

The Teenage Market

Pro Shop Can Bid for Sportswear Business That Goes Elsewhere

Ten-billion dollars will be spent this year by the nation's teenagers. More than \$14-billion will pass through their hands in 1965, according to leading market research organizations. It's small wonder that department stores and specialty shops have increased their efforts to attract this lucrative market.

How many of these teenage dollars can be added to pro shop sales? Probably quite a few for the pro who goes after them. Your teenage market depends on the number of teenagers who use your course and club facilities. Smart buying and skillful promotion on the part of the pro are necessary for success with teenagers.

As with all your customers, sales will depend on the amount of service you are willing to give teenagers, and the degree to which you are willing to cater to their tastes. If you approach teenagers as potential customers with money to spend rather than as kids cluttering up the course, chances are you can capture a fair share of this market.

Several pros are already involved in teenage selling. Graham Ross, at Dallas Athletic Club CC, says: "Some parents use the club as a place to park the kids. Most of the youngsters are aware of the pro shop and will buy the things they need and want if you've got something to sell them. It's a matter of stocking merchandise that will appeal to them."

Clinics Create Customers

An active Junior golf program, as Gene Root at Lakewood (Colo.) CC points out, is a great source of teenage sales. "As the Juniors develop as golfers, many buy \$1.25 balls and \$4.75 gloves," Root states. "Many times, parents buy the youngsters topline pro clubs as presents when they graduate from high school."

Root's observation of the value of Junior clinics to pro shop sales is a sound starting point. From golf equipment displays, it is only another step to a well-stocked teenage sportswear department. With 40 to 50 teenagers involved in the average Junior clinic, plus many more who use the pool and tennis courts, the pro has an excellent opportunity to establish his shop as a headquarters for this group.

Teenage sportswear may well be one of the pro shop's greatest untapped resources. It is likely that teenagers' wardrobes include a greater percentage of casual clothing than those of their parents.

Selling teenagers requires buying smart teenage fashions. Your best source of supply and helpful merchandising tips are the sportswear salesmen who service your shop. Consult them on promotion ideas. The major manufacturers are well aware of the teenage market and have carefully studied teen fashion trends. They produce good quality and style for Junior customers. Manufacturers and their reps undoubtedly are anxious to help you increase your teenage sales.

Promotion Makes Sales

Take your cues from stores that specialize in sales to kids in promoting casual Junior clothing. Teenage purchases are often made for reasons of identity. The status of the seller in most teenagers' eyes is an important factor. Often, a teenager will save for weeks to buy a sweater from a particularly popular shop, rather than buy a cheaper version at a local department store. This gives your pro shop a unique advantage. The connotations of country club and golf are important in attracting teenage buyers to your shop.

A pro shop label with the club crest is a useful decoration on the sportswear you sell. It probably carries even more prestige with youngsters than with adults. It might even be possible to have the customer's name sewn on to the label if the cost doesn't run too high. This, too carries a lot of weight with youngsters. Flyers addressed to your teenage customers will acquaint them with your sportswear and equipment department. Pro shop operators at semi-private and public courses, too, can capitalize on the prestige of golf as a selling tool through ads in local papers.

Style Shows and Consultants

Style shows of teen fashions are a selling tool for many local merchants. It may be no problem to outfit these shows with sportswear you have in stock. And, for models, choose from the club's teenage girls — they'll jump at the opportunity to

What Is the Risk with Teenage Credit?

Our shop has never lost a dime on teenage credit

*Mac Hunter, Riviera CC,
Pacific Palisades, Calif.*

We've extended credit to kids of from \$1 to \$500, based on our judgment of their character We've had almost no bad accounts over the years.

*Dick Farley, Montauk Down GC
Montauk Point, L.I.*

Probably you should set a \$60 limit payable at \$20 a month with no service charge If the account isn't paid promptly, add a 1½ per cent charge and close it after payment.

*Joseph A. White, International
Consumer Credit Association*

take part in a style show. Plenty of spots around the clubhouse or in the pro shop are ideal for a show of this kind. Held sometime in August, you should be able to attract a lot of back-to-school business. Suggest that your members invite guests to the show.

