

How to Make Pro Shop Selling "Best" for Club's Members

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Carl Beljan

I've tried to make my pro shop the best one in the U.S. for display, variety and amount of stock. This is a large order for me to take on as the standard of pro merchandising effort is so high that

it strikes a new note in smaller specialty shop selling and service. There are a lot of very bright and diligent fellows active in this field. Their resourcefulness was made plainly evident by what those who were at clubs during the war were able to do despite the shortage of merchandise and help.

And certainly it is realized clearly by thoughtful pros, and with increasing clarity by club officials and members, that unless a pro shop is operated so it is a very definite service asset to club membership the pro does not measure up to the requirements of a first class club.

Yet, conscious that I was setting my sights very high in aspiring to make my shop the best of many fine ones, I think I have succeeded. But success in this respect never is a lasting thing for the pro. Almost each day he sees, hears or reads some idea that he wants to adopt or adapt in making

his place of business still more attractive and serviceable to his members.

Considering the oft-times limited and unfitted shop space the pro has to work with I am willing to admit that my shop may be excelled, in some respects, by shops that were ideally built for pro shop purposes. But even there I think that the color and lighting of my shop have a cheerful and warming effect that is a proper expression of country club atmosphere.

Color Is Important

In a good many of the shops I have seen the color of walls, ceilings, floors, curtains and floor covering could be improved if the pro would consult his wife. The women have an eye for merchandising colors that is partially instinctive and partially developed by their observation while shopping. Not often does the man realize what tremendous power color has in creating an attitude favorable to buying. You can see that proved by many shops that otherwise are attractive because of their stock and arrangement and neatness but which fall short of having the utmost in strong, smooth selling power because the general color balance and handling isn't right.

A lot of times when pros do go in for color to relieve the somber aspect of their shops they are inclined to get the shop looking too gaudy or too dainty. You've

From attractive, convenient and well-lighted stock the members can supply their wants in Carl Beljan's pro shop.



got to consider the tastes or reactions of women as well as men players these days for one of the great developments in smart pro merchandising has been of increasing the patronage of women shoppers. That has been a really remarkable feat of pro merchandising in recent years because of the acute shortage of women's golf goods. How much longer we'll be able to continue this growth depends a lot on how soon we can get women's clubs, and if the pros can get them before they are shipped in large quantities to the downtown stores.

Lighting Is A Study

Another thing about most pro shops that affords plenty of opportunity for improvement is the lighting. Lighting fixtures at many of the shops are old-fashioned and poorly placed. Instead of doing something to bring some of the brightness of sunshine into the shops and help create a buying eagerness by showing the merchandise in its best possible appearance, the lights actually discourage buying.

Now that new types of lights are being made again the pro and the club officials should look into the chances of brightening up the pro shop illumination so that on the cloudy days the shop isn't a forbidding gloomy spot.

What the pro shop should be, in my opinion, is a distinctive and superior merchandising service station for the members. It can't be too brazenly a place to sell at a profit to the pro. We in pro golf have to be discreet in letting the customers know that we too have to make a living and want to make it in a way commensurate with the ability and effort we devote to their service.

When members know that they can have their needs filled just outside the locker-room, get the best at proper prices and the helpful, cheerful purchasing aid of experts then they won't go chasing around in town.

Perhaps in this effort we may stock up too much, or stock some items that won't move. Even the greatest of merchandising geniuses make those mistakes—and we are not the greatest of merchandising geniuses.

Sacrifice Slow-Moving Stock

But even when merchandise on shelves doesn't move there is one thing certain, you always can get rid of stock at what it cost you. Furthermore you know that you can't sell what you haven't got so you'd better get everything you think your folks may need.

Then display it with such care that it is bound to show that you think enough of it to bring it favorably to the attention of possible buyers. Even at the smaller town clubs where membership is inexpensive there's no longer any excuse for slovenly shops. Fellows who have come in and brightened up the places and devoted some

time to good housekeeping and intelligent store-keeping have done pretty fair business where their sloppy predecessors have gone broke.

Now although there are some signs that there may be a buyer's market in pro golf before long don't let that fool you so you'll stay back until salesmen call upon you.

I have found in my own shop that there is selling power and prestige in being the first to get good new merchandise. Some of it has been novelty too that I guessed wrong on and it didn't move at a profit. But I keep a close watch on stock and get rid of anything that is slow-moving. But you have to be candid and careful in selling such items. Tell them the stuff was good enough to receive your own O.K. but for some mysterious reason you can't understand any better than they are able to understand mysterious flops in their own business, the stuff didn't move so you are sacrificing it.

Watch Your Buying

Determining what volume and type of merchandise to stock is a task that requires careful and extensive study by the pro rather than hopeful guesswork. To warrant a big stock the pro must have a large playing membership. Pros have found it is not difficult to get badly cramped financially by stocking up more than the number and activity of the membership justifies. You must keep your shop time demands in balance with your lesson tee and general promotion work around the club. That, in turn, calls for good training of your shop assistant so he will share your knowledge of the shop and your keen desire to serve the members.

In visiting around to get ideas from other pros and clubs I have sensed a need of educating club officials in the shop problem of the pro and in the pro shop's possibilities as an asset which helps to justify the members' dues. The pro at a club having many playing members commits himself to a quite heavy inventory, tying up his own money, before the season opens. It would be financially fatal for the fellow at the smaller club to try to have the same sort of stock unless the club makes the job worth enough for the pro to assume the risk.

However, each pro has his own problem in that matter. The best he possibly can do is to strive to make his shop the best one of its class. I think I've done that in my case and even have exceeded in stock and service facilities and attractions the presentations at larger clubs.

**PLAN NOW!... for the
big year ahead.**

See page 61 for buying needs