

Good Public Relations Job Vital to Pro Success

You're always working at it whether or not you realize it. This article tells you why

By **EDDIE DUINO**

Professional, San Jose (Calif.) Country Club

PUBLIC Relations to some professionals means free publicity; to others, putting on an act; some regard it as one of those activities in which we engage in order to buy public acceptance more cheaply than if the same money were spent for paid advertising. But it is not any of these things. While its purpose is perhaps similar to that of paid advertising, the function and scope of public relations are quite different.

Public relations is a two-way interpretation and communication undertaking. It interprets the viewpoint of the club members. It communicates the resulting policies and activities of the profession to members and the public in general. Good public relations can be the result of many little things, as well as the result of strategically planned projects.

The same principles that are applicable to assistants also will apply when the day comes that the assistant has his own head pro job.

Form of Expression

Public relations, as far as the professional is concerned, consists of expressing himself and his job in an attractive and mutually helpful way to every element of the public. This includes both golfers and the nongolfers, and primarily of course, the members at a professional's private club and players at a public or semi-public course.

Public relations is the expression of the professional's personality, his value and service to public officials and to the other employees of the club. When I say other employees, I mean the club mgr., the supt., all of their subordinates, and the caddies.

Public relations as applied to the caddie can do much for all of us in cementing healthier relationship with our membership. I would like to stress that in the caddie department we have one of the greatest means of implementing the key word insofar as public relations is concerned. That word is "service."

Cooperation between the mgr., the supt., and the professional and his staff is of prime importance. This relationship must be good if a club is to operate harmoniously. Sometimes there are some petty conflicts that any one of the parties involved could develop into something that would be damaging to all.

Actually the three departments are so integrated, so dependent one upon the other that they must co-operate.

I once heard a speaker on this very subject liken these three department heads to the druggist and the doctor. The mgr., the supt. and the pro must work together similarly. We all realize how dependent a doctor's successful practice is upon the cooperation of a druggist and vice-versa. So it is with us!

Public relations are influenced by the

way we look, conduct ourselves and think. The way we look does not necessarily mean the profile that the good Lord blessed us with but rather how we dress. Careless attire, unshined shoes, dirty finger nails, and other little careless things can certainly damage that which we are all seeking — good public relations.

Conduct is a very important facet of our business. Here lies the true meaning of public relations because, if our behavior is anything other than that becoming a gentleman, we won't last very long on any job.

The community activities of a pro can go into almost anything except politics. Unfortunately for him (perhaps), it would be highly indiscreet, if not impractical and improper, to take partisan interest in politics.

Community Obligation

I firmly believe that once a professional has become established in a community and is deriving a decent living, he owes a moral obligation to his community by participating in activities where he can make a just contribution to society and to the betterment of his community.

Membership in clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Civitans, Knights of the Round Table, and many others presents an opportunity to serve. Participation in community projects such as Red Cross, Cancer, Heart, Polio Drives, etc., are other avenues of service.

Accepting speaking engagements on golf or sports in general, when asked by any service or fraternal order is a "must." Any and all opportunities that present the chance to appear before the public, such as radio, television, clinics, etc. are other steps in the direction of good public relations. The greater number of people who are acquainted with you and the greater number of people you can call by name, the more rapid is your ascent to success. Remember, it is always far more blessed to give than to receive. I have always found that in my desire to serve my fellow man, I best served myself.

The professional's relationship with every personality and every group in the club is to be equally, impartially, and genuinely sincere and helpful. This is often difficult, due to the personalities of the members. Unfortunately admission to a private club isn't always a sure guarantee that the members are the most attractive or desirable persons in the community. However, diplomacy, good judgment, and ordinary tact in selling oneself always



The recently revived "Health and Golf Club" in Chicago's Merchandise Mart features two golf driving nets, practice tees, real golf balls and a convex mirror as practice aids for businessmen golfers seeking to brush up on their game between working hours in the Chicago loop. Among facilities featured are a golf practice room, an exercise room, a steam room, a dry room, locker room and quiet room. Eighty per cent of the more than 100 members are tenants of the Mart. Golf pro, Sam Rauworth, who is in charge of the club, says golf carries 50 per cent of the financial load through sale of merchandise, golf instruction, etc.

constitutes successful public relations.

I feel public relations plays equally as important a part in your success as a teacher as it does in every other act, from the minute you arrive for duty in the morning until closing time.

I have seen a number of cases where ungrammatical speech is as glaring as bad taste in dress on the pro job. The unfortunate part of these cases is that the men often are very earnest workers, reliable and know the subject of teaching. They lack command of English and the general appearance necessary to establish the confidence essential to putting across the lessons to the pupil.

Public relations are as essential to a golf professional in teaching as the "bed-side manner" to a doctor or a good speaking voice to a minister of the Gospel.

Through public relations a pro can develop his lesson business tremendously by giving of himself and a few free tips. Many pros refuse to hand out free informa-

(Continued on page 105)

Pro Public Relations

(Continued from page 36)

tion because they feel their knowledge and skill is for sale and should not be given away. But "sampling" has been the life blood of many a business. I believe that free tips to members will lead to more and more lessons.

An example of this is: I see a chronic slicer on the first tee. He is doing so many things wrong I almost weep. What if I do tell him what his principal troubles are? Can he overcome them alone? Not one out of a thousand times. It is only natural for him to attempt to do what I have suggested. He tries for a few swings with no improvement and then reverts to his more familiar method.

The assistant must be an excellent counterpart of a first class master professional if the pro dept. is to be well conducted as any private, semi-private or public golf establishment. The assistant is in the shop meeting the golfers, often longer than the pro who must divide his duties between shop, lesson tee, playing lessons, meetings with officials and other department heads and other duties.

