

New Idea A Month Freshens Pro Business to Top Sales

By HERB GRAFFIS

A PRO at a job I thought was just average for a metropolitan district club in north central territory showed me his books recently. We'd been talking about the high cost of pro department operations.

His costs were high. He had one more man than I thought the job could stand. The club didn't give him much of a break in sharing expenses of a better and larger staff than is found at the majority of good clubs. His help got paid well; on a sort of a profit-sharing basis.

But the amazing thing about his pro department operation was that for the past three years he'd averaged sales per year, per active playing member, so far ahead of other averages I've seen I could hardly believe the figures. Even though expenses cut deeply into the gross, the job was netting very handsomely.

"How do you manage to sell them so much?" I asked.

"I don't." I sell about 15 per cent of it and they buy the rest," he explained.

"But how do you get them to buy at that rate?"

New Idea Discovery

"I made a discovery three years ago. I started going strong on one completely new idea each month of the season, and a half-a-dozen buying ideas in December.

"I'd been a pro 20 years before I realized I was doing just about the same thing years after year. That must get monotonous to members. I wonder now that I did as much business as I used to do. They must have needed golf stuff pretty bad."

This professional credited GOLFDOM

with supplying the spark that fired his successful new policy. "It was the way you kept pounding at changing shop displays that gave me the cue," he said. "I tried it and it worked. One of my assistants has studied store display and window trimming. We even change the clubs in our displays and the balls and accessories in our display case every couple of weeks.

"That freshening of display worked so well I began thinking we ought to have other fresh ideas.

"Exclusive Styles" Idea

"I began really trying to make my shop a style center. Now about half of my business is apparel and shoes. The only spot where I haven't yet clicked is in women's dresses. I import sweaters and sweater sets from Scotland and Italy and members' wives and daughters and their friends buy them about as fast as I can get them in. It's exclusive stuff and worth the money. That's one new idea—for me, anyway, that has paid off. And, I wouldn't have thought it possible three years ago, before I tried to sell exclusive lines of men's sweaters and slacks at the prices I now get for them and have every buyer happy.

"I do plenty of business in moderate-priced apparel but I think the makers, distributors and pros may be due to a slump on this stuff before long unless they select some pro-only numbers, advertise them well to the pros and their customers, and get across the idea that the merchandise is something exclusively obtainable at first class pro shops and not an item anybody can get anyplace downtown.

"The pros have done a great job of getting golfers to dress better, but, for this \$8,000,000 of sportswear business I hear the pros are doing yearly, they've had the minimum of advertising help from manufacturers and distributors. Pros are beginning to find out there's money in the word 'exclusive.'

New Selling of Basic Items

"Apparel is style stuff and lends itself to the 'new' sales treatment. But, where a pro really has to sweat his brains to freshen his selling is in connection with the basic items of clubs, balls, bags and strict-ly golfing gimmicks.

"The selling problem with golf clubs and balls is that they last too long. If it weren't for the manufacturers wisely changing models drastically, especially on irons, every few years we'd have players trying to use the same set of clubs for ten years. Woods are kept even longer than the irons because head changes are not as obvious to the rank and file of golfers. The new Rocket shaft has boosted club sales. Particularly for pros like myself who followed through on the company's strong advertising and made a campaign to their players on the shaft being new and better. Apparel people could take this shaft campaign as a good example in taking advantage of well

aimed advertising to work with pro outlets."

Then this professional made a comment that has GOLFDOM wondering just how it can pass the judgment tactfully to manufacturers. He said, "I get new ideas in the editorial pages of GOLFDOM and look through the ads to see how I can use the new ideas to sell more. Many times I'm surprised how manufacturers miss the boat by not advertising their products so they really look like they're big and new. I never have failed to put across something that had big, strong ads running steadily in GOLFDOM. But I'm not running any manufacturer's business. I'm only saying that I've found it pays me to merchandise on the platform of something new and better coming up all the time.

New Studies of Members' Needs

"I go over bags in my rack and see what my members should have. Then I do some delicate sharpshooting. A member should have a wedge. I see him when he's got a few moments to spare and my teaching assistant or I say 'I want you to take my wedge along the next time you play.' Then he gets a quick lesson. Next time he plays I tell my shop boy to slip my wedge in his bag and tell the member to give it a trial.

"I've sold a lot of wedges that way.

"Sometimes I even have a member using woods or irons of other members who don't happen to be playing. I know the clubs would be better for the fellow and I ask permission to have them used. It makes the man whose clubs are loaned feel that he's got superior equipment and it gets the word around that I am really trying to help players get what they can use best. This loan idea you can't use often but it sold five sets of woods and three sets of irons for me last year.

