

Remember the Big Idea!

Your Shop Is For Selling

BY AL BONK

Every year the professional has the same problems of freshening the appeal of his shop. Appeal means selling power.

A pro shop is for selling; other areas of the clubhouse are for entertaining. The pro cannot put it just that bluntly to his members or players at a fee course but selling had better be the primary purpose of the pro shop if the pro is going to make a satisfactory income.

Getting rid of the old look in a shop is not a matter of the pro getting tired of the way the shop looks. Nor does it come from being inconvenienced by some poor features of its layout. It is a matter of renewing the buying invitation to old members, of creating magnetism that pulls in business from old members who are not buying enough to pay their way at the club.

There has been a great deal in GOLF-DOM over the years about the member whose house account is so low that other members practically have to pay for carrying him on the club roster. But I

haven't seen or heard much about the member whose pro shop buying isn't enough to pay his share of the cost of pro department service.

Pro Pays Himself

The point does not seem to have been put across in the golf business that pro service actually costs a club little or nothing; that the professional department's service attracts profitable business to the club and that the pro, in the last analysis, must pay himself for working for the club. Therefore, the wisely run club gives its professional encouragement and opportunity to make money. In no other way can a first class club attract the sort of first class man it needs.

The same incentive and reward elements that enable a man to make enough to play golf apply to the player's pro.

The member or pay-play player who isn't buying at the pro shop is an important reason for changing the looks or layout of the shop. If a poor customer, man or woman, isn't buying from the pro it is, in most cases, the pro's fault. Somebody is selling the player what isn't being bought in the pro's shop.

Getting traffic into the shop is part of the pro's selling problem, but equally difficult to solve is getting the shop to sell all it should to the potential buyer who enters.

Experiments in increasing the shop's selling power must be conducted ceaselessly. Keep changing the displays — locations, merchandise, general appearance — often enough to keep the sight of the shop from getting tired and stale to those who come in.

Scares Away Sales

There is a tendency toward giving pro shops a too-sophisticated look. That trend sometimes is carried to an extreme. The customer in the fancy atmosphere of a place that seems to be trying to look like a salon rather than a pro shop isn't persuaded that the Big Idea is to spend

Sales Teasers

- Get rid of the old look — ring in the new.
 - Somebody's selling the player who doesn't buy from you.
 - Experiment in increasing your shop's selling power.
 - Price tags show that the price is fully warranted.
 - Golf merchandise has prestige value that you should capitalize on.
 - Use your imagination to keep the sales pot boiling through the season.
 - For the women, try to show smart styles that can't be bought elsewhere.
-

money for useful golf equipment and supplies.

No pro ever lost a job, lost a sale or lowered himself in his members' esteem by putting price tags on merchandise in the shop.

Again, I want to remind you that the Big Idea in the shop is to sell. How are you going to sell if the potential customer doesn't know the price?

There are very few things that somebody can't make in lower quality and sell for less money. Does the professional have to be afraid or ashamed of selling quality for the price that quality justifies?

Prices Are Justified

Neat and bold price tags on pro merchandise give the customer confidence that the price is fully warranted.

Some professionals seem to think that the sophisticated look of a shop is lost when price tags appear. These fellows do not realize that the genuinely sophisticated rich are frankly interested in money. That's how they got rich.

A certain elegance, in keeping with the country club atmosphere, must be present. The pro shop is not merely a display room but a retail store that is a convenient service. It provides expert buying advice, distinctly personalized in the case of the private club members.

Another trend noticed in pro shops, in private clubs, particularly, and in all sections of the country, is the trend to accent apparel merchandising at the expense of golf playing equipment and accessories. Apparel selling has its place in the pros' policy and at some shops amounts to more than 60 per cent of the entire retail volume.

Watch Clothing Balance

If I were a pro I'd watch that division between golf playing equipment and apparel sales. A high apparel percentage may be a healthy sign at resort courses where the guest's home club pro probably has sold him new clubs, a bag and balls before he went touring. But if the apparel sales percentage is high at a shop where the bags in storage show a high percentage of irons that are older than six or seven years, or woods older than eight years, or irons and woods that were bought elsewhere, the situation had better be studied.

The pro should bear in mind that he is hired as a golf expert, not as an



Paul Runyan (l), LaJolla, Calif., two time winner of the PGA Senior tourney, gets check for \$2,000 and trophy from Ronald M. Teacher, chairman of the board of Wm. Teacher & Sons, Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland, Senior tournament co-sponsor, for his 1962 victory. Paul will travel to England next month to meet the British Senior champ.

expert in pushing merchandise. The pro, originally located at a club to give lessons and supply clubs, balls and bags, grew into his present merchandising position because of the strategic location of his shop, and for no other reason.

The professional wisely capitalized on his shop's location and on buyers who, as private club members, were considered a "captive" market.

Don't Have to Buy

Golfers at the public and fee courses are not a "captive" market. They buy any place, often primarily for price. What the public course pro has done to retain and extend command of his market is one of the most interesting demonstrations of merchandising brains in golf business. These pros have to operate as a public utility. They make money for themselves and serve their players and the community in general by making the pro shop pay.