During the past two winters the PGA has been conducting schools for assistants which, in the opinion of numerous professionals, have been the most practical service the pro organization has rendered in some years to its members.

Eddie Duino's lecture on Public Relations was delivered to a PGA Assistants' School class.

However, I did succeed in arousing his curiosity and he very often comes into the shop and asks for more information. I then explain it is one thing to have your faults analyzed, and quite another thing to correct them. The result is that his name goes on my lesson book.

Publicity, which is actually free advertising, is an integral part of your program of public relations. Every item of good news concerning golf, you as a pro and your club, which appears in a newspaper, magazine, or on a radio or television program, has untold value to you, your club and its members and to the game. People enjoy talking about golf. Better than that, they enjoy hearing what the experts have to say about it. You, as a professional, are the expert they want to hear.

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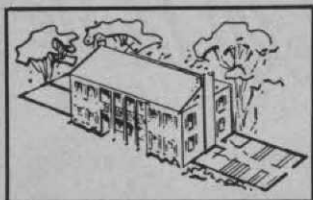
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Newspapers, radio stations and TV outlets are interested in golf because their readers, listeners and viewers are interested in it.

Then why, you may ask, don't they devote as much space and time to golf as they do to such sports as baseball, football and horse racing? You have every right to ask, since golf is the least publicized of all major sports. There is at least one full-time, paid, publicity man for baseball in every major league city, one man for football and basketball in every college or university town and one for horse racing in every locality which has a track.

Golf must compete with these other sports and their vigorous publicity operations for space in newspapers and for radio and TV time. You, as a professional, can play a major part in making a success of this important competitive program.

If there is to be good golf publicity on the local level, it is up to you the individual, to plant it and at least in part to carry out the program, once it is planned. Newspapers, radio and television stations want news about golf. The public expects it, so all these agencies are receptive to your suggestions.

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especially the golf writers in your city and surrounding area. Know the men who do most of the sports announcing for the local radio and TV stations. Make a special point of cultivating those who really like golf. These are the men who want golf news. Remember, you want publicity and they want news.

Learn what types of golf news each media desires and when it wants it. Feed day-by-day news to them. Watch for unusual or newsworthy items and call their attention to them. Find out what major stories they might be interested in and try to get such stories for them.

Change Their Viewpoint

Reporters and broadcasters who aren't particularly interested in golf, represent a difficult problem. It will take more time to get them to change their point of view. However, it can be done. One way is to see that their competition receives lots of good golf news. No reporter or broadcaster can ignore news of the type a rival newspaper or station is using day in and day out. Men in the news field are honest and conscientious. The trouble lies in the fact that they are overworked almost everywhere, in small towns and major cities alike. Frequently, they use items because

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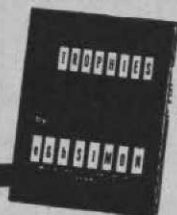
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they are easily accessible.

Your best move is to contact each of the newsmen in your area, preferably in person, before the season starts. Find out just what each of them wants in the way of news. Then see to it that each gets the news he wants at the time specified. Alert your assistants, your caddiemaster, and even your caddies to watch for possible news stories. Ask officials and members of your club to pass along anything that might be newsworthy. If your club has a publicity chairman or a publicity committee, you have a ready-made ally.

Public Relations Fundamentals

I list nine fundamental points that cannot be stressed too urgently on how you can develop better public relations:

1. Be alert
2. Be courteous and respectful
3. Be eager to serve
4. Be accurate
5. Be attentive
6. Tell the truth about merchandise
7. Know your goods
8. Call attention to new merchandise
9. Give quick service

The following are a few things your members will like and certainly will improve your public relations:

1. A well arranged stock
2. Exchange without question any unsatisfactory goods
3. Standard established prices
4. Same price to everyone
5. Careful attention to children
6. A clean and comfortable shop
7. Quick, courteous, accurate service
8. Calling patrons by name

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Sure ways to destroy public relations are:

1. False promises
2. Telling patrons they are hard to please
3. Poorly ventilated shop
4. Flippant answers to questions
5. High pressure selling
6. Trick mottoes like "Don't Park Here," etc.
7. Carelessly arranged stock
8. Dirty floors
9. Becoming overly familiar
10. Allowing clothing to appear untidy
11. Waiting on customers out of turn
12. Allowing stock to remain upset after a sale
13. Correcting customer's pronunciation
14. Suggesting "loud" goods or gadgets
15. Allowing customers to wait while you are fixing stock or checking records.

The subtle approach to good public relations is to get consciously or unconsciously in the habit of so acting, speaking and looking, that you can be judged at any time as being the most competent, dependable and attractive sort of an individual to head any type of private or public corporation.

Says Soft Course Can Lead to Boredom, Loss in Play

John Peters, Jr., Winnfield, La., who financed, built, manages and owns Winnfield G & CC, contends that typical, small town clamor for a course that everybody can play eventually leads to boredom. When he constructed Winnfield in 1957 he decided that it wasn't going to be a pushover. Some of its shotmaking demands are described as "breath taking" and to date no one has come close to par. Peters reasons that many players quickly become adept swingers after taking up golf and if their course doesn't offer much of a challenge they lose interest in the game or move on to a course where some scrambling is necessary.

Play has constantly increased at Winnfield, bearing out Peters' argument.

USGA recently released its 1958 edition of "The Conduct of Women's Golf." A new system of handicapping women golfers is recommended by the Women's Committee. It is the same system, with minor adaptations, that the USGA adopted for men at the start of the year. The course rating system also has been slightly altered.

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