

Small, Novel Touches Give Your Shop Its Personality

By RICHARD N. TARLOW

Executive vp, Brockton Footwear Sales, Inc.

In *October GOLFDOM* (page 68), Dick Tarlow reviewed five points which he believes helps to make the pro a better merchandiser. In this second and last article, he pursues the same subject, adding ten more factors that he thinks play an important part in promoting shop sales.

6. "Give your shop flexibility, individuality and the personal touch. When things have worked 'by the book' for a time, start using your imagination. A successful shop is a reflection of the pro and his club."

Someone once said that little things mean a lot. It's those small, seemingly insignificant touches that stamp your shop with a personality all its own. No other shop has it but yours. It's a business asset no money can buy. Here's an example:

You Can Do It With Mirrors

A shop I visited a few months ago had a novel shoe mirror installed for the amusement of customers. A full-length, life-size action portrait of Ben Hogan wielding a nine-iron was cut off just below the trouser cuffs. When a customer tried on a pair of golf shoes, he could view them as though they were being worn by "Mr. Golf." In fact, an amusing sign invited customers to "get a lift by stepping into Hogan's shoes." Naturally, an orthodox mirror was also available. But the idea was sound despite its frivolous nature. It put the customer in a good (buying) frame of mind and at the same time revealed the friendly personality of the shop's operator. A little thing? Yes, but add a few other little things.

7. "Follow through on your displays constantly. Shoes should be formed up and polished. Everything must sparkle. Put empty shoe boxes back in your display after a sale. It gives the impression of a full stock."

Last year I pointed this out to a pro I've known for a long time. He had the quaint notion that gaping holes in his display stocks gave his shop a "busy" look, and thereby promoted sales for him. The fallacy of his reasoning was even more striking when you consider that his club

membership, like so many others in the country, is comprised mainly of successful businessmen. You can't deceive a businessman into thinking that a sloppy-looking display (for that's what it was) is anything but indicative of a mismanaged business. Fortunately, the pro took the hint and volume is up considerably over previous years. As for soiled merchandise, would you enter a store and pay \$32.95 for a pair of dusty shoes, or even \$3.95 for a dirt-stained cap?

8. "Plan your merchandising program carefully before the season begins. Base your plans on last year's sales, membership figures and trustworthy merchandising advice. Once set, don't change them unless conditions change radically."

Sound Hunches vs. Whims

Whims are for women. Once you permit whim rather than sound judgment to rule your business, you might as well start looking for a new business. This isn't to say that a bit of intuitive thinking on occasion isn't beneficial. One good hunch in ordering merchandise can sometimes mean the difference between black and red in your books. On closer examination, however, you're likely to discover that most "good hunches" are firmly rooted in a solid business background. Remember, too, that a well-organized and faithfully-applied plan provides you with the guideposts to meet the objective you've set for your shop. Any needless deviation will simply put you in the dark.

9. "How about putting a practice putting rug near your club displays? You'll sell a lot of special putters with it. A member may be shy about taking a new putter out to the practice green but he won't hesitate to pick it up and try it there."

Here again is that extra touch that distinguishes you as a professional friend and counsel to your members and not just another shopkeeper. Provide your members with an added inducement to enter your shop and you'll automatically add figures to your profit ledger.

10. "Know your customers. Keep an index-card record of each customer and his family — address, phone, sizes, etc. Use them for special mailings at holiday

times to notify member of new shipments, gift ideas, etc."

Our company will be happy to supply you with a quantity of such cards. By maintaining an up-to-date card file of customers, you'll follow the lead of manufacturers who keep similar records on their pro customers. Our company, for example, has gone to considerable time and expense to revamp its record system so that we may have complete information at our fingertips on every pro who orders from one to ten doz. pairs shoes. It's simply good business practice.

11. "Stock the right merchandise. Nothing sells like the best — and nothing beats having a full range of sizes in the popular styles. For example: 24 shoe sizes should fit over 75 per cent of your customers. You'll make a lot more sales with 24 sizes of just one style than with single sizes in 24 styles. And you'll have lot fewer odds and ends to clean out at season's end."

Concentrate on Majority

A good deal of field research has gone into this statement. And it's just as true today as it was last season when we introduced the highly successful Sell-A-Matic units, the compact self-selling shoe department. Our surveys proved conclusively that over-diversification of stock defeats its own purpose. Instead of selling more merchandise, you sell less. The reason becomes obvious when you study the research findings. If 75 per cent of your members can be accommodated with a smaller, more manageable assortment, it's sheer folly to increase your stock by upwards of 50 per cent simply to serve 25 per cent of your membership. It's far more practical to concentrate on the overwhelming majority and serve the minority group with special orders from the supplier.

12. "Hold a little something in reserve. Keep a few sets of clubs in the back of your shop, out of sight. Then bring them out as something special — the club that's 'really right' for a particular player's game — rather than just another set from your regular display."

