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Don't Stand Pat on Your Pro Shop Product

By EVERETT LEONARD

Professional, Butte Des Morrts GC, Appleton, Wis.

To the inexperienced eye, many products look the same year after year. What often isn't realized is that imperceptible changes are made in them. Perhaps the flavor is improved, the shape made more streamlined, the product is reduced in weight or any of a dozen other things are added or subtracted to make it just a little different than it was before. Manufacturers have to continually change their products if, for nothing else, to develop new selling points.

I think that golf professionals have to follow the lead of manufacturers if they expect to go along increasing their net profits year after year. After 24 years as a pro, I am convinced of this more than ever before.

By making small changes in the way I operate my shop, by adding a new service here and there and by taking on new items for resale, I feel that I am following the example set by the manufacturer. More

important than this, I think that I am guarding against complacency, against becoming self satisfied.

Guard Against It

Complacency, being always content with the way things are going, are the evils that a man in the professional end of the golf business has to guard against. Why do I say this? Within a fairly limited range, a pro's income doesn't vary much from year to year. If he is halfway conscientious about his job and doesn't become too deeply enmeshed in club policies, he has as much job security as the next fellow. The same club members patronize him year after year. If a fellow is a Northern pro, he knows that he is going to work six or seven months and then, as so many do, slip away for a glorious five-month vacation. All these things can easily lull him into the error of taking everything in stride, of thinking that what is coming to him is sure to arrive.

He becomes perfectly set up for that complacent feeling unless he guards against it every working day of the year.

In my time I've seen quite a few pros who thought they were changing the product by removing the merchandise



Pro-Grip

is prepared especially for the leather grips of Golf Clubs. It gives a firm, tacky grip with light hand pressure, permitting an easy relaxing rhythmic swing. Your accuracy will improve, you'll feel relaxed . . . and those "Extra Strokes" will vanish.



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from the case or rack, dusting it off and returning it to a new location. Or maybe they moved the case itself, or the rack. Or perhaps moved a chair from one side of the shop to another.

That is fine as far as it goes. But why stop there?

Why not test sell a ball you've never

If You Can't Sell Clubs —

Jerry E. Zolan, who operates a ski shop as a sideline to his golf shop at Newark, (N.Y.) CC, had what he called a "schussing" business this winter. It was because about 150 ins. of snow fell in the Newark area and skis and sundry equipment were selling like they never had before. Late in March there still was 14-ins. on the course and prospects were that Jerry was going to go right on selling skis.

handled before? Does it ever occur to you that people get tired of seeing only balls made by Manufacturer A, B, C, D or E in your case? Or, maybe they don't like any of these brands. If you added a ball made by X, maybe you'd arouse some curiosity and increase ball sales.

The same thing applies to bags, clubs, shoes, slacks, sweater, blouses, etc. If the

quality of some line that presently is unfamiliar to you is equal to the old, reliable merchandise, why not test sell it?

One of the best merchandising lines that ever has been uttered is: "Mr. Jones, I've got something new here I'd like to show you." That word "new" will bend many an ear to hear what you have to say.

Don't stop with changing the layout or arrangement of your shop or with the introduction of new merchandise. Why not change your service "product" or, at least, add something to it.

Here are some suggestions for doing it. Maybe you are using some of them now or have been thinking about adopting them. Certainly, they are not new, but neither are many of the changes made by manufacturers in their products when they are looking for selling points to replace those that have got tired blood. They're guarding against complacency, against getting into a rut. So can you by:

Providing golf car transportation to and from the practice fairway;

Providing transportation when emergency phone calls are made to persons on the course;

Setting up a service to arrange matches for members;

Setting up some kind of foolproof sys-

tem for taking important phone calls for members. Note that word, "important." It means just that when you remember that many of your golfers are business and professional men for whom some calls are extremely important.

These are only a few of the services provided members by the pro dept. There are many others. You only have to look around you to decide what can be offered.

Says Sportsmanship Is "Modern Chivalry"

William Boice Langford was on the Yale golf team in the early 1900s when it won nine consecutive National Intercollegiate championships.

He has been secretary of the Old Guard Society of Palm Beach Golfers for many years. Bill has served on numerous USGA committees and was especially helpful in expanding the USGA Public Links tournament.

Langford is the architect of many fine golf courses.

Few people who know Bill are aware that he was stricken by polio when a child

and probably is the first exhibit of the effectiveness of golf as therapy for polio. By sheer will-power as a kid and with the help and encouragement of his father and mother, both ardent golfers, he dragged and stumbled around a course until his legs were brought back to usefulness.

One thing that many persons do know is that playing a round with Bill Langford is one of the great delights of the game.

Bill has a philosophy of golf that hundreds of professionals say explains the appeal of the game by men of good will: the true sportsmen.

Langford thinks of sportsmanship as "Modern Chivalry." Of sportsmanship he says:

Games and athletics, being builders of body and character, exert a strong influence on many phases of human relations.

Sportsmanship is the heritage of that medieval chivalry which contributed so much to the world's climb from the brutality of the dark ages.

In this troubled era it can help to rescue us from the constant communistic threat of nuclear destruction. Certainly a strict observance of the rules and an honest appreciation of an opponent's worth create

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