

Tie-ins with manufacturers, point-of-purchase promotions and other methods of pushing golf products offer big opportunities for increasing sales . . . but what's being done with them?

The Sad, Neglected State of Pro Shop Advertising

BY AL BONK

I've never heard of a professional who takes adequate advantage of the tax allowance on advertising expense.

Advertising costs are deductible as a business expense for the simple reason that advertising increases sales and consequently the manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing revenue on which taxes are collected.

The golf pro has before him innumerable exhibits of the wisdom and profit of advertising. He sees that, despite the fame of such golfers as Armour, Hagen, Jones, Snead, Palmer, Berg, Suggs and others, manufacturers have to advertise strongly and persistently to establish and maintain a sales value in even the well known names. The names, Kodak and Cadillac, without a build up and the reminders of advertising certainly wouldn't have the powerful appeal to buyers these names now have.

Some Spend Money On It

There are some instances of effective advertising by professionals. George Aulbach in the PGA Business Schools at Clearwater has exhibited letters and circulars that have sold many thousands of dollars worth of shop merchandise, lessons, club cleaning and storage service for him. Harry Obitz, among the older professionals, and Bud Holscher, among the younger ones, are standouts as businessmen who make money by spending money on advertising.

Nobody who knows the whole picture can criticize pro golf merchandising in a broad way. As a matter of cold cash fact, pros generally are superior to many sports goods store retailers in almost every phase of merchandising except advertising.

By advertising, the sporting goods or department stores overcome many of the advantages inherent in the pros' position. The stores budget from four per cent to, on special occasions, as high as eight per cent of expected sales volume for advertising golf equipment.

This would mean at a minimum of four per cent that a professional on a job that has as little as \$20,000 a year in revenue, should budget about \$800 of this amount for advertising. If a club doesn't provide a pro with any more business than \$20,000 it ought to be paying him a good salary. Otherwise, he is paying the club for working for it.

In planning and conducting their advertising to members or to pay-play course players, most professionals can learn a lot from the way in which the stores tie in with club, ball and bag manufacturers' advertising.

Brand Name Helps

It may irritate some pros to see newspaper ads in which prominent manufacturers' names and player names are advertised with cut prices on the merchandise. All there is to this advertising is the name on the merchandise and an obviously cut price, possibly looking even lower than it is because it may refer to a set of two woods and five irons while the pro merchandise usually is in sets of four woods, nine irons and a putter.

In a large amount of the store advertising, the cut price wouldn't mean much if it were not attached to a brand name that is favorably known to golfers.

But dealers also are irritated by the amount of advertising manufacturers do on "pro only" lines. The dealers probably would be even more perturbed if pros would tie in with the manufacturers'



This is a cheerful, well designed shop and generally the displays are first class. But in looking over the club rack, I note two things I would change. The shoes, at left, should have shoe trees and they should be laced up because they give the appearance of just having been tried on and then tossed rather carelessly back on the shelf. In addition, displaying them with the spikes up, as they are here, may cause the top shoe to become slightly marred. The clubs in the display are, of course, expensive items. It isn't good merchandising to show inexpensive caps on the same rack with them. It would be preferable to display something like alpaca sweaters in the spots where the golf caps are shown. In this way, the clubs aren't downgraded by items that cost only two or three dollars.

Al Robbins

pro-only advertising like the stores make use of manufacturers' advertising.

Inexpensive But Effective

Once in a while you will see pros tie in their own local advertising with a manufacturer's newspaper advertising in the way that Tony Casabella and Joe Schoenbaechler ran inexpensive but effective advertising in Louisville along with the MacGregor newspaper ads on the DX Tourney ball.

Not often enough is there pro shop display and advertising tie-in with manufacturers' pro only advertising, although there has been an increase in this since *Golfing* magazine and pros worked out a circulation and merchandising plan to educate members to buy from the professionals.

Window and store displays and news-

paper advertising that many retailers outside of the sports business use in tying into the national advertising of manufacturers are selling performances rarely applied by pros.

