

The Common Sense of Pro Shop Selling

Maybe you've heard of but never tried these ideas and methods in your business. Careful study of them should bring you increased sales

(First of Two Articles)

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Professional, Lufkin (Tex.) CC

THE BEST prospects for a set of clubs are the members with the oldest set of clubs. The best way to check every set is to make a careful study of the bags in your storage rack. This serves as an excellent check on those who need woods, irons and maybe a bag.

Behind the counter I have listed, under three categories, those who need woods, irons and a bag. These names are a constant reminder that I should talk to Mr. X about his needs whenever the opportunity arises. This systematic method of selling will bring definite results, but it takes much patience and time.

When Mr. X comes into the shop I show "what's new" items in clubs and tell him about the features of each make. I suggest that he try out a set at his convenience.

Above all, you should never work on Mr. X with such vigor and determination as to create the impression that you are trying to high-pressure him into a sale. Never rush him. He must first sell himself that the clubs will improve his game. Send your prospect folders on new clubs. You can get this material free from almost any manufacturer. When your prospect begins to show serious interest, then guide him to the clubs that are best fitted for his game.

Perhaps the gravest mistake a pro can

make is to sell a set of clubs that doesn't fit the player, just to make a sale. The member must be pleased with his purchase and feel that his new clubs are helping his game. Once a member feels you "got to him" on a bad buy, then you have lost a friend and customer for life. For months after the sale is made, you must show a sincere interest in the member's new clubs by asking him about his game.

Checking the club racks does not always give a complete list of prospects. We still have many players who do not leave their clubs in the pro shop. I usually stay close to the first tee to assist the starter during weekends. This gives me the opportunity to check other bags. I always carry a pad in my pocket to make notes as I look at the bags. You can pick up many prospects for clubs.

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 their modern design for more hitting power.

Don't sell feel — Sell the lie, weight and shaft to fit the swing of each player.

Don't sell the model — Sell its corrective features, such as hook and open face.

Sell durability, economy and high trade-in value.

Ask players to try the clubs and see for themselves. Give your member an opportunity to "see, feel and try." These are the three major factors in selling clubs.

Following the leader is always a good sales approach. When you have individuals in your membership who appear to be outstanding leaders, and with whom everyone likes to play, then they are key men. Each club has three or four such men. To these men you can afford to make long trades, just to get them using a new set of clubs. They will brag about their new clubs and members will listen. Remember, people always like to follow a leader.

Trade-ins Are Difficult

Now we are going to discuss the most difficult part of pro shop selling, the trade-in of clubs. When an assistant appraises a set of clubs for trade, the allowance should be on the low side. If the member feels it is too low, he can always ask the pro if the pro can do any better. If it is possible to up the appraisal a few dollars the member feels he has made a good trade.

If my assistant has quoted what I believe to be the highest we can afford to offer, and the member comes to me for a better trade, I say my best is \$5 lower than that of my assistant. But since my assistant made his offer in good faith, I'll let it stand. In either case, the member feels he has got the best possible trade.

Trading is a very hazardous business. You must trade with the member feeling he has got the best of the bargain. Also keep in mind, never trade unless you feel it is going to be profitable to you. You are entitled to a profit on every used set you take in for resale.

I have turned down many trades because members have insisted that I pay more than the clubs were worth.

Sometimes I approach a hard trader from a different angle. I make him a firm bid, then say, "You try to sell your clubs to anyone for what you think they are worth. If you haven't sold them within two months, I'll still give my original offer regardless of the extra wear the clubs have undergone." In most cases after a month of trying to sell them without success, he realizes they are not worth as much as he had expected, and he is willing to meet your terms.

One must be very careful in trading. If you don't watch it closely, you may

How's This for Distance?

It is an established fact that you probably can kick a golf ball that is frozen a lot farther than you can drive it.

So, it's reasonable to assume that a ball that has been boiled should have an added injection of go.

A Milwaukee golfer tried testing the latter theory a few weeks ago with three golf balls. After dropping them into the cauldron, he stepped outside his home to take a few practice swings. A few moments later there was an explosion — then two more.

He rushed back into the kitchen to find his astonished wife, who knew nothing about the experiment, gazing in horror at tiny bits of rubber that had plastered the stove, refrigerator and practically every inch of wall and ceiling space.

end up with your year's profit tied up in merchandise you can't sell. I have found that it does not pay to trade off brands or models older than three or four years.

Let Others Take Loss

There is a type of individual who always wants to trade providing he gets all your profit in the deal. This fellow has already been to other pro shops and ranges and is playing one against the other for the absolute highest bid. When I meet this type of trader I know I am not going to make any money on the deal. So I tell him I can't make him an offer because I have too many used clubs in stock. I am always ready to let the other fellow have the unprofitable business.

Sometimes we have a member who wants to trade but insists he can't afford it. I will make sales to these fellows on long terms giving them up to six months to pay.

Caring for Ball Shoppers

The golf ball is perhaps the easiest selling item in a shop. Every club has a few members who, for one reason or another, do not buy their balls from the pro. In most instances they buy their balls from bargain stores, cut-price catalogs or some "so called" wholesale outfit.

Of course, they do not get top grade balls. Their main buying incentive appears to be price and not quality. Apparently they do not want to pay top price for a ball and are embarrassed to ask the pro or his staff for low price balls for fear

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This article was condensed from a speech made by George Aulbach at the last PGA Assistants' School course.

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Pro Shop Selling

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someone may hear them. I think I solved this problem by keeping a box of bargain balls on my counter at all times with the price prominently displayed. The member sees the ball, selects two or three, signs the charge ticket and is on his way without conversation. When members learn that you, too, can supply bargain and inexpensive balls, they will not seek them elsewhere.

There are four ways a pro shop can increase its sales:

1. Sell larger quantity.
2. Sell better quality.
3. Sell associated items or things that go together.
4. Call attention to new items.

Selling by suggestion is one of the highest forms of salesmanship. Cultivate it and watch your sales grow.

Get Him to Say "Yes"

Never ask a man if he wants to buy, always ask him what he would like to buy. Always give him the choice between something and something, never between something and nothing.

For example, when a member looks at your shirt display, never ask, "would you like a shirt today?" because the natural answer to that question is "No." But if you say "Which of these two shirts do you like best?" his natural answer is this one or that one. After he has made a selection, it's pretty hard for him not to buy after showing an interest in the shirts. If he doesn't buy at the moment, he will probably buy a few days later when you call his attention to the fact that you have only one or two of the shirts he liked left. (To be concluded in September Golfdom)

Player, Crampton in GWAA

Gary Player of South Africa and Bruce Crampton of Australia, who play the PGA tournament circuit, are the first foreign newspapermen to receive invitations to become members of the Golf Writers Assoc. of America.

Player, runnerup for the Open title at Tulsa, files daily dispatches on his golf to the Johannesburg (S.A.) Star. Crampton, who finished 18th in the Open, does a daily piece for the Sidney (Australia) Telegraph.

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