"The 5-wood idea has been great for me. We've got four holes where that club comes in handy for a lot of our members.

"I've had 5-woods made up for women and they really have gone very well. Three of the 5-woods I sold to women worked so well the women got their husbands to buy them new sets.

Women Need the New Idea

"Something else I missed before I got the 'new idea' policy was the volume of women's business I should have had to be doing a good job for them. Many of the more active women players at clubs have had their woods and irons so long they got numb to the notion of getting something new. No wonder a lot of them don't



GOOD WITH THE WOODS

James Reid, supt., Brooklea CC, Rochester, N. Y., sent this one for hot weather use, showing how Brooklea members keep warm in winter. L to R are A. Cook, Green chmn. F. Levrgans, W. Myers and G. Adams, who with golf committee chmn. E. Olson who took the picture, worked all winter trimming course trees and cleaning away tree damage done by storms. Reid figures they saved the club about \$3,000 and got workouts that got them in great condition.

score well. The pro hasn't sold them what they need.

"Probably the fundamental new idea I got was that when somebody buys from me they're being helped. Now I work on the basis that I'm in business entirely for the members instead of mainly for myself. When I got thinking and working that way I began making more money than I ever thought there could be in this job.

"Everything is the new idea around my shop; even clubcleaning. You see no ball paint marks on clubs in our bags. When the clubcleaning boy has spare time he freshens the grips, makes minor repairs, puts a touch of furniture wax on woods (but not on the faces) and even takes bad spots off bags.

New Idea Propaganda

"We get the new ideas spreading. One has helped ball sales. We had players coming onto greens and changing to new balls for putting. It took some diplomacy but I got the talk started that if a ball couldn't be trusted for a putt of a few feet a player was making a bad mistake to use it for long shots where its interior or exterior damage might cut down distance a lot or curve it badly off line.

"My ball sales are better because one of my new ideas — and one I picked up from GOLFDOM — has most of our A and B class players changing balls often. I got the word around that the stars play a couple of balls a round and start every round with a new ball although the covers and paint jobs look perfect. I'd never expect any ball manufacturer to point out in ads what a terrible beating the finely made, delicately balanced insides of a golf ball takes from the topping, hooking and slicing of the golfer who isn't a star and who doesn't hit the ball squarely. But I can do that personally and bring out that it's nothing against the construction of the best of golf balls that it may not stay true inside for two or three rounds any more than the best automobile can run 100,000 miles without inside wear and tear.

"Anyway the shag bags in my shop have better looking balls than are used for play at many clubs.

"Without doubt the best new idea I picked up was on Christmas business. I'd read in GOLFDOM about Christmas business in the pro shop for ten years or more before I began using the idea. My first Christmas sales drive was only fair. The second year was very profitable and last year December was the second biggest month of my biggest year's sales.

"But it all adds up that, according to my experience, there isn't a pro who can't do better for himself and his golfers by going strong on one new idea every month in his department. Maybe some of the new ideas won't work but they won't cost him much money or any good-will and the new ideas that do work will make his job a new and better one."

Makes Use of 3-D Pictures in Novak's Second Book

HOW TO PUT POWER AND DIRECTION IN YOUR GOLF. By Joe Novak. Price \$5.95. Published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., 70 5th ave., New York 11.

This is the first golf book in which 3-D pictures are used. The 3-D glasses are in an envelope inside the front cover. Thru them you look at Novak in address, top of swing, just after impact, and follow thru. The 3-D pictures definitely make it easier for the viewer to get in mind and eyes a clearer idea of the golf swing. Especially is the hand action impressively plain.

The black-and-white sequence photographs are exceptionally clear and taken accurately by Tad Gillam. Line drawings illustrate the "case histories" of pupils whose faults Novak has eliminated.

Joe, when he headed the PGA Teaching committee, prior to his election to the presidency of the association, checked his 8-steps system with methods of pro and amateur tournament stars and confirmed his belief that he had a sound routine for improving most golfers. He explains the 8 steps so simply in this book the reader can easily put them properly into his own game.

Novak is very strong on getting the pupil standing to the ball with everything properly set for action. He maintains that the grip, stance, and position of club and ball at address — all essentials that can be correctly cared for before beginning the swing — can be so organized the proper swinging action is easy.

He shows how to get set, then goes into footwork, body pivot, hand action and balance.

Joe bluntly disagrees with some instructors. He doesn't go along with the "one piece movement" of the backswing start. He says there's a "definite, orderly pattern" of detail procedure. He also advocates pivoting in making short approach shots and in putting. Novak teaches that the grip for the left hand be confined to the forepart of that hand.

He makes a logical presentation of his "body for power; hands for direction" basic principle.