

Don't Let The Bright Ideas Get Away from You

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

A SMART old pro once told me that the trouble with golf as a business is that by the time you find out what should be done it is too late in the season to do it.

There's a lot of truth in that comment, which was made humorously. The tendency in any seasonal business is to forget the bright ideas that come up during the rush of the season. Then, instead of these bright ideas being stored for use the next year, they too often are forgotten.

Since club pro business has become nearly a \$100 million operation annually there is too much at stake to take a chance with memory where making money is involved. And some of the old habits should be dusted off and revised.

The note book in which are written, for reference and planning, ideas to be worked out the following season, and definite market information also written and recorded where it can be found later, are modern tools that have made money for smart businessmen professionals.

From discussions and correspondence with many professionals this spring and summer, I have picked up the following notes which at least should serve as springboards for any businessman who wants to dive into an examination of his own business. From a review of his own season he can make a check list of points offering possibilities for increasing his income and giving better service to members.

A pro's overall look at his operations must start with a clear picture of the pro

department's financial operations.

Quite a few pro jobs are oversold by club officials when they hire pros. The officials think there is more to be made in the job than there actually is. The pro, especially if he is a young, eager fellow, lacking experience, may gear himself to the inflated notion of the job and go deeply and desperately into the red.

The pro has to know exactly where he stands. He must know:

How much he is making (or losing);

What his operating costs really are;

If the club is paying a fair percentage of pro department wages and operating costs; or

If the pro is getting from club officials and members the purchasing support and other income opportunities required to finance his department's numerous services for the benefit of the club and its members;

If the pro were a member, what he would expect of the pro department that he isn't getting now.

Learned Anything From Kicks?

What complaints have there been about pro department operations? If they were valid what are you going to do to prevent these complaints?

What sales and lesson income are you averaging per active male member?

What sales and lesson income are you averaging per active woman member?

If you are at a pay-play course what sales revenue do you average per round of play?

Do you think that your assistants are

well trained so that they properly and ably represent you?

What is there about your relations and work with various committees that could be improved to mutual advantage?

What have you been planning for many years to do about your shop or any other phase of your job that you haven't attended to yet?

Write down the answers to those questions and you'll probably have some surprising facts, figures and hunches that will point directly to a considerable improvement in your job and its profits.

Show Yourself Your Job

This sort of written survey of the pro and his job, made by the fellow who knows best, may become the customary thing when college graduates are holding most of the club pro jobs. Right now the more successful professionals, regardless of the extent of formal schooling they've received, periodically examine every phase of their jobs.

The PGA assistants' schools have done a great deal in a short time to develop the procedure of looking at the job analytically and making notes to be used at work or in its planning.

One department of pro golf in which organized study has worked wonders is teaching. The best-known good teachers are better now than they were ten years ago and the average pro now is a better teacher than the average pro was ten years ago.

Teaching results are decidedly more effective, not because pupils are better qualified to be taught and to learn, but because the teachers know better how to teach.

Organizes Instruction

Ask any of the older pros who is regarded as an effective teacher and he will tell you that he really began to teach well after he had organized his own study of instruction. Now you see a number of the foremost golf instructors watching men's and women's pro tournaments, studying what gets results for the playing stars and which of these methods can be adapted to the teaching professional's pupils.

Harry Pressler, one of the great teachers, takes a sabbatical leave every year and for several months goes on the tournament circuit, observing and studying and recording what makes the player tick — or slump. Around any big tournament you will see other club professionals who have developed men or women stars. These teachers never stop learning. In most cas-

"Christmas Shopping at Your Pro Shop" Campaign Starts

The sixth year of the highly successful pro shop campaign of merchandising golf gifts for Christmas already is certain to set new sales records for professionals judging from advance orders of the 1959 edition, says Joe Graffis, GOLFDOM's business mgr.

Around the "Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" plan was built golf gift sales at pro shops that passed the \$1,000,000 mark, according to reports from professionals who took part in the 1958 drive for Christmas business.

"Christmas shopping at other retail outlets often diverts money from pro shops when golf gifts would be more desirable from the viewpoint of givers and receivers," Graffis says. "The Christmas campaign converts stock into cash, promotes buying of golf equipment for winter vacations and sells substantial volumes of merchandise without cutting into spring sales."

Beginning early in Sept., "Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" will be sent to pros who have placed orders.

In each of the previous five years of the Christmas gift plan's operation, professionals who delayed in ordering the pro shop sales promotion catalog couldn't be supplied. There are no late printings of the gift-buying guide!!!

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es they know more about how and why the players happen to be playing well or just mediocre than the players do.

Averages Will Improve

Tommy Armour, who makes a study of coaching and performance in other sports in search of ideas that can be applied to golf instruction, forecasts that the next generation of average golfers is going to score much better than the average now. "They will be taught by professionals who have studied the job of teaching," Armour says.

Studying every part of the pro job may be even tougher than doing the actual work on the job. According to club pros who are top businessmen, studious examinations of what's doing in the pro department is the surest way of making more money out of the job.