

Tells Golf Salesmen What Pro's Problems Are

By PAT MARKOVICH
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An article by Dan Ellis advising pros to "take it easy on salesmen" was one that made me reflect on my own relations as a pro with salesmen. I appreciate the salesman's position that Ellis describes from his own observation and probably his experience.

So to further understanding between salesmen, their sales managers and professionals, I'd like to set forth my own observations and thoughts. We all had better understand each other's positions because we all share the desire to increase volume and profits and reduce selling costs and keep our prices to the ultimate buyer as low as possible.

I must admit I probably have been as guilty as Pro Joe Blow. The pros must find a pleasant "out", still treat every salesman as a human being. As Pro Joe Blow mentioned, he has been in the habit of giving every salesman an order, and at the same time tried to take advantage of the 2% discount each month. He is not alone in his thoughts.

Using my shop and experience along with many of my neighboring professionals, I have drawn the following conclusion . . . in order to stay in business and show a fair return, one must act the part of a business man. My clientele and my promotional work directs me to handle certain lines.

In the last six years the average professional improved on his business ability and is still learning each day. Present tax conditions now compel volume in order to make a livelihood. This has made the professional take heed.

In years gone by the term "Pro Shop" was applied to the professional's headquarters. Most still have this habit. The word "shop" carries as one of its definitions, "place where mechanics carry on a trade." It is a long time since clubs were made in our shops. It is now a "pro store" where the merchandise is selected to fill the demand, and in the majority of cases the equipment is specially manufactured for the golfers.

Salesmen are increasing in number, and that is only part of the problem; many represent several firms. Naturally they expect orders; and it is not uncommon to purchase six items, and have six different invoices representing the name number of companies. Each calls for an indi-

vidual check and mailing, thus creating an added expense and confusion.

In 1948 I did business with 48 firms. In 1951 it had jumped to 72. To be a good fellow I found that I not only had to hire extra help, but at inventory time many dead items appeared on my shelves, shopworn and depreciated in value. Selling in order to obtain your cost, as well as clearing your shelves means also losing a profitable potential customer.

I have always felt and argued that the pro shop has been a display counter for the manufacturers. Changing names and models has been done without the consideration of the home professional. Talented salesmen are hired to cover the professional. As mentioned, I was a soft touch. So much so that at one time I carried 30 different makes and models of irons and the same number of woods representing 14 golf club manufacturers. Now I only have six, and am doing as much business with less confusion and resulting in a greater profit.

Shoes and sport clothing is relatively a new venture for the professional, and we are experiencing the same problems. I just do not know what to feature, therefore I am buying everything that looks good. "Good Guy" professionals are being overstocked by energetic salesmen.

It is probably true that salesmen do get information on possible pro vacancies, and that many of the assistants have been able to follow up the lead, but your clubs are turning more and more to others for recommendations.

Possibly I should end this article by giving advice to the salesmen and companies who are probably "pushing" their men and expecting a sale for every call. The majority of the orders by professionals are either mailed or called in to the local distributor. The only person who actually is in a position to know his potential is the professional. He has a limited clientele and his sales and purchases must be judged accordingly.

Again using my own experience, we must feature some name brand. In 1945 and 1946 one leading brand of clubs were my top sellers with another's woods running a close second. Prior to 1945 it was products of different makers. In 1947, 1948 and 1949 it was still another maker's goods by a wide margin. In 1950 and

1951 and now in 1952 I featured another line. Time is approaching when another change has to be made.

Customers Are Bosses

In a period of three years with as good selling as can be done without scaring the customers with high pressure I know that I saturate my market to the point of diminishing returns. I would like to continue to feature the clubs I have been pushing. They are very good or I'd never have bought and presented them in the first place. I like the salesmen and I like the companies. We all have got along very well together. But my members who haven't bought these lines for reasons that I certainly haven't been able to blast by steady, diplomatic and close-up salesmanship are not going to buy just because the salesman and his company and I like each other.

I think I know, and apply in selling, the value of a manufacturer's name of very high repute and try my level best to

concentrate the manufacturer's national advertising effectively at my point of sale. It works for two or three years in the case of each first class manufacturer, then to make sure that my members are allowed their "say" in my shop operations (and they'd got to have if I'm going to stay and make a profit) I give the other fellows a chance.

