

# Highlights in Planning Pro Christmas Gift Selling

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**I**NTERVIEWS and correspondence that **GOLFDOM** has had with pros who have been highly successful in Christmas golf gift selling repeatedly emphasize that these profitable campaigns have been thoughtfully planned.

Several professionals report they have started their Christmas golf sales campaigns in September. The novelty of suggesting in September that the golfer "do Christmas shopping early" gets attention and laughs but it also gets action. Many golfers in central and northern states, knowing their club bills are low after September, realize there is financial leeway in October and November for paying what they'll give as Christmas presents.

Procedure of the successful professionals highlights the following points in preparing the Christmas gift campaign:

## Market Study

Numerous pros went over bags in storage and made notes of what golfers needed.

One pro sold 12 complete sets of women's woods and irons and bags by discovering, and reminding husbands, that equipment their wives had been using was from eight to 12 years old.

Another professional advised **GOLFDOM** he sold 63 golf gloves as Christmas gifts last year simply by learning from examining bag pocket contents how many members' gloves were badly worn and dirty.

Still another pro businessman bases all his Christmas gift advertising on the study he has made of what equipment his members have and what they need. Among the responses to this approach was the sale of 16 wedges.

One phase of the market study is that

of locating the members who may buy Christmas presents for their companies to give to customers. This invariably pays off big. By far the biggest selling golf item in this part of the market is balls. Numerous pros have sold hundreds of dozens of golf balls for company gift distribution.

This ball business must be signed early, especially if the balls are to have personalized marking.

One pro reported that the ball Christmas gift sales drive had reduced the number of cut-price off-brand store balls coming into his club to almost nothing although he had suffered in previous years from this competition.

Accessory and golf specialty business pays big in the Christmas sales drives. Prices of many of these items are low enough to get considerable volume from people who don't want to spend much per item. Practice devices, head hoods and such practical new items as the Kaddy towel, ball retrievers, shag bags, etc., sell very well, if featured at Christmas.

Bag and bag cart Christmas gift sales have been booming the past couple of years in pro shops. The stores in some cities have gone strong on these items, but the pros who saw the sales opportunities have more than caught up on the competition.

## Stocking for Christmas

The prospects for sales of golf Christmas gifts for kid use are growing each year. The professionals who have made a study of what the youngsters at their clubs need and suggest these presents to the kids' parents are doing a genuine shopping service as well as helping the kids.

Every professional consulted says he's been helped a great deal by watching GOLFDOM ads for Christmas gift angles. The ball ads especially have meant many thousands of dollars of increased pro profits, judging by pro statements on the amount of added business done by pushing the attractive Christmas gift packages of balls.

Many pros tie in with the Christmas gift packages early by displaying a package as soon as possible in the shop and displaying "Available for pre-Christmas delivery" signs.

Clubs differing from the normal stock also have to be ordered early so they'll be received before Christmas. This makes a very legitimate reason for the pro soliciting Christmas club business well in advance. Deliveries of the 1954 models of clubs generally aren't until spring and the pro who wants the new stock for Christmas gift selling hasn't much time left for ordering if he is to get deliveries before Christmas. He'd better canvass his sales prospects soon and pay special attention to players who take winter vacations in the south or southwest, if he is at a northern or central club.

Particularly interesting is the practice of some professionals of cutting the price on slow-moving stock and converting it into cash at Christmas. This operation has been growing, with the pros picking their spots among people who want new clubs and can be sold when there's a discount.

In several instances pros have reported that the Christmas sales have not only practically cleaned out their own inventories but have disposed of clubs neighboring pros haven't been able to sell and want to turn into cash so they'll have their bills paid and able to make a clean start the following season.

The Christmas gift certificate business has been growing steadily. Gift certificates supplied by the National Golf Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill., are used by the thousands each Christmas.

#### **Schedule Ad and Sales Work**

Inventories should be carefully checked before Christmas campaign plans are made. Pros have found that a lot of the summer stuff, especially slacks, hosiery and headwear, can be sold as Christmas gifts when the winter golf vacation idea is played up.

Advertising material must be prepared well in advance and dates set for mailing

the folders or letters. Often cuts have to be made of photographs the pro has shot of gift displays he has arranged in his own shop. Some cuts may be secured from manufacturers. Generally the number of folders the pro sends out is small enough to make advisable the use of printing methods that can use illustrations rather than cuts.

At almost every club there is an advertising man who will be very glad to work with the professional in preparing the Christmas campaign. This man is busy and the pro can't depend on the ad man's services at five minutes before midnight.

Manufacturers supply enough material to make possible a steady campaign of mailings by the pro to sales prospects starting late in November and hitting the potential buyers two or three times before Christmas.

In the letters pros have found it very profitable to stress the point that valuable shopping service is available in specific and expert advice on the golf gift the recipient would like most.

In a few instances pros have gone to the trouble of individually checking items in folders that amount to concise golf Christmas gift catalogs so the one who receives the checked list is advised what to buy for certain members of his or her family.

If the clubhouse is kept open in the winter, or the pro operates a winter school, special displays of Christmas gifts have proved to be exceedingly profitable. It pays to have a sign painter make special Christmas signs for these displays.

Without exception pros have found that the most profitable of all advertising and sales methods are the direct personal approach with definite suggestions of gifts golfers in members' families would desire and certainly could use in getting pleasure from a Christmas gift throughout the year.

Pros have found that it pays to advertise shop stocks of jackets, sweaters and other apparel as Christmas gifts for members' kids.

A couple of pros told of making mention in their Christmas ads of boxes of balls as Christmas presents for women golfers. The pros said women at their clubs played too long with badly beaten-up golf balls and they took a chance on suggesting new balls as an added gift for the wives and mothers. The idea clicked.