

Pro Must Study Selling Like He Studies His Swing

By **WALT SILKWORTH**

Professional, Rydall (Pa.) Country Club

THE proper method of merchandising from the golf shop has become highly important to the professional. It determines how well he is handling his responsibilities of service to his members, and how much he will earn.

With his own ideas and the aid of some successful sales executives who are among his members the professional constantly seeks the soundest, most attractive and profitable methods of merchandising service at his club. A great many constructive suggestions have come from this cooperative effort.

But what almost every successful professional has learned is that application of the ideas are dependent to a very large extent on each individual pro and his club. The pro can't work on an absolutely uniform chain-store pattern of operation that will apply to every club.

Profitable pro merchandising methods, in a way, are comparable to the swings of stars.

We all know that there are some rather obvious variations of golfing experts in their individual interpretations of the details but the stars all look about the same when they hit their good shots.

And there are numerous variations in the merchandising details at wisely-run shops but the principles are about the same. When the sale, like the good shot, is made, the first class pros and their assistants look the same.

Study Selling Like Shotmaking

These men study their shop operations as a playing star studies his game. The pro businessmen practice a lot in making experiments to improve their shop displays, stocks and operating methods.

They have taught themselves what scores best in arousing the shopping interest and action of their members.

The first step in the aid of merchandising is proper display. A display attractively arranged is half sold. Eye appeal is a primary part of sales; the silent salesman.

A display in the golf shop in neat arrangement and contrast always attracts attention.

Placement of merchandise providing the proper color scheme is most important. There should be frequent change or rearrangement of the merchandise to make each item freshly noticeable.

Competition today, as always with the exception of the years of war when merchandise was more difficult to get, is very keen, yet competition where quality is involved is not too difficult to handle.

Quality Is the Bargain

Quality is one thing; price is another. Impress on your members in a diplomatic way that you as a golf professional have the knowledge to purchase and to sell the best in all golf requirements, whether it be clubs, bags, balls, shoes or sportswear. Properly expressed, this will go a long way toward placing your shop in a more prominent position than the downtown store.

Never hesitate to talk and promote quality, and that it is being sold by an expert in the profession.

The pro in making a sale thinks of the purchaser as a golfer, while the downtown store thinks of him only as a customer. There is a tremendous difference.

Quality is something that cannot be hidden; something to be proud of because



RYDER CUP COMMITTEE MEETS AT PALM SPRINGS

Members of the committee sponsoring and conducting Ryder Cup matches at Thunderbird CC, Palm Springs, Calif., Nov. 5-6, embellish the above illustration which presents, L to R: Florian G. Boyd, Mayor, Palm Springs; Harold West, Pres., Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce; Harrison Smith, Gen. Chmn., Ryder Cup Matches committee; Phil Harris, chmn., Ryder Cup Matches entertainment committee; Joe Novak, chmn., PGA International Matches committee; Fred Karlen, pres., Thunderbird CC; Milton Hicks, chmn., Golf Course committee; Jimmy Hines, Thunderbird pro; Robt. A. Hudson, Portland (Ore.) tournament sponsor, who represented British pros at the meeting. Thunderbird is having considerable reconstruction done to prepare the course for the Ryder Cup matches. New bunkering, more length, and more exacting rough, will be new features.

it is outstanding. It is in the material itself along with the proper manufacturing.

Let us take, for illustration, a wood club: the head is carved from a block of wood. It is attached to a steel shaft and the grip is put on. After the head is finished smooth and bright it might easily look very fine and in fact to the newcomer in golf may look as good as any other club. Right here, however, is quality, again—the grade of wood from which came the head, the quality of steel in the shaft, and the quality of the grip. Second grade quality in these three items does not make the top grade article.

Must Tell Sales Story

We all know that merchandising usually goes hand-in-hand with advertising. That is the way it is handled by downtown stores. As professionals we rarely can advertise in newspapers, for various reasons, so we must get the needed information to our club members by other methods.

A very good method bearing a personal touch may be three letters a year to each of the members: a spring letter for the opening gong of the season mentioning the new lines, a midsummer letter to carry on through the summer months suggesting vacation needs, and a letter prior to the holiday season to promote the gift buying spirit at your shop.

Always get across the point that the pro line of any merchandise is not mis-

represented. The golf professional cannot afford to sell unsatisfactory merchandise at any price.

It is up to every pro to resort to a method best suitable to inform the members of what he has to offer. Members do not go to the trouble of finding out what you have so you must inform them.

An overcrowded shop is a handicap to merchandising. Less on the shelves, racks or tables, but all that properly arranged, is beneficial in the promotion of sales.

Sales are often retarded by articles that remain on shelves day in and day out. It is good business to mark these items down and get rid of them. Any type of merchandise commanding this valuable space in the shop becomes unsightly and should hold no space.

We are all aware that many of our shops do not provide enough well balanced space for the display we would like; then why glut it with dead timber?

It is also noticeable that pro shops may be rather monotonous in their sportswear. This might mean that we should vary our lines. Quality again, but different, with eye appeal—not sameness.

It is of top importance that the pro, along with his assistant, devote time and thought to better methods of sales approach, better means of selling and the building up of confidence. With those he improves his service to the club as its professional.