

Creating "Atmosphere" That Betters Pro Shop Sales

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WHEN you've given your own pro department business a lot of study you can go into almost any other pro shop in the country and tell how the pro is doing by the "atmosphere" of the shop.

Pro shop "atmosphere" differs from that of the store selling golf goods. In the pro shop the display should be a pleasant temptation, a reflection of class and value, and give a subconscious feeling that all the personnel in the pro department and every item of merchandise in the shop is there for the sole purpose of contributing to the enjoyment of the member and the member's guests.

There is a fine difference between merchandising at the pro shop and at the store. The customer goes into the store with the deliberate intention of buying something. Most of the times the customer comes into the pro shop the visit is for buying balls, tees or some comparatively minor item, and the pro must make the most of that opportunity to arouse the visitor's interest in buying something additional that will be well worth the money in added scoring help, pleasure, comfort and convenience.

The first problem of the pro in making his department one that actually is part of the benefit of private club membership is the problem of locating an attractive shop where men and women both can walk into the shop without going out of the route

they travel to the first tee. And in many places the answer is difficult, as the pro shops often are architectural afterthoughts.

Shops Must Show Class

But regardless of where the shop is located with respect to men's and women's lockerrooms and the first tee, and of how the shop is provided with floor and wall display space and windows, the pro must make fullest use of its possibilities. The shop must be made, by paint and attractive display of merchandise, a place that will have a strong magnetism and express the spirit and the class of the club's members.

This knack of proper display of merchandise is something that we pros have to study and develop. In my own case, one of my members sent the head display man from his department store to help me show the merchandise in its most attractive form and convenient for shopping and sales service. There are many little but important details that these experts can bring to the pro's attention in giving him basis for effective display. You can get a lot of help from these men and as you're a customer of their stores and they and their employers often are golf enthusiasts, it's a tie-up the wise pro will make and use.

The many little things that make perfection must be considered and watched

Handy location of handicap record in Southern Hills pro shop makes it easy for Wotherspoon and assistants to keep in touch with members' scoring and show personal interest that ties up with sales.



at all times by the pro. Easily available, pleasant and complete service by the pro department is just as important to a thorough picture of high class private club service as a finely groomed golf course and a smoothly operated clubhouse. And they do create the "atmosphere" that subconsciously establishes a disposition to buy from the pro.

Those incidentals such as ordering the caddies for the members and their guests, checking their clubs, arranging games when a member comes out alone, welcoming the guest and treating the member with the courtesy and thoughtfulness you'd extend to a friend visiting your own home, all combine to put the member in the spirit of wanting to do business with you as a man who is genuinely concerned with his enjoyment at the club.

Draw Them to the Shop

Furthermore, it's these many little things that get the member in the habit of coming into your shop. That's the first thing you must have—steady traffic into your shop.

One thing that brings members in is the handicap card rack in the shop. The men's and women's racks in your shop also then are handy to you so you can keep an eye on how your members' games are, and can offer advice, discreetly, if you think the members are not scoring according to their possibilities.

Probably this year you have about all the lessons you can book and you may feel you don't have to watch the scores as tip-offs to instruction business. Yet, the main reason for the pro's job is that of seeing that all the members play well enough to get pleasure out of their golf and to feel like playing a lot of it. In this respect you have a sales promotion factor that no stores can have. By showing real interest in the member's scoring and not being reluctant to give some free advice tactfully, you get a very strong "in" with the member who might not otherwise think much about how he could do more business with the pro in reciprocating the pro's interest in the member's game.

The more you study your business of pro shop merchandising the more you are convinced that the pro must have a wisely chosen stock of smaller items in order to maintain a steady and large volume that never could be attained solely on the sale of clubs and bags. The ball sales, which in many shops before the war, constituted about 50% of the season's gross, were the indication to pros that steady volume of smaller-priced units of sale is essential to the pro's security in business, and to the club's interest too. It is obvious to experienced club officials that unless the pro shop is smartly handled as a mem-

bers' service station there won't be enough money in the job to attract the type of a pro that contributes to the standing and member satisfaction of a high class club.