When the salesman learns that I'm not wedded to the line until death do we part, he doesn't need to be sore at me. My customers control my actions and it's no great secret that they are independent of manufacturers and of me. The manufacturers and I have to keep wooing them and it's life not to have the course of true love run smooth.

I can appreciate the golf salesman's optimistic hope. I, too, wish that all who come to my club bought something from me. But they don't, and I just have to keep after them, knowing that some day if I keep on the job, thinking and pleasant

CLASS IN CAPPS' SHOP AT DESERT INN

When Howard Capps left PGA Tournament Bureau management to become pro at Wilbur Clark's de luxe Desert Inn CC, Las Vegas, N. M., he brought with him ideas for pro shop arrangement and fitting he'd picked up at clubs all along the tournament circuit. Here's one view of the neat and colorful shop. No opportunity for appealing display of golf merchandise is overlooked anywhere in the shop. Capps has with him at Desert Inn George Bruno as teaching asst., Doug Grochow, shop mgr.; Milton Ross, tournament mgr. and starter; Spencer Trask as teaching asst. and starter and Ed Wardell as business mgr.



and eager to serve, I'll get them. I come back to the good companies in turn, headlining the merchandise of each and carrying enough stock of all leading brands so I won't be missing any bets. I figure if I keep trying to do the right thing eventually all my possible customers will buy from me.

But I can't get it all at one time, all the time, and I'm not going to tie up my money and display space in something that isn't in enough demand by my members to move fast. So I'm pretty much reconciled to having to work steadily and have some disappointments and suffer some losses of time and money I've devoted to selling. If any good golf salesman can tell me how I can escape these troubles I'd sure like to listen to him.

What has improved pros' credit rating with manufacturers is that the pros have been attending more to being good businessmen than to being good fellows, and that's something no salesman's company is going to complain about.

Course Shortage Cramping Golf Around Salt Lake

By ALMA R. EMERY

Supt., Forest Dale GC, Salt Lake City, Utah

Here in the Salt Lake district there is a definite need for more public golf courses. In this area many have given up the game and gone elsewhere for recreation because of over-crowded conditions. It is true the reservation system is used but many refuse to fight the lineup, even for golf.

In Salt Lake there are three, 9-hole, city-owned courses for public use. These courses range in age from 20 to 40 years; same greens, same tees, etc.

Changes of Administration bring new faces, new supervisors, making it impossible to bring about necessary long-time planning to revise, reconstruct, and remodel our golf layouts. Salaries paid are not attractive enough to obtain and hold the type of men required for such important work.

The development of new equipment has played a great part in saving many old golf courses from complete loss. Chemicals developed for use in preventing loss of greens and fairways by grub worms, brown patch, and snow mold, etc., have been one of our greatest benefits.

Our county has recently built an 18-hole course now being used, which has helped, but little, to alleviate heavy traffic. Blueprints have been made, and plans were well along to build an 18-hole

public course in this area to be called "Falcon Golf and Country Club." The public wishes the builders a most speedy success. It will be open to the public, but privately owned. I have been asked to help with its construction and maintenance

The Magna course, owned by Kennecott Copper Co., is operating 12 miles from Salt Lake. This course will be one of the west's finest layouts in a matter of two or three years. They are rebuilding greens, tees, and fairways. They purchased the latest modern equipment and grass, such as B-27, C-1-Arlington, etc.

Golf Market Could Be 20 Times Larger

By JOHNNY COCHRAN

Professional, Greenwood (Miss.) CC

Now an important part of a pro's job is creating more desire to play golf and promoting construction of additional courses to care for present and potential players. If this work isn't done young men with excellent education now coming into pro golf as tournament players and the present professionals will find there are a lot more pros than there are pro jobs available.

Population and income statistics indicate that the possible market for golf is 20 times larger than the present number of players. The game is losing some players because of lack of courses and is missing chances to recruit many new ones because these possible golfers haven't been made aware of how much pleasure golf will give them, and how to get playing the game. The pro is the man to do this essential educational job.

WHAT GOLFER MUST LEARN —

When the golfer becomes aware of what he can and should do in considering the condition of the course on which he plays many of his complaints about condition of the course and many of the superintendent's expensive troubles will end.

If the golfer would repair divots, get out of traps on the low side instead of on the high side, stop practicing on the tees, tee up on the tees, lift his feet so his spikes don't harrow the greens, put his debris in the waste baskets and remember that he owns and is paying for the course, course condition would be better and the costs and troubles would be less.

—JOHN PRICE

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