

Let display be your buy-word

Whatever the size of your shop, you can fresh up its sales atmosphere with these tips.

By JOHN KRAFT, Jr.

The best way to make the pro shop pay, is to do a first-class promotion job. In the golf business, this starts by flagging the members' attention. Here are three suggestions for pulling them in:

1. **COME INSIDE.** When foursomes get together, have them come into the shop to sign up. Keep free tees and scorecards on the counters. Attractive displays of golf bags in oxblood, ivy green and Italian tan will catch your customer's eyes.

2. **READ ABOUT IT.** An inexpensive way to stimulate interest in new equipment is through the 5 x 8 circular. When you have special covers, golf cars or a line of shoes to introduce, try an occasional circular. The caddies can pass them out on the parking lot. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the response.

ONE FOR FREE! Offer a free golf ball each day. Place the names of members who played the club course during that period into a box. Draw one every afternoon and post the winner's name on the wall.

What do you have in the pro shop to hold your customer's interest? Try these for size!

1. **The "WHAT'S NEW" BOARD.** This is a special 3 x 3 foot board for newspaper clippings and pictures of the winners in your tournaments. It should have a place for national golf news and shots of former club champions.

Try to get photos of players in action. They stand out, attracting attention.

Reserve the center area for golf humor. Cartoons of duffers and 19th hole experts

in locker-room meditations put customers in a relaxed mood and make it easier to do a selling job.

Round out the board with a few shots of pretty girls to catch the male eye yet not draw disapproving glances from lady members.

2. **DRAW SHEETS.** Golfers want to look over pairings in each tournament. Draw sheets, furnished without charge by sporting goods manufacturers, are an excellent way to interest players.

In most cases, the pro makes the draw and shouldn't be in a hurry to remove the sheets when the matches are over. Customers enjoy looking back at the results and "replaying" the close holes.

3. **HARDWARE.** Order the club awards as early as possible and display them in a glass front case. Members like to see the trophies and will return frequently to admire them. Be certain it's a short step from the silver trays to your colorful line of shag bags.

4. **FAST SWITCH.** You can have a new look in your shop just by rearranging equipment. Why let months drag by without moving sets of clubs or shifting rain-jackets from one area to another? You can attract attention that may result in sales.

Take advantage of the display material offered by sporting goods companies. They spend thousands of dollars for effective commercial posters which they'll provide on request.

Here are several important aspects in making sales:

BE CHOOSY. Examine the competi-

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tive lines of golf equipment; use your knowledge and experience to select the best.

You are the pro. Customers expect you to screen items carefully. When you recommend a particular iron, be able to explain why you prefer it to others.

KEEP 'EM CURRENT. Don't carry last year's stock. Fresh merchandise tells the members you're on the ball.

Old shoe boxes make your customer think he's buying used footwear. If the club sets are displayed in cardboard containers, replace the containers when they become soiled or torn.

BE REALISTIC. If a member wants to order special equipment you do not ordinarily carry, don't promise super delivery service. At changeover periods, most firms are slow in filling orders. Tell the member frankly what your experience has been in buying from the company and point out factors that may be responsible for late shipments.

When a special order arrives, call the member at once. He may wait a week before picking it up, but you're in the clear and chances are good that he'll remember your help.

YOU'RE THE DOCTOR. You're a golf pro—but when it comes to prescribing the right club, you're also the doctor. Take the player's complaint seriously. Most members will accept your advice the first time it's offered; they won't come back if it's wrong. Try to select clubs that will serve the customer's needs. Consider him, and he'll remember you when he buys additional golf equipment.

An honest appraisal won't make selling a cinch, but it will win the golfer's confidence and prompt him to rely on your judgment.

Take time to explain why clubs differ and point out the advantages in certain shafts and heads. If you've seen a player in action, you can personalize your sales pitch.

IMPULSE BUYING. Have some low-price items on the counter where club members sign for purchases. New style caps, an economy glove that retails for less than two dollars, accessories like putting discs, golf ball markers, slip-on

grips, cans of leather conditioner and practice balls are inexpensive items for spur-of-the-moment buyers.

Keep instruction and official rule booklets available. Members like to study and quote the regulations.

GET 'EM STARTED. One of the best ways to put new jackets, caps and golf shirts before your customer is to wear them yourself.

In this sport, at your club, the pro is an important man. Children and adults notice your clothes and are influenced by them. Keep the shop modern and wear fashionable attire.

HONOR SYSTEM. Many clubs require members to sign for items charged to their accounts. Others do not. If you can persuade them to honor tickets without signatures, they'll buy more merchandise.

NARROW THE FIELD. Don't confuse a customer by showing numerous sets of golf clubs. Narrow the field by selecting a set and relating its merits. Indicate the ways in which these clubs will improve his drive, approach shot or putts.

Take a wood from the set and get him to swing it. Stress the good feel it has, if you can do so honestly. Point out advantages over the equipment he is currently using.

If the member raises objections, stop. He is trying to tell you that the item doesn't appeal to him. Don't force it. He won't be satisfied and will realize later the club was sold over his objections.