The sales of clubs during the next few years should be tremendous. There will be plenty of competition for this business but the pro who has diplomatically impressed upon his members his superior capacity for giving them personal service is sure to get by far the greater part of this volume.

Club sales are the primary item in demonstrating the value of the pros expert buyers'-aid service.

A constant customer who buys all the little items is the one who makes the profit for the professional and no customer will be constant if his golf clubs do not fit him.

In my humble opinion the strength of the shaft in a club is the important feature in selling clubs and I tend toward medium to stiff shafts for most of my players that they may learn to hit reasonably hard and not have to time a slow swing with a whippy shaft in order to keep the ball down the middle.

The professional himself would be an unhappy golfer with a misfit set of clubs and most certainly would not play with them even if he scratched them here and there while trying them out. In normal times the stock should consist of a representative line of practically all standard manufacturers' clubs even though the turnover of some is slow.

It is almost a crime to sell a fast, highly compressed ball to the dub player though of course anyone is entitled to a ball with some 'feel.' Since golf balls are carefully manufactured for all types we should take time out with our assistants and instruct them the type of ball each of our members should play. In many cases our assistants do not know the player's ability as well as we do.

Buying 8 or 10 pairs of shoes with the expectation of doing business is a waste of time. Each size, say from 7½ to perhaps 12, and each style of shoe, should be stocked with 1A, 2B, 2C and 1D minimum which would entail the necessity of purchasing 66 to 72 pairs. An immediate re-order when a pair is sold keeps the stock complete and the customer will be fitted at all times with the possible exception of an extreme width or length and this type of customer expects to have to wait anyway as few stores carry exceptional sizes in their regular stock.

Golf events are a good medium for sales. Many clubs provide a prize fund but in some cases the members form a pool with each contributing \$5 to \$10 per season which entitles them to play in all

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events. As everyone likes to win it is usually better to give small prizes and many of them so that almost every golfer will win something before the year ends. A percentage of this pool for the ladies is usually agreeable with the Men's committee and helps to maintain their playing interest.

Many professionals pass up the opportunity to advertise and a notice in the monthly statements can be very advantageous. Tips on the game, how to take care of the golf course, how to treat a caddie and make him a better one and coming interesting golf events may be included with the news of something new in the golf shop.

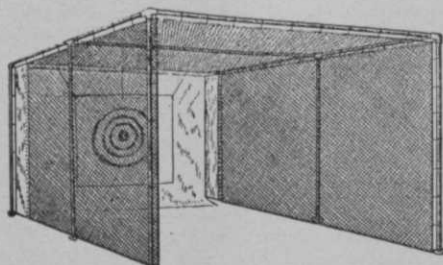
SPALDING BUYS TIMBER—Four hundred acres of timber in northern New England have been purchased by A. G. Spalding & Bros. to insure a constant supply of the highest quality wood for tennis rackets, it was announced today. These tracts contain considerable quantities of northern ash, oak, white birch and hard maple. The Spalding Company has also

bought a sawmill. These tracts have sufficient wood for over 1,000,000 tennis rackets if they were 'logged clean' but Spalding's pres. Charles F. Robbins, says: "We will continue to buy large quantities of ash the way we have in the past; however, these tracts will serve as an added protection to the uniform quality of our rackets."

Modern tennis rackets are made of several strips of laminations of wood. These number from five to nine depending on the type and quality of the racket. To stand the great strains and stresses of a tennis racket, the northern ash has been found to be the best wood because it is not too heavy and yet very strong.

OPEN ORGANIZATION CHART—Canterbury GC, host to 1946 National Open, has prepared an organization chart that's a model for clubs holding big tournaments. Committees under gen. chmn. include gallery, contestants, caddies, ticket sales; publicity, press and information; finance accounting, insurance, house, admissions-registration, parking-transportation, hotel accommodations, police protection, program, scoring, reception, and women's. Committee members' names are on the chart.

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