

# Over The PRO SHOP Counter

If you run across the word, "motivation," in connection with salesmanship, don't let it alarm you. It's an old idea under a new heading that is being flipped around by psychologists and scientific salesmen and it has to do with what makes people buy. Practically all "motivation research" men agree that it still takes quality, superior service and the salesman's ability to size up his customer's needs and fill them to build up volume. That is a reassuring thought. It shows that people don't change — only terms used in describing their habits do.

"I ran a pro shop for a couple of years before a local merchandiser tipped me off that people won't buy if your shelves and display tables have a bare look," says a pro at a semi-private club in Pennsylvania. "When this fellow came in he immediately detected two or three open spots in my displays and the first thing he said was: 'Going out of business, young man?' I asked him why he said that and he explained that stock that gives an appearance of being skimpy has a way of repelling buyers. 'It's a funny thing,' he added, 'but a fellow may come in here with a definite purchase in mind, find that you have the item he wants, but because he is denied the pleasure of looking over a fairly wide variety of merchandise, he won't buy what he originally intended to. Your stock, whether you realize it or not, drops very quickly in his estimation be-

cause he feels you're operating on a shoestring. You've got to give the impression of being prosperous and progressive in your business.' I immediately saw how reasonable these remarks were. I've kept the bare spots covered up ever since and I'm sure it has helped business."

In a recent mailing to his members, Steve Blatnak, pro at Chicago's Ridge-moor CC, enclosed a return postcard with the request that the members jot down any suggestions they had for the improvement of pro shop service. Not only was the response very good but Steve got some sparkling suggestions telling how he could improve his operations. He can't put all of them into effect, of course, but he has had his eyes opened to several ideas that will improve service as well as help him boost business.

It might be interesting for pros to make a study of how much time golfers spend in the different sections of their shops. Department stores do this on a continuing basis. If they find, for example, that a shopper spends an average of 60 seconds in a department where four different items are sold, it's assumed that each item gets 15 seconds exposure. In the next department, exposure may amount to 30 seconds per item. With these facts in mind, displays in the first department may be made to jump off the counters to attract passersby. A pro may find that in his shop golfers are spending twice as much time looking over his shoe display as his sports shirts. He certainly won't do anything to detract from the shoe display, but if he's a good merchandiser, he'll liven up his display of sport shirts to get more exposure for these items.

Among the club selling tips passed on to assistants who attended the PGA Training School at Dunedin this winter were these by George Aulbach, who spent many years as pro at Golfcrest CC in Houston:

There is a "punch point" in everything we sell. For example, don't sell clubs — sell what they will do!

- Don't sell looks — sell the ultra modern design for more hitting power and
- Don't sell feel — sell the lie, weight and special shaft to fit the wrist action and physical makeup of the player.

Then say: Try these clubs and prove these facts for yourself.