

Basic Principles of Good Shop Business Pictured

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I'd never been especially interested in playing golf and had never been active in my husband's shops until after he became professional at the Ft. Wayne (Ind.) CC. Like most other wives of professionals I was fairly well acquainted with my husband's operations but my interest was strictly back-stage.

Then, in mid-summer of 1946 Orville asked me to help out at the shop during busy hours. I'd always been attracted to selling and when I went into the shop I soon realized that I could be a very helpful factor in the shop's merchandising. I saw what I believe quite a few women golfers see; that the merchandise in the pro shop is very well chosen for value and priced reasonably. Now that I know something about the way pro shops are operated I can venture to say that there are some shops that are missing quite a good volume of business. Some strong advertising is lost by catering so completely to men's business that they almost neglect their women customers instead of making the shop draw them.

But, to relate our own experience: Our volume of play isn't sufficient to warrant a full-time employee exclusively for selling, however in the work I am qualified to do I can, in addition to some selling, pick up leads that my husband's expert services can turn into substantial sales.

In 1947 as merchandise became available we went into sportswear items which Orville never before had carried. Early in 1948 many of our women golfers asked me to put in a line of women's golf dresses. It took me some time to locate a line of dresses which were properly priced. In 1948 while I was shopping, a salesman called on Orville and as Orville couldn't discuss the matter with me he ordered a couple of dozen dresses. I was skeptical about what might be delivered but when the shipment arrived I found the merchandise to be very satisfactory.

Then when I got to work selling them I found that it was difficult to sell the

color we had in the size the customer wanted. That meant considerable re-ordering. Many times it was impossible to get through the color or style we wanted.

Then I learned that the dress manufacturers start to make their line in September for the following year. By May of the next season many of the styles have been taken out of the line because of no more supply of that type of material or because a certain style was a poor seller.

By the next season I was lined up with two of the leading dress manufacturers and that enabled me to show a better selection. In some cities these manufacturers sell only to dealers in town, so in some places it would be difficult for pros or their wives to line up with such manufacturers.

Order Well Ahead

The last two seasons I have ordered our spring line in September or October and have had them delivered as soon as possible. In this way I was certain of getting the styles I wanted. Buying that way does tie up some capital but a mid-winter invoice dating can be arranged, or at least we have been able to do so. Getting dresses that early has enabled me to take care of customers who go South during the winter and who like to have the latest styles.

The amount of one's inventory has to be watched as styles and trends change easily and quickly. This year I was caught with a lot of dresses because of a swing to "shorts" at this club. So we have swung into that line also. It didn't take long to find means of getting rid of the extra dresses away from the club.

I have found that a certain per cent of our buyers like a fancy golf dress for Sundays and special events, so there is a real market for the, out of the ordinary, golf dress.

Watch Hat Business

I carry hats and caps to match the golf dresses. They must be ordered with

the dresses tho, as by May they are usually withdrawn from the line or the manufacturers do not care to bother with small single orders. During the summer I carry a dozen or more different styles of women's hats and caps.

It has been my experience that it does not pay to reorder the same style unless it has been a "WoW". You can sell out a dozen hats in a few days and two weeks later a duplicate shipment would simply lay on the counter and attract no buyers. I take spring styles out by early summer and later show fall models, taking the previous styles off the counter.

My dresses are well displayed on a rack across the front of the display room, it holds six or seven dozen dresses. From the outside they show up well through a large window. Another dozen are on display on racks and hangers in other conspicuous spots in the shop. I have tried to clean out my stock of dresses by the end of the season so that in the spring I have an entirely new stock. So far I have been pretty fortunate in this respect.

I have found that it is smart to buy only one color or less of each style of dress. That is if a dress comes in nine colors I select six colors that I feel will sell easiest and order one of each of those colors. In that way my customers do not see their friends wearing the same color and style.

Often I suggest that several dresses be taken home so that a customer can be sure of which ones they like the best. Many times they will buy all of those they have taken home.

I handle quite a few skirts and blouses, but care must be exercised in ordering them as they cannot be worn by all players.

Accommodation to Women

The handling of such merchandise is a definite accommodation to many of our women golfers. With the care of growing children and household duties their time is limited and they appreciate being able to be outfitted while at the club to play golf.

I doubt if a pro by himself could do much of a business in ladies' golf wear. It takes a woman's knack of displaying and presenting such wear to women, and in ordering a woman can picture better what the average women will like and wear. I try to picture which of our members will like certain dresses and shorts and order with those certain persons in mind.

Of course there are many things that a sales person does automatically and are not easy to think of and jot down on paper, but this gives an idea of some of my experience and the way I carry on.

There always are new ideas coming to mind and I'm always looking for something good and attractive that our customers can get first. It's good for the members, good for the club and good for the shop to get distinctive fashions first so the women members are leaders in women's sports fashions.

I carry a line of ladies' sweaters in several styles. It often is surprising how quickly a new and different style will sell and how much fine advertising it does for the pro shop.

The business is not the type that rushes into the shop in a bargain-hunting way. It must be secured on the basis of excellent style, material, workmanship and value that is up to the highest standard of women's shops and often lower in price. I go after business well in advance to make sure that all possible customers are reminded that we will have what they want. Early in February I send out a postcard advising that I will have my new line of dresses on display early in April.

Midwest Turf Election

Lafayette, Ind., March 4—Taylor Boyd, supt. Camargo Club, Cincinnati, was named new president of Midwest Regional Turf Foundation by directors at their annual meeting at Purdue, March 3.

Boyd succeeds Malcolm E. McLaren, supt. of Oakwood CC., Cleveland, O., who has headed the foundation for the last several years.

Frank Dunlap, supt. of the Country Club, Cleveland, is vice president. Other officers of the foundation, which headquarters at Purdue, include Dr. W. H. Daniel, Purdue turf specialist, executive secretary; and Dr. G. O. Mott, Purdue agronomist, treasurer.

Directors elected for 3-year terms are Leo Bauman, former green-chairman at Westwood CC., St. Louis, and Oscar Borgmeier, George A. Davis Co., Chicago. Other directors are Edward Fifield, Gary Municipal Golf Courses; Carl Bretzlaff, Indianapolis; Ward Cornwell, Grosse Pointe, Mich.; Dr. Fred V. Grau; William H. Stupple, supt., Exmoor CC., Highland Park, Ill.; and Lester Verhaalen, Brynwood CC., Milwaukee, Wis.