The private club pro can make use of the prestige factor as well as of his own position as an authority as he sells golf equipment. Association with the social prestige of his club often is the selling point for apparel bought at a first class private club. It means something to a manufacturer to have his clothing or shoes sold at exclusive private clubs, as well as at other "prestige" retailing establishments. To what extent a manufacturer recognizes this factor is some-

(Continued on page 102)

Only NASSAU GOLF CARS



Offer all these advantages:

- A Proven Quality Product
- A Profit Planning Service . . .
tailored to your course
- Industry's Most Flexible Financing
. . . With Fleet Expansion Feature
- A Complete Line
- Maintenance Programs
- 5 years Experience

Write for literature and the
name of nearest distributor.

PARRETT

MANUFACTURING CO., INC.

777 Paw Paw Ave. • Benton Harbor, Michigan

Pro Shop Is for Selling

(Continued from page 56)

thing for the pro to consider as he buys. He can see, in GOLFDOM's advertising pages, for instance, the degree of the manufacturer's interest in pro endorsement and retailing effort.

Overall Market Factors

The appearance and operation of the pro shop express the importance of the pro shop in supplying the golfer. There are more than 5,000,000 golfers playing 15 or more times a year. Their per year spending for equipment and apparel must be at least \$50 per person. Sales of golf goods in 1961, at manufacturers' selling prices, including federal excise taxes, was reported at approximately \$99,500,000 and this figure did not include the sales of all manufacturers.

When that much merchandise must be sold there is going to be a lot of competition among retailers for the buyer's money. The pro has to be ever alert to maintain his command of the high class golf goods market. The top quality ball accounts for about half the total ball sales. The highest quality clubs are about a third of all the clubs sold. This top level business now is the pro's. How much longer this condition will continue, or how much longer the golf market will maintain its present emphasis on quality merchandise, depends mainly on the pro himself. This means that the pro shop is the place where he will see a preview of his business future.

His shop gives the pro his means of outselling aggressive store competition which fights for golf business with merchandising devices by the carload, special promotions to tie in with specific products, bold displays in stores and windows, effective use of the manufacturers' advertising, price concession and strong use of its own advertising in newspapers, TV, radio and direct mail.

Search For New Ideas

The resourceful professional must make his shop an advertisement that not only sells but gets talked about. He must be eagerly looking for new ideas.

A pro friend of mine, Joe Zelazny of Briarwood in the Chicago district, was getting ready to open his shop for the 1962 season. He said there was just something missing there, something he couldn't put his finger on. After talking

NEW IDEA *American Sentinel* ENTRANCE MAT



Interlocking link construction prevents misalignment and provides dimensional stability. Precision-molded grease resistant vinyl links are woven on a non-rust steel network, which is metal-reinforced on the ends, Non-slip surface. Eliminates hazards of wet floors. Even the tiniest heels cannot catch. Keeps dirt, mud and slush outside. Rolls for easy handling. Individual links come in 15 fade-resistant solid decorator colors, and the first marbled polychrome colors. Design can include name.

Send for catalog sheets and prices.

AMERICAN MAT CORPORATION

1802 Adams Street

Toledo 2, Ohio

"America's Largest Specialists in Floor Matting"

A MAT FOR EVERY PURPOSE

to him for a while, I suggested he set up a corner of his shop specifically for promotional items. This, in a sense, would be the bargain department. In it he could stock closeout merchandise or discount items that he wants to clear out without necessarily waiting for an end-of-season sale.

This section of the shop would soon develop into a regular stop by the members of his club and not affect the sales throughout the rest of the shop. The idea behind a merchandising device such as this is to keep a constant excitement going in the shop. Don't let the member walk through the shop only when he is ready to buy something. Keep the sales pot boiling through the golf season!

Sometimes merchandising and sales promotion walk arm-in-arm with public relations. If the membership of your club warrants this type of activity, why not set up a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly display pertaining to the business of some of your members?

This could be an exhibit of the items produced by your members or it could be a series of photographs illustrating production details. Most members would be not only pleased, but proud, to participate in an exhibit in your pro shop.

Win the Women Shoppers

Constantly review your ladies' wear stock. The trick is not to have too much stock, but to have a selection of smart styles that cannot be purchased at every department store and ladies' wear shop in the area.

Women are natural-born shoppers and given the right inducement (which in effect is availability, style and price) they will buy — and buy often.

Golf professionals can get expert advice from the manufacturers and their representatives who are eager to help, not only in suggesting a display but also in calling attention to the newest styles which are available.

And don't be afraid to ask for reactions from the women at the club. But don't let them stampede you.

Golf and PGA Professional

"Golf and the PGA Professional," a booklet first issued by the PGA in 1960 and telling of the PGA's services to the pro, the amateur and the game in general, recently has gone into its third edition. This informative book may be secured free from the PGA, Dunedin, Fla.