

## **Price Cutting Is Poor Solution in Selling to Women**

**By HERB GRAFFIS**

**W**hat accounts for the big variation in women's business done in pro shops?

That's a question to which professionals have to find an answer to keep growing in the golf business. Women take more than 60 per cent of the lessons but their buying at pro shops isn't anywhere near that percentage. Women golfers need a good deal of prompting to develop the habit of patronizing the pro shop — and they need it right away.

We recently asked some pro businessmen: "What have you found is the most important thing in persuading women golfers to buy at the pro shop?"

### **Reasons for Success**

Professionals who have done well in this, report these reasons for their success:

1. Interest developed in individual or class lessons;
2. Convenience of the shop;
3. Merchandise well displayed — and in stock;
4. Competitively priced merchandise and apparel;
5. Advice of other women.

The sequence above is based on reports from 58 professionals in various parts of the country. The primary reason for women's buying differs at various clubs. Only four professionals reported that competitively priced equipment and apparel is the No. 1 selling point. Obviously, women's "shopping" is not always with an eye to what is cheapest.

Tony Henschel, professional at Westborough CC (St. Louis dist.), says that "competitively priced" merchandise brings women's business to the shops when it is known that prices of quality brand apparel are the same as at other first class retail outlets. He notes: "A colorful and clean shop with smart display attracts women, but even if merchandise is priced right there must be top service from an informed pro shop staff."

The woman golfer knows in a general way, for example, that her pro knows a good deal about golf clubs but not many women have much of an idea of what vast differences there are in various types of clubs.

Women "bargain hunters" have pros puzzled. Often the pro discovers that a woman thinks she has bought clubs and a bag outside at a bargain price when she could have gotten the same number of clubs, probably of a higher quality, and a better bag, for less money at the pro shop. The pro's big task is to get the word around that he can match outside prices and add what is called the "pro shop premium", according to Gordon Richards of Overlake G & CC in Medina, Wash.

Richards points out that the free service of the pro to his customers (tees, instruction tips, minor repairs,, arranging for caddies or golf cars, conducting tournaments, caring for members' guests, etc.) constitutes a substantial bonus value added to pro shop purchases. The male golfer usually is aware that these services involve an obligation to allow the pro a chance to make a good income, but the woman who is fairly new to golf should be educated to the fact that these services are premiums given to her for her loyal patronage.

### **A Woman Discusses Women**

An illuminating summary of the pros' position in selling to women golfers is presented by Ann (Mrs. Gordon) Leishman, wife of the professional at the River Road CC, Louisville. She remarks: "The most valuable factor in serving the woman golfer is the professional's informed and sincere personal interest in her, based on his study of her as a golf pupil.

"Women at our club are aware that they could buy shorts and blouses elsewhere for less than they might pay in the pro shop. But they know that pro shop merchandise will hold up longer — and fit much better.

"There always will be women golfers who will buy inexpensive golf apparel and playing equipment. Cutting prices for this minority is cutting the throat of the pro business. The pro is further ahead to either ignore this type of buyer, or to try to win her over through courteous service. The point is that price cutting is the worst possible solution."