

Smart Pros Are Putting Accent on Top Grade Lines

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It is quite plain that golf professionals who have enjoyed a profitable year in moving clubs in 1961 are those who have done their selling in a really "professional" way.

They went at the job like a pharmacist filling a doctor's prescription. What patient knows the drugs the doctor prescribed to be used in the remedy or who made the materials in the medicine? The patient trusts the doctor and the druggist; the golfer trusts the professional in his dual capacity of teacher and merchant and that confidence is the foundation of every successful pro's business.

Many retailers can beat the pro on price for there is a limitless amount of cheap apparel, clubs and golf balls on the market. None of it gives as much value per dollar as quality merchandise does. If the pro handles a cheap class of merchandise he loses his distinction and the biggest edge he has over competition—the prestige of being a merchant who provides his customers with the best. In a game where psychological factors are important as in golf, prestige counts for a great deal.

Discredits the Club

The pro shop today is closely associated with the prestige of a club. If the shop is unattractive and disorderly place and displays merchandise of the sort found in the "bargain basements" of second rate department stores, it is a discredit to a first class club or semi-private or public course operation. Golfers at such clubs are inclined to be dissatisfied with the pro, subconsciously associating him with the inferior grade of merchandise in his shop.

GOLFDOM's survey of pro shop business this year indicates that 35 per cent of sales were in wearing apparel, including golf shoes. This figure checks with our observations. In our own close look

in recent years at pro shop business the shops doing the largest volume, and handling quality lines, split about 50-50 in playing equipment and apparel (plus shoes sales revenue).

There is significant evidence of the sales value of quality in the pro's trade-in club business, a substantial factor in club sales at many pro shops. The top brands of clubs taken in on new club sales are readily re-sold at good prices. But the lesser known or cheaper lines, no matter how good they may look as used clubs, are hardly marketable at a price that will enable the pro to come out ahead on a transaction.

Profits From Wise Buying

Wise buying is most essential to pros' profitable selling. The pro can learn from watching women buy in his shop. Almost instinctively they know how to buy apparel and shoes. They are learning to judge values in clubs and they are building pro shop volume as they learn. Women don't come into pro shops looking for the sort of stuff advertised as "Famous Makers' Close-outs" in newspaper ads. They expect the pro to be a source for the type of merchandise found at the finest suburban or resort specialty shops. How well that policy pays the professional is something to which we can testify. Our sales of a quality line of women's golf wear through pro shops this year has been 62 per cent ahead of 1960.

Can't Fool Women

Any pro who thinks that a woman is going to go to a pro shop to buy cheap the same sort of stuff she can probably buy even cheaper in a low-price store has a lot to learn about merchandising. He should talk with his wife on this point and get straightened out.

Of course there is strong reason for a rather wide range of price lines on clubs, especially at the courses where people of limited incomes play, but I can tell you that no successful pro businessman I've come across ever has made a mistake in over-accenting his top grades. I have seen a few cases where pros put so much push on low priced club sales that they cut down on their high grade club business. These fellows drove the golfers to competing retailers to get clubs even cheaper than the pro shop could offer them.

PROS!

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