



Pat Mahoney

... build up a complete inventory.

Put 20 Per Cent Back in Your Business

Half of Pat Mahoney's profits go right back into his inventory . . . This enables him to buy more and bigger and continue to snowball his take at Palo Alto Municipal

BY DON CURLEE

An old Scotch business philosophy is proving to be as solid as the foundations of St. Andrews for Palo Alto, Calif., golf professional, Pat Mahoney, who's a wee bit o' Scotch himself and doesn't mind admitting it.

Neither does he mind adding substance to the tight-fisted image of the Scotch as long as he can make it pay off in sales and profits for his pro shop at the Palo Alto Municipal GC.

The Scotch shrewdness that Mahoney has followed for more than 30 years — the past nine at Palo Alto — is simply this: Instead of taking 40 cents of every sales dollar for yourself, keep only 20 and put 20 back in the business. That 20 cents has multiplied over the years so that Mahoney now keeps an average inventory of about \$50,000.

Consequently, he merchandises like a person who doesn't owe anybody anything, except 20 cents of every dollar to himself.

"Owning your own inventory is a big advantage," Mahoney says. "You've got to buy it to sell it, and you've got to sell it to buy it."

Translated from modern Scotch that means you have to buy wisely to sell at a profit; when you do you can start the profit cycle over again with more merchandise.



Mahoney is the Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside of the Palo Alto muni shop. Catching customers coming and going is part of his success secret.



Mahoney believes every pro shop operator should observe the merchandising techniques of the department stores regarding display, price marking and customer service and follow them closely. "They've studied merchandising thoroughly and understand it," he says. "We can learn a lot from them."

But even Mahoney's Scotch aggressiveness is under some restraint. "I don't believe in gimmicks such as transistor radios and other give-aways," he says. "When people are in the shop I want them to think about their golf needs and their games without distraction from unrelated merchandise and premiums. Besides, you can buy wrong on novelty items and get stuck with them."

But Pat, as nearly everybody calls him, is a teacher, too. He knows from years of experience that the relationship developed between a teaching pro and his pupils should be a deep and lasting one. If it is, the pupil is likely to keep returning to his pro for his golf needs for a long time.

That relationship, Mahoney believes, is based on the pupil's confidence in his pro, and that usually hinges on a good fitting

with reliable clubs. He spends a lot of time making sure that his pupils and other customers are fitted properly. He insists that his assistants take as much care in this process as he himself does.

He refers to a statement credited to Tommy Armour to the effect that clubs are the only part of improved golf that can be sold to the golfer, and he reasons that they should be expertly fitted to bring the greatest satisfaction.

Competition Down the Street

"Specialized fitting by the professional is the only thing we have to offset the department stores and the discount houses," Mahoney says. Two large discount houses have been operating within easy shopping distance of his pro shop. But his business has been increasing comfortably every year.

Public relations, Mahoney believes, is a solid source of income and he practices it religiously. To him it is synonymous with public exposure. His service and civic club memberships fill the bill as public relations, but he admits that participation is also for enjoyment and relaxation. "People get to know you in these organizations and they turn to you

Students at the seventh West Coast PGA business school, held in the Jack Tar Hotel, San Francisco, Feb. 8-12, listen to panelists discuss club fitting. (Inset) Ken Venturi talks golf with Lyle Wehrman (l), school director, and Gene Mason, while waiting to speak at opening day session.



for their golf needs eventually," he says.

Those he can't reach personally he tries to influence through advertising, in which he has substantial confidence. He feels that newspapers reach the ever changing, always expanding population within the shopping range of Palo Alto Muni. Circulation of the Pal Alto daily newspaper is about 150,000. He advertises special purchases, leader lines and club model changes. A series of small reminder ads are run just before Christmas each year, but the ads at other times are larger, perhaps a fourth of a page. He sets aside a specified amount at the beginning of each operating year for advertising.

Inventory Control System

Inventory control gets careful attention. "As new clubs are received they are entered immediately into our inventory con-

trol book," he explains. "When they are sold, part of the sales receipt is kept as a reference and then transferred to the inventory control book. This lets us see at a glance what merchandise is moving and what may be standing still."

Coded tags on every piece of merchandise serve the inventory control system, since the code number entered in the book reveals price and thereby, volume, for a given period — all at a glance. Theft is discouraged — or detected quickly, at least — through use of the tags. If an item doesn't show up in the "sold" column and isn't in the shop, theft is the only answer. Steps are taken at once to prevent a recurrence.

The tags give Mahoney and his assistants a constant reminder of the cost
(Continued on page 134B)

Puts Profits Back

(Continued from page 50)

and lets them gauge exactly how far to go in making trades. Used clubs are marked in the same way.

Mahoney's assistants are encouraged to sell hard all the time, or, at least, be alert to sales opportunities, especially when he is away from the shop. During his vacation each year, they take part in a contest to sell the most merchandise for a healthy bonus above their normal sales commission.

Both of the full-time assistants came to Mahoney from vocations greatly removed from golf. Robert Swan was a travel agent and Norman Oliver was an electronics engineer. They have both agreed to work five years with Mahoney before seeking professional jobs of their own.

95,000 Rounds A Year

A lighted driving range helps keep the traffic flowing around and through Mahoney's shop in the evening hours. During the summer the range is open until 10 p.m. each week day evening, and in the winter until 8 p.m. It closes at sundown on weekends.

Heavy play — about 95,000 rounds a year — assures Mahoney of ample traffic during the daylight hours and keeps golfers circulating through the shop before, between and after their rounds.

Taking advantage of the traffic includes placing merchandise in such a way that golfers must walk around it to move through the shop; they can't overlook it. The price on each item leads to a good many self-service sales, especially with the smaller, frequent-sale items which are located close to the counter and cash register. Clubs in upright display racks occupy the center part of the shop, with bags along one wall, and the shoe department in the back.

Mahoney recognizes that a high-volume public play operation such as his must operate differently from a private club, but he knows that side of the business, too. He was pro at Lake Merced Golf and Country Club in San Francisco for 11 years, and then at Pasatiempo in Santa



Chicago area supts' estimate that it will be several years before their courses will fully recover from the damage caused by a severe late January ice storm. At least 20 courses in the suburbs north of the city were hard hit. This photo shows a small part of the damage done to the trees at Briarwood CC, Deerfield, Ill., where Paul Voykin is supt.

Cruz for two years before taking over at Palo Alto. He recalls that he had an inventory at Lake Merced that was considerably less than his current stock of \$50,000.

He Makes 40 Per Cent

But no matter what size business a shop does, he contends that a complete inventory is the pro's best investment. "Where else can he make approximately 40 per cent on his money?" he asks.

He presents a convincing case, even for putting half the profit back into the business. It's a great practice, but it requires self discipline. It's easier of course if you're just a wee bit o' Scotch, laddie.

Ladies PGA Moves Office

The Ladies PGA tournament office was moved to 1172 W. Galbraith, Cincinnati 31, O. on Feb. 1. Telephone number of the new office is (A/C 513) 522-7960. Leonard F. Wirtz, tournament director, is in charge of the office.

Rutgers Product Field Days

Rutgers University will hold its annual turf equipment and products field days in New Brunswick, N. J., Apr. 23-24. The event was to have been held last August but was postponed because of the drought. Henry W. Indyk and Martin Decker, Jr., of the school's College of Agriculture are co-chairmen.