

Establishing Par in Pro Business for 1949

BY REX McMORRIS

Pros who play against the scoreboard can adopt the same idea with success in conducting their business operations at the club, according to numerous professionals who have given the business par idea a test.

Business generally now works on the budget system of estimating sales and setting operating costs in advance and the usual system of budgeting at golf clubs keeps course and house operations well in line, signaling the need of adjustments before the season is on its way out and it's too late to make effective corrections. But seldom does the pro apply this operating policy to his own department. However, those who do check a list of their members and their present golf playing equipment against possible sales for the season have found that the practice is not only a guide to buying but points out some weak spots in operation.

With down-town competition getting back into the pro business picture this year the pro is going to have to watch all opportunities for sales. How many times a pro sees a member show up with a new set of clubs he bought away from the pro shop and has been shocked by losing the business when an examination of the player's equipment in bag storage would have reminded the pro and his assistants to stay close to that member and tactfully keep a bit of selling steam on him!

Records Pay Off

Not only the pro, but every other small retailer is inclined to make the mistake of depending too much on general impressions instead of records in governing business operations. The larger companies spend fortunes in market surveys to determine sales possibilities and they make this expenditure pay profits. The pro can apply the same idea very easily. In applying the idea he can give his assistants a good clear view of the members' needs and how to sell them.

A few nights going over the contents of each bag, studying them and listing them on file cards probably will give pro shop staffs a picture of their market that they never had before. The procedure also is

sure to give much more specific data on pro shop stock requirements than most pros have as a result of depending entirely on previous years experience.

No "Saturated" Market in Golf

You hear around that fairly large post-war business in club sales is going to make it tough for some of the boys to have satisfying volume this year. A look at the bags in storage will correct that misconception. Even a casual survey of clubs in storage at representative shops of different types of private courses and of equipment brought to the first tee at daily fee and public courses shows that at least half the clubs and bags are about due for replacement. One especially impressive thing about such surveys is that the older golfers who have the most money to spend usually have the worst equipment. Many of the older men are badly handicapped by clubs that they bought years ago and which don't fit their physiques or swinging habits at all today.

Women's Kids' Markets Grow

Almost every survey of clubs in storage at pro shops will show that women's club sales, although good last year, are far short of what they should be considering the need of the women players and the increasing play of women golfers. One point that several pros have brought out is that what women used to spend for caddies before the war and now don't spend because of their use of golf carts, is a goodly sum that should be spent for clubs.

But just how big this women's market is and who are the women constituting this market isn't often recognized until a survey of the bags is made.

The youngsters who have been getting pro class lessons for years and who have been exposed to golf in high schools and colleges now are getting old enough to have good equipment that they won't out-grow for years. Some numbers in manufacturers' lines are being discontinued and provide good clubs at bargain prices. There is a great field for the pro to work. He can use the time payment plan with excellent

results in women's and juniors' club and bag marketing.

But after the survey is made the figures determined must be used in sharp focus and persistently in making sales. Advertising must be especially devoted to these sections of the pro's market instead of the pro's general sales appeal touching lightly on needs of the women and junior players. The women and juniors must be worked strong, then Daddy must get the works too, for he's going to have to pay the bills for these clubs.

Study your market, make figures on it and from a detailed survey you are bound to see plenty of chances for making sales that require special attention.

Fresh Events Create the "Buying Attitude"

By TOM MAHAN

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Every time we think about shop profits for the pro we must follow through in our thinking and realize that unless the member who buys from us gets more value out of his purchase than we get profit out of the sale, it's been a poor sale for the pro.

Value is an intangible factor. You can't put an actual dollar and cents value on a putter that looks and feels so good to the buyer that it is psychologically good for a couple fewer putts than normal. A comfortable and good looking garment for golf or a fine pair of golf shoes that make walking a delight are of greater value to our buyers than our profit on the sales is to us as pros.

Old timers who were bench club-making artists recall their handiwork with which they were reluctant to part for any amount of money. We haven't that same condition existing in pro shop merchandising today but in every properly conducted pro shop business I know of, the pro selects his merchandise with such care that he can be sure he is doing his customer a favor by making the sale.

Accent on Getting 'em to Buy

The pro had to become more of an aggressive merchant during the war years when he couldn't get playing merchandise and had to make a living by switching the members' buying dollars to purchasing whatever the pro shop could supply. Those seasons of scarcity taught professional busi-

ness men plenty about balancing service readiness and selling pressure in the pro shop.

Despite what we learned in the war years about how to discreetly force sales we still see that the most important element in pro shop selling is creating an attitude that makes the golfer want to buy from us.

Naturally the member is more interested in himself than in the pro. So anything the pro can do to tie in the member's perfectly reasonable selfishness with pro shop sales adds to the pro's shop volume.

Club competitions that give everybody a chance to win prizes are the surest stimulus of a buying attitude I've seen in my years as a professional. Often we professionals don't show enough interest in the calendars at our clubs. The same events are held year after year and there are too few names in the prize lists. That's bad for the club and it's bad for the pro. The man or woman who is hopeful of winning some prize, no matter how small, is in the right attitude for buying clubs, balls and bags, etc. and for taking lessons.

Liven Up the Calendar

I'd suggest that every pro who diplomatically can do so, take a very active part in making up the club's schedule of events. He will receive many suggestions for interesting events from the events booklet available at 20c from the National Golf Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago.

We had very good success for the club, the members and the shop in inaugurating a new type of tournament at our club last year. It was the Hi-Lo that we ran every Saturday and Sunday there wasn't some major event on our calendar.

The tournament is played just as we play our New England Metropolitan style pro-amateur. In our club event our better players with handicaps of 5 or under took the place of the pros. It's a great event for getting members acquainted. Generally the better players at a club play in their own class and the medium or poorer players seem to be almost afraid to enjoy the companionship of their more proficient fellow members in a round of golf.

This type of tournament has not only been excellent for the spirit of unity in the club but it's been a good thing for pro shop sales. Every two weeks it's meant directly an added shop volume of about \$200.