



Frequent changes of display of apparel and other stock, but always attractive neatness in presentation, are part of the forceful, silent advertising done by Done Perne in the St. Clair River (Mich.) CC shop. Don observes that with male assistants displays sometimes are fresh and in order . . . and sometimes they're not . . . but with a young college woman working as a shop assistant during her vacation, good house-keeping always is evident.

A Pro Shop Must Be Advertised

By **DON PERNE**

Professional, St. Clair River (Mich.) CC

IN talking with fellow professionals, I have heard many ways of increasing pro shop business. As a matter of fact, two hours of our Michigan section spring PGA meeting was spent on this subject.

Keep the shop neat and clean . . . use attractive displays . . . buy wisely . . . keep a well stocked shop, etc. Without these important fundamentals any business in our field wouldn't last long. In this we all agree. In addition to these fundamentals, I have tried to incorporate some ideas which, as I look back at my sales figures, have been quite effective. Nothing new, mind you, but things which I found other businesses using every day.

Have Exclusive Clientele

First of all, we private club professionals are in an enviable position in that we have given to us an exclusive clientele with which to work. We don't need, nor

can we use advertising in newspapers to get our members into our shops. Our problem lies in using other means of persuading them to patronize us. Without the use of high-pressure salesmanship, discount, bargains and the use of the advertising columns of excellent daily papers we must create the desire to buy exclusively from us. In today's business world, this is no easy chore. With the necessity of good advertising in mind, I have tried to use a word-of-mouth advertising plan to help my shop sell itself.

To begin with, I never charge for anything selling for less than 25 cents. In this category fall tees, spikes, adhesive band-aids and mosquito repellent (which I added this year.) Quantities of tees are packaged, ready for sale, but are kept under the counter. When I am asked for a few tees I gladly give them out and the cheerful handling of the request reminds the members the tees are free. Putting the tees in a bowl accomplishes nothing in the way of advertising.

Sincerity and low-pressure salesmanship are keynotes in my shop. A sincere effort is made to sell what the customer wants or what is best for him, not to unload the



entire shop on his club account in one sale. This "buy it yourself" atmosphere is my best selling tool.

Pro Advertising Cost Low

Sales promotion is done by free group lessons to juniors and ladies of the club. Monogrammed headcovers are given with each set of woods purchased. GOLFING magazine subscriptions are given to my members with my compliments. All of these gifts are charged off to advertising. The cost is about one per cent of my gross business per year. That is not much when you consider many companies spend as much as five per cent.

My hope in constantly keeping my services going to my members is to create the idea in their minds that they should buy from me. Call it obligation if you like. They consider it turn-about and fair play.

Women's Influence Increases Sales

I made great progress in my sales promotion and selling after I found myself overlooking perhaps the one biggest selling force at my disposal . . . women. Not only do women buy more than 50 per cent of the merchandise at my and many other pro shops but they often are responsible for planting the idea to buy the remaining portion.

I hired a pleasant college girl to work in the shop and she helped increase sales and goodwill right from the start. Not only does she sell more than most men could



(Above) Don Perne sees that his young lady shop assistant has the great advertising value of selling with smiles — smiles of the pro shop staff, and of the buying member.

(Left) One thing that the pro can do that is of tremendous advertising value and a big advantage to the buyer is expert club fitting, and Perne makes a big thing of this in his shop. If he hasn't got a stock of clubs that he knows are exactly what fits the buyer, the buyer is told frankly that he (or she) will have to wait until Don can get the right equipment from another pro's shop in the district.

but she also does all my book work.

Women customers feel more at ease buying from a woman. She helps them with size problems, in selecting materials, etc. I don't have to mention what a pleasant girl behind the counter did to increase buying by the male members. All in all, I have found a woman's personality and selling sense in a pro shop is a service valuable to my members and to me.

From the beginning of my definite, organized planning of pro shop merchandising I felt I could do a better job of persuading my members to buy what I had at the price I must have. I knew I had to deserve their business by meeting competition by using different techniques. Price cutting, "bargains" and high-pressure tactics were out. Only by word-of-mouth advertising was I successful in accomplishing what I set out to do.

Philadelphia Meeting

Walter Schmidt, pres., Golf Association of Philadelphia, announces that the Association's annual Superintendents'-Chairmen's dinner will be held Aug. 25 at the Cedarbrook CC.