

# Making Members Partners in the Pro's Business

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The successful businessman of today is the man who some years ago envisioned an idea he was determined to convert into reality. He studied persistently, he kept growing, he applied enthusiasm to his work, made contacts with people who could help him, and had a definite program that involved hard work and a constant influx of new ideas.

These are the men who made good and who now have the money and time allowing them to be members of golf clubs. They rate other businessmen by the factors they employed in their own progress. If their professional isn't as good in his business as they are in theirs they consciously, or subconsciously, don't think the man is qualified to be in their employ.

To such men the wise professional should turn for advice and other help in improving the operating of pro golf business.

Regardless of what kind of a club you're at, the officials of that club are as eager as the pro — maybe more so — to have more members, livelier and more pleasant general golf atmosphere, more activities and, naturally, more revenue. They've got ideas of how these ends can be achieved. They may not know much about the specific problems of the golf professional's business but they do know sound business principles.

It's been my experience that every club official with whom I've ever talked about problems that mean ultimately the improvement of the club situation by betterment of my own operations and increase of my profits, has been understanding, encouraging and very helpful. But it's also been my observation that not enough understanding and cooperation has been secured by pros from such men.

Basically the pro's situation is that the more money he makes, the better the general financial and operating picture is for the club. The pro isn't operating wisely when he is lucky enough to get signed up by a flourishing club and just collects on his luck. He must contribute to the sta-

bility and development of the club so increase of his own profits are justified. I have yet to see a case in which the unselfish pro who was thinking of the club first, didn't make a good income and hold his job securely, if he made it plain to his club officials that he realized his own situation was primarily dependent upon a strong, progressing status of the club.

## "Free Enterprise" in Golf

I've seen, as you have, plenty of instances in which the pro lost out by appearing to be too "hungry," even though the fellow was just getting by with what he was able to make out of the job. Such cases are the result of not having the successful businessmen of the club understanding the pro's unique business problems.

Most successful businessmen are vigorous advocates of the free enterprise system and are examples of "rugged individualism." They know plenty about the importance of the profit incentive. Yet at golf clubs you hear casual or severe criticism about the pro making too much. When you do hear that it's an indication of two things. One is that the critics haven't the slightest idea of the pro's expense of operating and they think the pro is making a high income in a limited market over a comparatively short season. I haven't seen many such cases myself in many years in pro golf but those I have seen have been warranted by the pro doing a fine job to make his own type of work as successful as that of his members in their respective professions or businesses.

## Pro Protecting the Club

It's a pro job to educate pros and club officials to understanding that usually the more the pro makes at a club, the better the club does. If the pro—as far as his departmental operations permit—doesn't show more of a cash return to the club than the cost of his services to the club and members, then the man is a liability instead of an asset. The pro must think of himself and his operations in terms of dollars to the club, otherwise his thinking about his job is foggy.

When the membership of a club is full and activities are at high pitch, then the most trying part of a master pro's job is beginning. The pro, if he knows anything about the business, knows that booms are followed by recessions of mild or heavy nature. He knows from his experience of years that when clubs have money the current officials spend it and when the lean years come another group of officials have the urgent task of making economies. When these later officials are confronted by conditions making economies imperative they often go on the "penny wise; pound foolish" basis that finds the pro a target as he generally is believed to be netting from two to five times his actual net for work that officials don't regard as hard or exacting. They don't know what the work is.

That situation develops because the pro has not made a practice over the years of getting business advice from his active and successful members, and in discreetly soliciting such advice, educate these members in the fundamental fact that the better the pro does, the better the club does.

The most successful pros I know operate with their Number One thought being that the club must be solidly and energetically successful. In achieving this they know they must get all possible play and enthusiasm into the members. The pro can't handle his members as a football coach handles a team but has to diplomatically direct the job through committee members.

The pro's discreet influence in getting the right chairmen and members appointed to committees and the pro's performance in helping these committee people, is one of the highly important phases of the pro job. Committee members and other officials join a club to have fun. They don't want to spend their time assuming responsibility and exposing themselves to criticism. Some of them may solicit, or accept, committee work because they are sore about something and are confident they have the right answer. Vanity may be the reason for desiring committee appointment but that soon vanishes.

Usually the initial interest in working on committees disappears quickly. Then only the real busy men on the committee are left to do the actual work. Those the pro must help and he also has to do everything he possibly can to keep other committee members interested in their work and functioning. Even a few tips on the practice tee are instrumental in keeping the committee member reminded that he is

quite a guy, with an important assignment around the club.

The more the pro shows genuine interest in all activities of the club without becoming a meddler or a busy-body, and the more that he shows he is a businessman in the work of making it possible for businessmen to enjoy their club, the more recognition the pro will receive and the more helpful his members will be to him.

The intelligent service and friendly personality of the pro are great assets to any club. Experienced and observant club officials encourage and capitalize these assets. They know in some cases the pro's methods may not be polished to the extent these assets are in other businesses but they know the club is fortunate to have a professional who has his heart and soul in the job. They are willing to help the pro make more use of his brains on his job. They know that the pro — especially the younger fellow — must be developed as any other businessman is developed, on the job. Men seldom are born great.

It's club officials' responsibilities to see that pros are encouraged to make the most of all opportunities for serving the club. But it's first of all the pro's responsibility to see that he is looking for these opportunities and learning from the businessmen with whom he is associated how to handle these chances for making his services to the club more valuable, winning the respect of his members and earning the greatest thing in life, the lasting friendship of men, women and children to whose enjoyment of life the pro has contributed.

"The Lord helps him who helps himself" is an old axiom that is still new and powerful in pro golf. Help yourself to your members' help and you'll do better by yourself and your club.

### **Jaycees Plan Junior Event**

U. S. Junior Association of Commerce will hold its fifth annual National Junior golf championship at Houston (Tex.) CC, Aug. 2-7, inclusive. Already Jaycee organizations in 20 states have set up qualifying tournaments. It's expected the entries will exceed last year's 10,000. Pros interested in the Jaycee championship which gives swell competitive opportunities for their boy proteges should write Hugh Egan, Jr., Director, Sports and Recreation Program, US Junior Chamber of Commerce, 209 S. State St., Chicago. Jaycees' 1950 National junior championship will be awarded by US JCC executive board at Colorado Springs convention, June 8-12.