Ask a professional what community work he's doing in addition to doing the expected duties at his club and you'll often get the answer, "I've got more than I can do at the club and just can't bother with outside activities." Many will admit readily that they have felt that they should take active parts in community affairs but just can't seem to get the time for this phase of their public relations.

The men who are active in these community enterprises, in moderate-sized cities, smaller towns and suburbs, are just as busy as the pro so the pro's belief that he hasn't got the time really hasn't much foundation to it. The pro is the associate of other businessmen of the community when these men come to the club for relaxation or to do their share as officers and committeemen in management of the club's affairs. The pro should carry this sort of association further in exhibiting his interest in the welfare of the community and his willingness to do his full share as a citizen.

A golf professional, just as a banker, merchant, lawyer, doctor or other professional man should take a faithful, energetic and thoughtful role in community activities. It is something he must assume in bearing his share of responsibility for the community's welfare. Furthermore, it is one of the wisest ways in which he can build himself and his profession in public esteem.

Should Join Service Clubs

The pro should join one or two of the good social and civic service clubs. If he is under 35 he should by all means join the local Junior Chamber of Commerce and identify himself with the leading young businessmen of the community. Pro golf certainly has had, in the building of its tournament circuit, ample demonstration of the vigor and brains of the Jaycees.

Another good club for the pro is Rotary. There are several classifications under which the pro can come in Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimists, Lions or other service clubs. As a professional golfer, recreation director, or course supt., if he is in charge of the course, the pro member of the service club

makes excellent contacts and develops himself as a businessman and public-spirited citizen.

Then, too, in a foresighted manner he can head what is practically a club of his own when he takes a deep interest in his junior golfers. Since coming to Augusta I have given a great deal of my time to the youngsters. Our club is a very active one. We have 450 playing members. I have about 75 junior golfers shooting in the low 70s. The older boys take part in the club championships. We also have a junior championship.

Junior Golf Is Foresight

I am sure that in 5 years from now we will have the best group of golfers in the southeast. These lads represent part of my public service. I have done my level best to give them the same sort of tutoring and encouragement my ex-boss Dave Hunter gave me the 6 years I was with him at Plandome.

It has greatly benefitted my interests in the community to be known as one who pays special attention to the development of the youngsters' golf. I have steadily conducted group lessons—in groups of 4 or more—depending on the ages and how advanced the students are. I also encourage refresher courses. These boys and girls eventually will become my key members. But right now, when I get around in my civic duties, the attention I've given to the youngsters proves it has established me with their parents as a fellow-citizen genuinely interested in the progress and happiness of their children.

Pro Competition Increasing

Another thing that my association with other businessmen in civic enterprises does for me is in keeping me right up with the latest in business trends and methods. The pro's shop business is of major importance to him. He must be very much on his toes or a goodly percent of business he might get in his shop will go to the downtown stores.

If the pro will check in his city or town he will find that he has a great deal of com-



The pro shop at Augusta CC is attractive and conveniently located.

petition from stores handling golf goods as one of numerous items. It seems that not only is there an untold number of sporting goods retail outlets now but that the situation is going to get worse in a tremendous bunch of new outlets competing for the golfer's equipment business. If the pro is going to get his share he'll have to make smart use of every contact and every idea he can get.

In checking his own business the pro must begin in his own bag storage. He must have at least 90% of his members' bags for service. With his members' bags under his eye he can keep a close watch of just who is going to need new woods, new irons, a new bag, head-covers, etc. If he hasn't made every effort to give bag service that provides a basis for getting these bags in storage, he'd better do some thinking and working, quick.

There is a good profit in minor repairs such as replacing old grips, refinishing wooden clubheads, checking whipping and checking bags for worn-out straps or needed sewing or zippers. Another small but steady profit that comes from another service members appreciate is replacing worn spikes on golf shoes. Saddle-soaping golf bags is still another.

Make Your Shop Shine

Next the pro had better check his sports-wear and golf playing equipment selling facilities. If his showroom isn't as attractive as it possibly can be made, he'd better attend to that. He's definitely in a tough competitive situation against store displays.

If your showroom happens to have brick

walls you can finish the walls with wall-board or a veneer—or knotty pine, if you can get it—hang up a few pictures, hang bright curtains and see that your show-cases, tables and wall displays are fresh and clean.

