

How to Win Sales and Influence Members

By **BOB GUTWEIN**

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Last year was the one pro expected would produce their biggest business. It was not that; nevertheless the pro who was on the job in selling sports wearing apparel made 1946 one of his most profitable seasons.

While it has been true that sportswear was pretty hard to get it has been amazing how much a pro could get his hands on by writing a few letters or, better still, by telephoning.

This year, with golf merchandise being produced in large quantity the pro should make sales records that will be the tops for some years to come. But he'll do that only if he now is doing the groundwork for his 1947 sales campaign. This year isn't going to be one in which the pro can depend mainly on the stored-up demand for golf goods. That volume will interest aggressive merchants who will try to cut in on what the pro would consider his own marketing field.

But that isn't something that will scare the alert pro. It is only another challenge to his ability and energy. It demands that he completely modernize his shop now, and adjust his mental attitude to get an "in" with his customers so deep and solid that no competition can beat him.

We can't kid ourselves about our customers feeling that they "owe" us their business even though that's the opinion some pros are inclined to have. The members, as customers, are just the same sort of human beings pros are. They will buy wherever they feel they are getting the most for their money.

The day has gone when the club member bought all of his needs from the pro just because it was the thing to do, or just because the pro was a good guy and could slam the hell out of a golf ball.

The day also has passed when good golf merchandise could only be found in the pro shops. This means we have had to expand our pro shop lines. We're now in competition with a lot of guys who have spent their life in this wearing apparel business and if we are to get

our share of this volume, we have got to get in there and pitch.

If we expect to get this business we must prove to these members that the merchandise for sale in our pro shops is the best that money can buy and that our prices will meet all store competition.

Price Tags Educate

I think one of the worst things a pro can do is fail to put price tags on all merchandise. Too many people still believe that it costs more to buy in a pro shop than it does downtown. This was brought about by the better workmanship on pro shop clubs in hickory-shaft days and, by pros not pricing their merchandise firmly, but selling to different members at different prices.

Remember, you are expected to make a fair profit. Don't be afraid to price your merchandise at the regular retail prices. Don't however make the fatal mistake of selling to one member at a lower price than you did to another. I firmly believe that failing to price merchandise and selling at various prices has done more than any thing else to drive members downtown.

You can whip this condition by good smart buying and by informing your members by mail and by mouth just what you have to offer.

Sale Authority

You are supposed to be the authority on golf; on every phase of golf. You probably are on clubs, balls and bags, otherwise you haven't much license to be a pro. On the apparel fashions in golf you're also expected to be an authority. That's a basis of the volume of apparel business you should be doing not only as a service to your members but as a source of decided profit to yourself.

I have always taken "Esquire" and for more than one reason. There are other books that may give you the latest in wearing apparel but I have found that you can always find out the latest in men's styles by fol-



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lowing this book. I have also found it advisable to shop around at the men's stores in town to see what they were featuring and what they were charging for these items. Make up your mind just what you intend to feature and then buy enough so that you will have an ample stock to work with. Don't expect to sell many sweaters if you only have a few on hand. Decide on a number, enough to make a good display and then go to work selling that item.

Talk to some of your merchandise men at your club. You will find them eager to help you and their advice will save you many a dollar.

Regardless of all that I have said if you do not keep your shop clean, neat, and your stock well arranged you will not get the business. You are dealing with a very fine class of people. Offer them the type service and surroundings to which they are accustomed when they go to purchase their new suit and you will find your sales mounting.

There is one point that a good many of us overlook, that is the ease with which a member can buy in the pro shop.

Most men are about alike; they just don't want to take time off from work or

lunch to go buy the things they need. They do, however, have time to kill either before or after their golf game when they can browse around your pro shop in search of the things they need. This really gives us the jump on the stores. Are you taking advantage of it?

Make your displays inviting. Don't pile merchandise up in any old manner. Make neat attractive displays and change these at least once a week. If your shop looks the same to your members they will not become accustomed to walking in and looking around. They will assume that you have nothing new if your displays are practically the same. If you can't get new merchandise move the old to another part of the shop, change location of your cases or tables or get new ones. Do something that will let your members know that your merchandise is moving if only in the shop.

If you have tournaments at your club and if you give merchandise as prizes be sure and let the winners know that it can be changed. You will be surprised at the added sales that will come your way when they take the time to drop around and change that prize.

Flood of Business Demands Pro Vigilance

By JACK JOLLY

Often one hears a pro say, "I've got more business than I can handle." I've said it myself. I've had to ration Silver Kings among professionals ever since we were able to renew manufacture after the war. Although there are numerous uncertain conditions in the golf goods manufacturing business one thing is sure and that is a demand in excess of supply in 1947. There'll still be shortages of the better class of merchandise.

It's logical that shortages will ease up on the lower grades of merchandise first. There will be a lot of stuff made quickly to sell and without much regard—if any—for pro standards. There also will be plenty of places selling this inferior merchandise. There are pros who will be bothered by having members go for the inferior stuff because of inability of a pro to furnish the needed amount of pro quality goods. Then a pro may say to himself, "If they insist on buying junk why should I beat myself out of a profit by trying to protect them with quality?" That's going to be a temptation of having more business than you can handle.

But it won't be a temptation to the experienced and thoughtful pro. He knows that the punishment the average golfer gives clubs and balls is such that it shows pro quality merchandise to decidedly good advantage by comparison. The buyer who was too eager to wait for pro quality will learn the hard way and the expensive way. His experience will impress upon him the

wisdom and thrift of buying pro-approved golf goods. If the pro had been stampeded he would have identified himself as just another retailer willing to sell the unwary anything for a quick profit.

Certainly the war years when new clubs and rubber golf balls of any grade were unavailable provided many convincing tests of the lasting economy of quality. Compare the performance and durability of the recovered balls of quality during the war years and the satisfaction of pro quality clubs as contrasted with the cheap and hurriedly made implements that some had to use during the war years because nothing else was procurable.

The five years of shortages proved the economy and consumer satisfaction of pro-quality goods. That history is something for the pro to bear in mind should he ever be inclined to figure that the answer to his problem of having more business than he can handle is the slightest lowering of pro quality.

It may be a tough task for a younger pro in some cases to convince a member that it's much better to wait until the pro can equip him properly than to grab any quantity of inferior grade balls or any cheap clubs that can be bought. But eventually the sadder-but-wiser cheap goods buyers will come around to the pro. They won't if they think of the pro as just another fellow who is in business solely to make a profit off of them.