Young girls are often employed by department stores to serve as fashion consultants to teenage customers. Possibly, one of your salesgirls is just the type for this service. Or you might choose a well-dressed, popular college girl home for the summer for this job. In either case, a consultant can give specialized help to teenage customers.

Teenage girls probably will be more interested in a sportswear department than teenage boys. But don't forget the masculine fashions. Boys usually are more sportswear conscious than their more practical fathers. Mothers, too, enjoy buying smart looking sportshirts, sweaters and slacks for their sons.

Once a merchandiser decides to compete for teen dollars, the controversial question of teenage credit comes up.

The general practice of tacking teen-

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in support of their contention that by allowing his signature to appear on the sales letter and in facsimile on the three advertisements, Palmer had assumed personal liability for the performance of the golf cars as advertised.

In conclusion the Court said: "A reading of the record and examination of the advertisements, including the letter, demonstrate no basis for personal liability. The plaintiffs testified they knew that they were doing business with Birdie Co., Inc., of which Palmer was vice-president, and that the order blank — not in evidence — was directed to Birdie Co., Inc.

"This record does not sustain any legal basis for a finding of ambiguity as to the contractual relationship between the plaintiffs and Palmer, or any direct assumption of personal liability by Palmer."

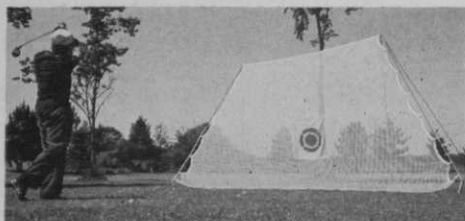
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age purchases on to parents' accounts, some sales specialists feel, is inconsistent with attempts to attract teenage customers. If a shop wants teenage sales, it should be willing to recognize the potential young customers as financially responsible individuals and extend direct credit to them.

More conservative merchandisers point out that there are no legal obligations in teenage credit contracts. A compromise step, these salesmen suggest, is teenage accounts guaranteed by parents.

Several department store and specialty shop credit managers have pointed out that the pro shop is in a particularly good position to analyze the character of its customers. Close relationships not usually enjoyed by local stores, permit pro shop operators to determine credit risks in given situations. Pro Dick Farley at Montauk Downs GC in Montauk Point, N.Y., has had experience that supports this idea. Farley has extended credit to teenagers in amounts up to \$500 on little else than his judgment of their character. "Over the years, there have been surprisingly few bad accounts in this age group," he says. "Most kids are very conscientious about paying their debts promptly."



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(MORE TO COME)

Further support for teenage credit plans comes from a survey made by Seventeen, a magazine for teenage girls, a few years ago. At that time, 31 per cent of the stores polled had teenage credit plans which were every bit as successful as those for adults. Only three out of every ten requested parental guarantees.

Limit the Account

Shops that extend credit to teenagers usually limit the account balance. Joseph A. White of the International Consumer Credit Association was asked for his recommendations for teenage accounts at pro shops. He suggests "a \$60 limit, payable \$20 monthly with no service charge. If the account is not paid promptly, add a 1½ per cent late charge and close the account."

The advantages of teenage credit to pro shop customers are many. His own account gives the teenager a sense of pride and responsibility that should encourage him to shop with you. It makes his purchases his business with no need to explain each and every item to his parents at the end of the month.

The question of teenage credit is one to be completely weighed. The final decision must be reached by the pro after consideration of the advantages and pitfalls of such sales, and the reliability of those to whom credit is extended.

Run Shop for Dough

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brother, Alec, at the Philadelphia Cricket Club.

Al came to America at the age of 18 on the British liner Berengaria. He landed in this country during the Golden Age of Sports when Bobby Jones and others were in their heyday. He was impressed by the skyscrapers of New York and other cities and the beauty of American courses, although he did somewhat miss the heather of his native Scotland.

He lived with his Uncle Jim near North Hills when he first went to work for Alec Duncan. He stayed at Philadelphia Cricket four years, then became assistant to George Sayers at Merion in Ardmore, Pa. This was a time when Joe Valentine, dean