

Put the Welcome Mat Out for the Salesman

Learn to get him talking and you'll find out things that will improve your operations

BY WILLIAM E. LYONS

Supt., Firestone CC, Akron, O.

THE golf course supt., professional and manager don't pay for the services of one man at least who makes and saves money for the department head and, for that matter, the entire club.

That very valuable person whose salary you, as an operating executive don't have to pay, is the salesman.

No matter how much energy has been exerted in bringing something useful to the golf business, the product isn't of any use until it is sold. The salesman is the

William E. Lyons, supt. of Firestone Country Club course in Akron, O., is the owner and operator of Bill Lyons Turfgrass Farms and of a Par 3 course and range. He says that long ago he learned he could get more work done quicker by picking the brains of salesmen who call on him. Lyons adds that he has gotten a good deal of basic education in utilizing salesmen by reading Firestone's sales training material. Editor

one who primarily makes the product useful to you.

As a supt., I can say that the more salesmen I have working for me the better off I am. I am sure that every successful club department head believes this just as strongly as I do. My experiences with salesmen are paralleled by the profitable experiences of my co-workers at Firestone CC, Professional Alex Redl and Manager H. J. Laughlin.

Buying is a highly important job at a



Bill Lyons

... why not pick his brains?

golf course. Rarely does a course have a budget that will allow a dollar's waste. Even when the supt., and his chairman think they have provided for all contingencies in their budget, poor weather or some other unexpected condition may occur to increase operating expenses. When this happens the purchase of overdue equipment is deferred again.

The buyer at a club seldom gets the time for buying he would like to have. The supt. too often has to be out on the course, and the professional has to be on the lesson tee or in the shop when a salesman is waiting with something that either could use.

I want to see (and make use of) every salesman who has something of benefit to our operation. I believe that an attitude of "Welcome Mr. Salesman" is important to the club and to myself.

I must have the understanding and cooperation of the salesman. He has to be somewhat educated in my business. I am, to some extent, educated about his product because I have read his company's advertisements. So that brings us to the point where the salesman enters. Then, I want to know these things from Mr. Salesman:

What have you to show me today?
Will what you have:

1. Save labor?

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commissioner. This must be done within 30 days. If the club isn't satisfied with the regional commissioner's decision, it has the right to submit a protest to the IRS's national headquarters in Washington.

In the majority of cases in the last year, according to the CMA Advisor, appeals that have been made to national headquarters have been decided in favor of the clubs involved. Normally, a lower administrative echelon can't reverse a ruling made by national headquarters.

In cases where an agent or group chief requests technical advice from a higher office, a copy of the facts and questions presented must be made available to the club. Reviews of decisions made by district and regional offices are said to be fairly standard in most tax situations.

Welcome the Salesman

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2. Save money?
3. Be a better method for me?
4. Produce better turf?
5. Contribute to safety?
6. Carry authentic approval?
7. Be used by leaders in the turf field?
8. Show a need of which I am unaware?
9. Contribute to my knowledge of turf?
10. Be guaranteed by you and the manufacturer?

• Please remember, Mr. Salesman, that there are 101 things I should be doing. So, if you please, let's keep it brief and to the point. I, too, will remember that you have come a long way out of your way to help me.

You Have To Be Sold

• We are dependent on you to deliver the goods plus the service of seeing that the product works as you represent it. If you are not "sold" on your product, don't try it on us.

• Anything you might have learned while attending turf conferences is most welcome. You see we don't get around like you do. You see a lot of other fellows doing the same job. Someone is doing the job easier and at lower cost than I am. Tell me how it's done. If you see something in our operation that is unique, tell the other fellow. Nobody has a corner on all the ideas.

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