The old days of limited stocks in pro shops have gone. Now, at the good club, you've almost got to have everything you think your member needs for playing golf. More than that: you've got to let the member and his wife know what you've got. You have to keep telling them. One ad or letter now and then isn't enough. And by all means make your campaign for Christmas business strong, beginning with a letter around the first of December listing everything you've got in stock. Letters to members' wives suggesting what their husbands might use as golf Christmas presents are work because they're more than merely form letters, but such letters are not only effective selling, they're great public relations in letting the wives know that you know and think of what golf goods the husband needs.

Now you can sell almost any clubs you can get. That's a great temptation to neglect the sort of service that is of true pro expert character. But when stock again becomes available you'll have to have a complete line of golf playing equipment with extra putters, sand irons, chipping irons. No. 5 woods. If you're using a new set of clubs let your members try them out.

Make Pro Service Unique

Again you'll be seeing the wisdom of letting your member hit a few shots with clubs before he buys them. Go to the practice tee with him and check his grip or any

other fault he may have. Try the clubs on him for size and other specifications there. That's the one thing the pro can do that no other retailer of golf clubs can. Make the most of it.

You can further distinguish your shop and its member service by attention to stocking the best of the little things. Keep a good supply of gloves in stock—in pairs and right- and left-handed. Have beeswax, rosin powder and other grip material, band-aids, and an assortment of tees, long and short. Have tees in different colors for you'd be surprised to know how many of your members are color-blind.

I have my tees in transparent paper packages. On one side of the package is my name and on the other is a selling message for golf professional service. This sales talk sets forth a case for expert service in all lines that I have to live up to in the golf line.

My bill-forms, letterheads and other advertising material are examples of first-class printing, and so are the form letters I send out. I could get the work done cheaper and on less expensive paper, but on all these perhaps small details I never overlook an opportunity to subconsciously impress my members that they are getting from the pro shop the thoroughly high-class service high-class people who belong to a high-class club should have.

Keep Advertising Constantly

The alert professional golf businessman realizes he must keep his members reminded that he's in business for them. I do business with a good sign painter. He prepares for my shop display selling messages that are attractively framed. Lines such as: "Keep Fit—Play Golf," "It Pays to Take Lessons," "Don't Keep Paying Your Opponent; Take A Few Lessons," may not be examples of advertising copywriting genius but by keeping these simple messages changed often and pecking away I know I get business and better serve my

members. Under my clock I have a sign, "It's Time to Take A Lesson."

There is an electric continuous message device that can be placed in the shop, or better still, behind the club bar on party nights, especially, and that can get across considerable selling talk for the pro.

Budget Pro Time

I think it's highly important for the pro to be available for lessons almost any time. This brings up the vital matter of the pro smartly budgeting his time for time is his greatest asset. I believe the pro should spend much of Saturdays, Sundays and holidays in or near his shop. On these days he has to switch his attention back and forth from the shop and the starting tee. By watching the members' swings on these busy days and noting the needs for correction he gets a good basis for helpful conversation with the member the next time he sees him. Unless the pro is very much in evidence these busy days the members are going to think they're being short-changed in pro service.

It is essential that the pro keep a good bookkeeping system; one that's complete but not too complicated. He must have an indexed file of all the members and their purchases, a cash book, a charge book, and a ledger. He's got to have close control of his inventory with the stock in a pro shop now becoming much larger and more varied than it used to be. I certainly think that the pro these days had better write his orders and handle his other business correspondence on a typewriter. It's not difficult to learn to operate one of the many portables now on the market.

In many communities one part of the pro's public service can be that of writing a golf column for the local newspaper. He can get a lot of personal mention of his players into print and that positively promotes his public relations. It's good advertising that constantly keeps his name before the local golfers. His talks and demonstrations before local clubs of men and women and before high school groups are very effective public relations. He certainly should write regularly for his club's magazine or bulletin, if the club has one.

Certainly it all takes time, it requires study and a close watch for public relations opportunities. And it all is work. But it makes money for the pro and if the pro isn't willing to work more for more money he's out of place in this game as a business.

Corner of Joe Frasca's shop,
Augusta CC.

