

Pro Business for Business Experts

By **EDDIE KUHN**

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No matter how large or how small a pro shop operation is the pro must know at least once a week **EXACTLY** where he stands on sales, inventory, accounts receivable and accounts payable or he can't consider himself a thorough businessman. I know this from experience in finally developing a system that keeps me in close and accurate touch with the financial part of my operations. The pro who neglects any detail so that he can't tell quickly and exactly where he stands is taking far too much of a risk in a comparatively small retail business and particularly in one where his business must be done in about 6 months of the year.

Being at the International Business Machines CC I naturally am in an atmosphere of the latest developments in business record-keeping and constantly exposed to the IBM chief's admonition "think." This combination of circumstances impelled me to think about developing business control

easily and helpfully applicable to the pro shop. My control system is basically similar to that used in other businesses to handle large stocks but not many pro shops have my sort of a system. Other pros have investigated and applied it.

At any time I can tell exactly what stock is on hand and what should be ordered. This is possible through the "perpetual" or "running" inventory that I use. On this inventory I carry 27 different items of accessories, 9 different makes of golf clubs and 5 different priced golf balls. Yes, we have more than just the top-grade ball for use by our members in the spring.

Deductions are made nightly from this inventory. As all sales are rung up on the register before these sales are consolidated, deductions are made from the inventory and the daily receipts checked with the inventory figures. Every Monday morning the actual inventory is checked and brought up to date by reordering.

Eddie Kuhn's shop at IBM Country Club is laid out and operated to get approval of people who are experts in good merchandising practice.



It is a great method of keeping the pro's invested capital active and from getting out of line. It is even more important in coming days when there are prospects of quick deliveries by manufacturers than it was when capital had to be kept available for paying for stock as the bills came due after uncertain date of arrival of orders.

In mid-January when I wrote this our sales were over \$150. I don't have the exact figures at hand as I write but by going to my shop I'd get the amount to the penny. This figure includes golf and bowling merchandise. Our pro shop adjoins our club's 16 bowling alleys and we sell quite a volume of bowling accessories.

Keeps Golf Interest Hot

We keep the golf shop open all winter and in this way have the golfers dropping in to look around and chat. Thus we keep golf interest steamed up the year around. In view of the winter sports programs at many clubs this winter I am wondering if some pros haven't missed a bet in not having their shops open at least over the weekends when the crowds come out and sales can be made ahead of the season when members house accounts begin to bite into the members' funds. By keeping the shop open the pro gets interest stirred in pre-season lessons as well as in equipment purchases. He also encourages opening the season earlier instead of letting the members wait until every playing condition is perfect before they come out and bring business into the pro shop.

We go strong at the IBM CC for the golf

"hot stove league" in keeping our members entertained and eager for the outdoor season. In February we installed our golf nets and began our pre-spring series of golf movies and golf lectures. The lessons begin on a pretty heavy schedule then. This pre-season activity benefits beginners most of all in preparing them for play without the embarrassment that beginners usually experience, but almost every one of our members drops in from time to time to limber up in the nets.

I am convinced that there is a tremendous room for clubs and pros in the northern states to make money and increase club interest by these pre-season programs at least on the week-ends during the latter part of January, February, March and April. People have begun to get restless after months indoors and are eager to get some workouts and get the jump on an improved golf game for the coming season.

Shop Well Located

Location of my shop, of course, makes it practical for me to encourage this pre-season warm-up program. My shop is 24 ft. x 36 ft. and is attached to the clubhouse. Three of the 4 walls are used for display. Two walls are used exclusively for club displays and the third has a built-in showcase 10 ft. long and 3 ft. deep. This case is a little lower than eye level. This is our main display. It has fluorescent lighting and artificial grass to set it off. Everything from shoes to clubs is shown in this display and the merchandise is changed about every week so members get

Kuhn's shop adjoins clubhouse bowling alleys and he makes it attractive to golfers when weather prohibits play and they come to the club to bowl.



in the habit of looking at it for something new. The lower section of this display is used for additional showing of clubs and bags.

Adjoining this display are shelves for our boxed merchandise such as sox, jackets, and other apparel. At right angles to each other in a corner we have 2 6-ft. showcases for display of balls, shirts, etc.

Shop Is Immaculate

The greatest factor in all our display is cleanliness and brightness. Our shop always is immaculately clean. We couldn't afford to have it otherwise. Our members are people who are doing business with the smartest businessmen and merchants in the world and would be quick to notice, if not to criticize, any standard of shop appearance that showed the slightest indication of negligence.

One of the strong display features in our shop and an attraction that brings members in where they are exposed to the magnetism of attractively displayed merchandise is the lost ball racks. These are located next to the shelves on which we keep our boxed merchandise.

In these racks are about 500 individual slots with each slot large enough to hold 6 or 7 balls. A member buying a ball in our

shop uses our marker to put his name on the balls he buys. Should any ball of the buyer's be lost then found by another member the finder turns the found ball into our shop and receives credit toward any ball he may have in the lost ball rack or may lose in the future. This system helps speed up play instead of keeping people looking too long for balls and it gets people turning in all the marked balls they find.

Hunts For Ideas

Every time I can get away from the club and look over another pro shop or every time I go into any well-run store I am looking for ideas that can be applied to making the IBM CC pro shop one that will be a credit to the members and the company as well as a first class business operation for myself. The way I look at it is that a pro is in the golf business and if he isn't continuously on the lookout for thoughts that will improve his business operations he is neglecting his opportunities just as much as he'd be if he saw an improved method of shot-making and neglected to apply it to his own game. That I don't think would ever happen in pro golf, and there's no more reason for passing up any chance to better the pro's scoring as a businessman.

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