This is selling psychology at its most effective level. Next time you're in a quality haberdashery store, watch for the salesman who comes up with something "special" from the stock room, for the hard-to-please customer. Call it personalized selling! This special treatment is a legitimate sales tactic that invariably gives the customer a sense of importance and well-being and usually makes him a cash

PGA Schedule

- Jan. 2-5—L.A. Open, Rancho GC, Los Angeles
9-12—Tijuana (Mex.) Open, Caliente CC
15-18—Bing Crosby Inv., Pebble Beach, Monterey, Cypress Point, Del Monte
22-25—Thunderbird Inv., Palm Springs
26-27—Eldorado Pro-Am, Palm Desert
29-Feb. 1—San Diego Open, Mission Valley CC
29-Feb. 1—Panama Open
Feb. 5-8—Phoenix Open, Arizona CC
5-8—Valencia (Venezuela) Open
12-15—Tucson Open, El Rio CC
12-15—Puerto Rico Open, Berwind CC, San Juan
19-22—Texas Open, Brackenridge Park, San Antonio
19-22—Jamaica Open, Caymanas GC, Kingston
Feb. 26-Mar. 1—Baton Rouge Open
Mar. 5-8—Greater New Orleans Open, City Park GC
12-15—Pensacola Open, Pensacola CC
19-22—St. Petersburg Open, Lakewood G & CC
24-25—Seminole Pro Am, Seminole CC, Palm Beach
Apr. 2-5—Masters, Augusta National
9-12—Greater Greensboro Open, Star-Mount Forest CC
16-19—Houston Classic, Memorial Park GC
23-26—Lafayette (La.) Open, Oakbourne CC
23-26—Tournament of Champions, Desert Inn, Las Vegas
30-May 3—Colonial National Inv., Colonial CC, Ft. Worth

customer.

13. "Get rid of merchandise that doesn't sell. The longer you keep it the greater the mark-down you'll have to take to make it sell. Meanwhile, you tie up valuable space and money that should be working for you."

You Can't Blast Out

Have you ever been exasperated when a pupil stubbornly insists on trying to blast out of an impossible lie? He loses six or seven strokes rather than take the penalty at the start. It's a good illustration of what we mean by marking down merchandise (taking your penalty) at the right time. Irrational stubbornness might make sense if you're climbing Mt. Everest but on the course or in the shop it's expensive.

14. "Don't concentrate entirely on clubs and bags or even shoes. You carry lots of other merchandise that can add up to big sales and profits for you. Display it all. Remember, people seldom buy what they don't see. Every little sale adds to your total profit."

(Continued on page 70)

A "Must" for golfers visiting Europe

The World-famous Scottish Resort hotels and their Championship golf courses

GLENEAGLES HOTEL

Perthshire

and its King's and Queen's Courses in the foothills of the Highlands. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, the home of golf, is only 50 miles away. Served by frequent express train services from London.

**OPEN EASTER TO THE
END OF OCTOBER**

The international airport at Prestwick is adjacent to Turnberry Hotel and only 70 miles away by road from Gleneagles Hotel. As well as their superb golf courses both hotels have fine tennis courts, indoor swimming pools, shopping centres and private cinemas.

Full details and brochures may be obtained direct from the Resident Managers or from British & Irish Railways Inc:

NEW YORK 9 Rockefeller Plaza · LOS ANGELES 510 West Sixth Street

CHICAGO 39 South La Salle Street · TORONTO 69 Yonge Street

BTC/143/A

TURNBERRY HOTEL

Ayrshire

and its Ailsa and Arran Courses situated in the heart of the Burns country, and overlooking the sea. Near Culzean Castle.

OPEN ALL THE YEAR

Your Shop's Personality

(Continued from page 58)

Impulse buying is too often a neglected factor in pro shop merchandising. Take a lead from the better haberdashery store which displays jewelry accessories at the cash register. A man who has just purchased several dress shirts and a few expensive ties is likely to get the hint as he's about to leave the store. This is suggestive selling at its most potent (and profitable) height, especially when the salesman at the cash register throws in a verbal reminder that a set of cuff links and tie clasp will go handsomely with the new tie and shirt.

Likewise, the pro who adopts this suggestive selling technique should rack up many more sales with such items as caps, gloves, golf-slanted jewelry and socks. But this added source of revenue can be yours only if the merchandise is displayed statagically.

Get This Tip!

15. "Here's a fiscal tip: if you don't have the ready cash to earn the 2 per cent discount on your bills, borrow the money from your bank at 6 per cent for 30 days. On a \$1,000 bill, you'll make an extra \$15 profit without any work at all!"

This is standard operating procedure for most retailers, but you'd be surprised to learn how many pros continue to ignore manufacturers' discounts. It's simple arithmetic to take advantage of a discount whenever possible. In the case of a 5 per cent discount, for example, the \$15 profit triples, and you make \$45 extra. Even if you prefer to negotiate a 90-day loan, you'll still save \$5 on a \$1,000 bill with a 2 per cent discount.

These are just a few suggestions that may be applied to the operation of your shop. Above all else, put to practical use the tools provided by your suppliers. Take advantage of their catalogues, brochures displays and selling ideas. Nobody is more concerned with your success than the companies that produce your merchandise.

Louisiana Turf Officers

Officers of the Louisiana Turfgrass Assn. for 1959 are: C. D. Smith, pres.; A. E. Champion and Reese Coltrane, v. p.; Lloyd Abadie, secy.-treas.; and J. M. Peek, research dir. Directors are Winnie Cole, Ford Ames, New White, Lou G. Vickers, Tom Hassion and Irv Zeidman.

Buyers' Service • P. 87