

Springtime Sales "Heat" Applied by Pros

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

This is the time of the year in the central and northern states when golfers begin to have an itch the pro can cure with decided profit to himself. Before the house accounts begin, the pro can get best results on a sales campaign as the member is not looking at the total of his bar and restaurant tabs for a month and deciding to go onto a strict economy platform—at least until he's got a few drinks under his belt and signs the tickets with a free, flowing signature.

This year, too, the stores are going to put on a heavy drive for golf business. There are many aggressive new retailing outlets opened, so any pro who thinks he can coast and get business simply by letting nature take its course is going to pass up a lot of sales. Furthermore, his members will be missing the expert pro guidance in shopping that is one of the strong points that hasn't been—and probably never will be—adequately emphasized.

Every year pro merchandising is improving, notwithstanding the fact that the smart old timers set a very high standard of retail selling and service. They were able to take members and educate them in the craftsmanship and artistry of bench-made clubs. That made the member keenly conscious of the pro department as the source of authoritative knowledge on golf goods. I have seen that the majority of the veterans have kept even, or ahead, of the merchandising procession in golf. The bright and brisk younger men, picking up and applying business methods from the outside, have contributed their share. Most of the successful pros have benefitted considerably by taking their wives' advice on smart merchandising methods to be used on the class of people who play golf.

Spring Letters Are Business Getters

Most pros in the north and central states send letters prior to the opening of the season, advising members of the services and merchandise available at the shop. This sort of a mail selling campaign gets the

members stirred up and puts in a bid for the pro before the member comes out to the club. That's highly important in the metropolitan districts, especially as the stores' advertising and window displays may catch some of the richest early gravy.

It is a good idea for every pro to have a session with some advertising man who is an enthusiastic golfer and get him to help in drafting a letter and circular presenting the pro's "grand opening" proposition. He can take the pro's proposition and put it into form that will really get results. Maybe he'd advise spending some money on artwork cuts and printing after he has gone over your market prospects with you. Perhaps that expense may chill you a bit but you have to remember that you've got a lot of your money tied up in stock and want to convert it into cash profit as soon as possible. Keeping the investment turning over is the way the pro shop makes money. And as George "Shirt" May says, "You've got to spend money to make money." George has another line of good business advice in asking "Who can do it better than I can?" That means if another guy can do it better, get him to do it. An advertising specialist can do it better than the pro.

One more little, but important, thing in getting the advertising fellow to work for you: He will think that he is doing the job as a labor of love because he likes you and golf. You may get service for which he would charge his clients from \$50 to \$500, so at least, along with your thanks, give the guy a box of balls.

Gordon Tells the Story

Bill Gordon, pro at Tam O' Shanter CC (Chicago dist.), makes a practice of getting out his pre-season letter early in March. Time of mailing depends on when you are sure that practically all of your members have returned from winter vacations and have had some time to get folding money in their pockets again.

Bill's letters, which have a return post-

PRO SHOP SERVICE CARD

Kindly place my clubs in the pro shop for the season club care () Kindly phone me when the lesson season begins so I can show definite improvement in my golf this year () I am interested in some of the following items: Spalding balls () Acushnet balls () Wilson balls () Spalding irons or woods () Wilson irons or woods () Armour or Nelson irons or woods () Ladies irons or woods () Wash balls, 25c, 35c, 50c, 65c, 75c (doz.) Men's Golf Shoes, size () Women's Golf Shoes, size () Wind-breakers () Wool Shirts () Howland Bathing Caps () Leather bags () Canvas stick bags () Shag bags () Pussy foot socks () Wool socks () Sport shirts () Hand painted golf ties () Men's bathing suits () Men's or Ladies Golf Gloves ()

Signed.....

card enclosed, always get strong results. There is nothing fancy about them. They read like Bill wrote them straight to the point. That's something to bear in mind when the advertising expert helps you. There may be a tendency to go too fancy, but chances are the advertising specialist will see to it that the presentation is according to the character of the pro.

Gordon's letter for this year reads:

Dear Member:

The Tam O'Shanter Country Club Golf Shop is now open for the 1947 season. Upon receiving your golf clubs, they will be overhauled and put in tiptop shape. Club cleaning services will be the same as 1946—\$10.00 per set for the season until November 1st or \$2.00 per month.

Arrangements have been made to carry the finest line of golf clubs, balls and golf accessories that are obtainable. Quotas of scarce equipment will continue until mid-summer but my effort to take care of your needs is now offered, as a good supply of this merchandise is now on hand. You can rest assured your best buy in town will be the "Tam Pro Shop."

Golf instruction will again be arranged by appointments if possible. Six half hour lessons will cost \$12.00, six hour lessons will cost \$25.00, and individual lessons will be \$3.00 per half hour or \$5.00 per hour.

Your professional will have a limited line of men's and ladies golf shoes, Howland bathing caps, fancy hand painted golf ties, fancy swimming trunks, pussy foot socks, T shirts and sport shirts, all priced to sell.

I am enclosing a card for your convenience to protect your needs for the golf season. I would appreciate its early return so this work can be done before the season gets under full swing, and your needs will get my full cooperation.

Ed Phelan will again be on hand to help with teaching and operate the "Pro Shop." A revised caddy system under Harry Decker, formerly with North Shore Country Club and Miami Shores, will endeavor to provide more and competent caddies, with a supervised caddy school.

Our efforts to make your golf more enjoyable and your season at the club the best ever is our desire.

Come and see us early and often.

Sincerely, Bill Gordon, Professional

The mimeographed postcard Bill enclosed has spaces in which the member checks items in which he is interested.

This card is shown above.

You will note that Bill does not have on his card the complete line carried in his shop. The objective of the mailing is to get the prospects indicating interest and after that expression Bill can show them exactly what he thinks will fit their requirements.

Also notice how the "quota" element is discreetly mentioned in the second paragraph of the letter. This probably will mean that members will come in wanting to buy balls by the dozen to make sure. So what? Bill, like the rest of the fellows, probably will sell them as many as they want within reasonable limits and hope for relaxing of the quotas by summer. The branch of the Chicago river which runs through his course also should help to get his ball volume back onto the basis of the "good old days."

There's still a debate between experienced and successful pro businessmen as to whether it is better to give the members "the works" all in one mailing or give them a series of short letters or announcements on new equipment, club cleaning, lessons and other items of sales and service. One thing is certain and that is that the businessman does not read long letters.

Whether to mail at home or office addresses is another point on which experience of pros differ.

Last spring we noticed that in several shops where able clubmakers were available a bid was made for remaking grips to fit the member's hands. Grip leather was hard to get, of course, so often the old leather was used and the grip built up. Good prices were received for this work and the members talked about it as something they could get that helped their games.

In the spring preparations, one of the highly important factors is plain pricing of the merchandise in the shop. Then, in the letters or circulars, try to get the members to come out and look over the stock.

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