

Pro's Compensations Go Beyond Profits from Sales, Lessons

By Gene O'Brien

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Some years ago one of my members, a physician, told me that he thought I was in a good position to help people with mental and physical problems.

He was greatly overworked himself. He didn't have much time to play. He came out to take a lesson and practice now and then to get refreshed and conditioned.

Golf worked so well on him that he told me some of his patients would be better off coming to me than to him. This gave an important new aspect to my job. It is a responsibility that goes beyond curing slices or duck hooks, selling a club or demonstrating my own capacity to play better golf than my members can.

I saw myself and my club in a new light.

I saw all of professional golf in a tremendously important and exacting job that requires study and educational and temperamental qualifications that few of us realize in this stage of our profession's development.

When the professional does clearly and completely see the possibilities of his work in physical and mental therapy, his job is going to be more satisfying to him and his members are going to hold him in higher esteem and reward him accordingly.

Awareness of Mental Health Problem

The educated and thoughtful golf professional, like educated and thoughtful men in other professions and businesses, certainly must be impressed by all the magazine, newspaper and television references to mental health as a problem of growing seriousness. The golf pro knows that membership in a first class private club, by its identification with social and financial success, brings together people who constantly may be under excessively high pressure and need the sort of relief that golf should and can give.

When a professional looks at his job as one that can help people enjoy life and

good mental and physical health then the job becomes to him one of the most important in the community. His own spirit reflects this awareness of what he has to do to make his club worth far more than it costs the member.

I have made sales of golf equipment and apparel for which each buyer has cheerfully signed checks running into several hundreds of dollars. I have taught pupils so handicaps have been reduced a dozen strokes in a year. And so have other professionals. We make a living this way.

Far Better Than Pills

But what other thrill in golf business is there like having a woman come laughing past you as she walks from the 18th green, telling you that she hasn't had to take a pill in two months? Especially when that woman was a nervous wreck and a pill addict only a few months ago when her latest doctor sent her to you to get her interested in golf.

What can make you prouder or happier in your job than having a 69-year-old man, who has had numerous major operations in recent years, come to you for a lesson so that he can retain the 8-handicap which you have helped him to attain?

Each year I get some pupils who are sent to me by their physicians. So in a way I am a medical specialist. And so is our golf course supt. for the feel and the look of grass and the shrubs and trees are part of the cure for reducing the pressure of modern living.

Greater Than Cash

A fellow who is about ready to crack and too tired to fight is a fellow who needs golf desperately. When a professional can collaborate with the man's doctor in getting the weary citizen out on the course, then that professional has done a job worth far more than he ever will get paid. A grand part about the whole deal is that the pro doesn't expect to get adequately paid in cash for that work. The pro is paid in something greater than cash. Maybe that is why the other fellow has \$3,000,000 and desperately needs the help of a fellow who grew up from the caddie ranks.

When there is some youngster who has been worrying his parents because he can't seem to get stabilized, and I can straighten him out so he is fascinated by golf and has a swell time playing it, what is my bill for professional services? There isn't that much money made. I am paid off in more than money.



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