There are many ways in which a pro could make his shop the point at which the manufacturers' advertising of superior value merchandise would pay off.

Resourceful, older professionals who learned the hard way, and bright young men, such as Joe Benner of the Country Club of Miami, who got his training in modern business at university schools of commerce, hook their own shop displays and advertising by letters, pamphlets and signs to the millions that manufacturers spend in general advertising. They learn what advertising the manufacturer has for them to use and they use it.

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an investment of about \$1,000,000. As you probably have already surmised, it goes first class all the way. The clubhouse, with a canopy that extends over part of the range, has a large dining room and bar and a long lounge that looks out over the range and part of the course and also houses the pro shop. Its comfortable furniture and fixtures complement the overall class of the center.

The Miami golf center occupies about 55 acres. Fairways and tees on the Par 60 are planted in dense Tifton 57 Bermuda, which has held remarkably well right through the hot months, and the greens are planted to 328. The putting areas, running from 5,000 to 7,000 sq. ft. per green, are of a rolling type, rising to height of about six feet in the back. Just about as many traps surround them as you will find on the average and difficult standard course. Supervising the maintenance of the Colonial Palms course as well as the range and miniature is Emil Elama, who directs the work of four assistants.

Walter Anderson is fulltime executive sec. of the Florida Turf Assn., succeeding Col. Frank Ward.

Advertising Is Neglected

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All advertising is directed to explode into a profit at the point of sale. The pro has one of the most valuable point-of-sale setups in all merchandising. His shop is where the merchandise is used — at the golf course. His lesson tee is the source of education in good golf.

Profit Motive Secondary

The pro himself is (or should be) known as a friendly, completely trustworthy authority on golf who sells not because a merchandising profit is his primary objective. The pro's fundamental reason for selling is that of helping golfers to get greater enjoyment and better scores. Then comes the profit motive. Other retailers can make a profit without being in the pro's position of responsibility for the satisfaction of the buyer.

Very few retailers are any better situated than the pro to make profitable use of advertising, his own and that of manufacturers.

Good advertising is a teaching job for the customer's profit as well as for the profit of the pro. The majority of golfers do not get any planned educa-

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tion in how to be good members of private clubs. Diplomatic advertising by the pro will do a great deal of this important job for the club.

Furthermore, such advertising will educate the golfer in the obligations and benefits of buying from the pro, in the good and thrifty common sense of paying for club cleaning and storage, taking lessons and in all other ways making use of the professional's services.

Almost every professional has at his private club or pay-play course one or more advertising men who are enthusiastic golfers. These fellows would enjoy discussing a pro's advertising problems, planning a campaign and even writing or editing copy for the pro's letters to his members, articles in the club magazine or printed circulars. The pro's advertising counselor would tell him how to make profitable use of manufacturers' advertising and possibly local newspaper or radio advertising.

In some places the pro has an advertising and selling problem with the used clubs he has taken in as trade-ins. His advertising friend might be able to help him solve this problem.

The pro is in ideal position to make good use of advertising because golfers want to be told by the pro what to buy, and they prefer to buy from the pro.

The immense success of the "Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" pro advertising book shows how golfers and their non-golfing friends appreciate and respond to the pro's advice on buying gifts. Millions of dollars each year now are being spent in pro shops for Christmas gifts that are greatly preferred to the ties, mufflers, etc., that normally are received.

Talk over your pro department advertising picture with your advertising friend. He probably will want to give you invaluable advice and help as a favor to you and because he is interested in golf, his club and golf business. But insist that he take something — a wedge, a putter, a 5-wood, a box of balls, a bag, a shag bag, an umbrella or something else. What he will tell you will be worth a lot of money to you if you will do it.

Pros learned how to save many dollars when taxation made it necessary for them to get the expert services of accountants and tax advisers. They will learn how to make even more money when they learn how to use what their friends in advertising can tell them.