

Over The PRO SHOP Counter

This comes from a pro in central Ohio:

I don't like discount houses any better than the next fellow. They're cutting into my living, but that doesn't mean I'm going to lie down and die without trying to compete against them. I visit discount houses every time I get a chance, study their displays and selling methods and generally look around to see how they operate. In addition, I study their ads, and promotional material, too, when I get a chance to see it. Some of these houses are junk shops, but others are real merchandisers. It's surprising the ideas you can pick up from the latter and, I might add, turn against them if you apply them.

An up-state New York pro, who always does well in the shop sales volume says, "The one thing that helps sales is to get the confidence of your members so they seek your advice as to their needs."

A pro in Pennsylvania, rated by manufacturers' salesmen as one of the best businessmen in golf, says:

It usually takes a smart young pro three or four years before he learns to run the job the way the members would like to have it run instead of the way the pro wants to run it.

After learning that, and diplomatically educating members to want the job run in a way that gives the pro a chance to make a good living, the pro is in position to do well for members, club and himself.

Often members don't notice that their clubs have been cleaned or repaired by the pro shop staff. Calling it to their attention can sometimes be rather awkward, or may look like you're courting favor with them. But there is a way of insuring that this service won't go unnoticed. When clubs are cleaned or repaired at our shop, we tag the bag. The tag (made out in duplicate so we can retain one copy for our records) shows what has been done and, of course, is dated. Members invariably notice the tag and thank us for performing what is unsolicited service.

Howie Atten, pro, Dubuque (Ia.) G&CC

There is a lot of room for improving golf club sales promotion at the lesson tee, according to pros with long and successful experience as teachers and businessmen. Jack Mitchell of Essex County (N. J.) CC outlines lesson tee value in club fitting by remarking: "The fine art of fitting clubs to the users is one of the most important services a competent pro can give. There are no rules for making the correct fit. The pro knows that from his own trials with clubs. There are very few tournament specialists or other fine players who have been able to get exactly the clubs they want without trying several sets. Hence, we professionals realize we are up against a delicate problem in determining just what clubs will be best for each of our players.

"We all have had cases of pupils whose trouble, we suspected, was to a marked degree caused by ill-fitting clubs. It's a good thing sometimes to suggest trying a club that we think might be the right answer and have the pupil use it. No damage is done to the club by the few shots that are taken. If the club turns out to be the answer a whole set may be bought."

Electric cars are one of the best potential profit items that have been offered to pros in a long time. At least one manufacturer that I know of offers these vehicles to us on most liberal terms. He gives us a chance to make real money through rentals, or a very reasonable margin on resales to members. If the pro is willing to see that the cars are kept in A-1 condition if put out on a rental basis, or will stand back of the cars he sells to the limit of his ability, then I think he is going to do well with them. Cars may not bring "quick dollars" but I believe they'll bring the pro a lot of long-range benefits.

Ron La Parl, Battle Creek (Mich.) CC