What about his present clubs? Offer to display his set in the shop at a price he feels it is worth. Under these conditions, the player may justify purchasing new equipment. When his clubs are sold, credit his account or mail the check directly to him.

If a customer objects to a club on the basis of appearance, show him one that is distinctly different. Make the remark: "Here's an unusually attractive iron," or "This wood combines good looks with many distinctive features!"

SUPPORT YOUR CHOICE. Enthusiasm makes sales. Let your confidence in the product come through. The man in your shop can be convinced, but you can't do it in tones that lull him to sleep.

Why do you like a particular club?

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A pushcart that he wheels to the most advantageous location, is the center of attraction in Mickey Homa's shop. He uses cart to display seasonal merchandise.

THREE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES OF DISPLAY TECHNIQUES

Every business-minded professional should be aware of the importance of attractive presentations to sell merchandise. Three outstanding examples of this thinking are pictured on these pages. Mickey Homa's shop at Rolling Hills C.C., Wilton, Conn., one of the most attractive in the New York metropolitan area, is typical of good display. A pushcart (see photo above) is his gimmick for showing seasonal merchandise such as rainwear, etc. Joe Moresco, who has made the Woodmere Club on Long Island his home for the past five years, picked up an unusual piece of driftwood on a trip to Florida and uses this to highlight his most colorful merchandise (See photo at top of next page). Terry Wilcox of Siwanoy C.C., Bronxville, N.Y. concentrates on displaying all his goods so that they are within easy reach of his members. (See photo at bottom of next page). •



This unusual piece of driftwood, featuring his most colorful fashions, has provided a topic of conversation and added traffic to Joe Moresco's modern shop.

Terry Wilcox believes in displaying all his wares so they are within easy reach of his members. He says he wants them to have a chance to "feel" the material.



What makes it a favorite with other players? In what ways will it help this golfer to lower his score?

KEEP IT CLEAN. The pro or shop manager who takes a dusty article from the box and puts it in a member's hand doesn't deserve the sale and isn't likely to make it.

Keep merchandise fresh and inviting. If you carry items that are not in cases, protect them with cellophane. Unless you clean the clubs in your shop daily, their appeal is likely to be buried under a layer of dust.

REPEAT SALES. Normally, the manufacturer will replace defective articles. You can do a real service to yourself and the golfer by stocking guaranteed items.

Try this approach: "You'll get lots of wear from this golf shoe, Jim. If for any reason it doesn't feel comfortable or give complete satisfaction, I'll make it good!"

Don't make the person returning an article wait for a refund until you've been issued a credit memo. Why take the chance of losing his business? Make the item good when he brings it to your attention. Even an unreasonable complaint deserves a hearing.

If a club or golf shoe can be repaired at the pro shop, handle it with a minimum of delay. While the member waits, offer substitute equipment so he won't lose an afternoon of enjoyment.

Never allow the customer with a complaint to feel he's imposing on you. He's doing you a favor. Instead of taking the article to someone else or buying new merchandise from your competitor, he's giving you the opportunity to make an adjustment. If you succeed, he'll remain a customer.

HOW MUCH? It's unwise to hold on to buyers by cutting prices. You can't compete with discount houses or department stores; don't try. Your advice and years of experience as a player and instructor are worth more than the few dollars a member saves by shopping for bargains. The most expensive wood or iron is of little value to an individual if it's not the right length and weight.

Look ahead in your selling. Don't persuade a golfer to spend money for clubs

Night Frostbite Golf At N. J. Course

Two Bridges Country Club in Lincoln Park, N. J., the first illuminated 18-hole golf course in the Metropolitan New York area, will stay open in the evenings until about 11 p.m. this fall and will feature "frostbite golf." The new course, open to the public, may even sponsor a frostbite golf tournament, its owners said, in October or November—snow permitting.

William (Wild Bill) Mehlhorn, famous pro at Two Bridges said, "This will come as good news to those die-hard duffers and chip shot artists who are reluctant to put away their clubs at the end of the summer season."

Mehlhorn added that a heavy sweater, ski pants and some sprightly exercise will offset the chill winds, and that the course's mercury vapor lamps will give "frostbite golfers" an illusion of warmth. An added feature—no mosquitoes.

unless you are reasonably certain he'll be pleased.

You deal with the member, his family, relatives and friends while you remain at his club. He may not always give you credit for fitting him properly, but he'll holler his head off if you sell the wrong putter to anyone in his family.

A successful pro builds a reputation for dealing fairly with his customers. His friendly approach and the ability to help select equipment are his stock in trade. Since he is limited in the number of players patronizing his shop, he'd better do a good selling job in addition to being a fine teacher.

Choose the products you sell as carefully as the clubs you use in tournaments. Don't stock products for price or appearance unless you're convinced of their value.

Make your pro shop the low score for modern golf accessories where a member knows he's welcome, is assured of personal attention and materials that combine craftsmanship with serviceability. Your first drive on the fairway to championship performance is title-winning merchandise. ●