



THE BEST
OF GOLFDOM

Selling club to members

*In 1927, like today, a
successful manager had to
be an energetic promoter.*

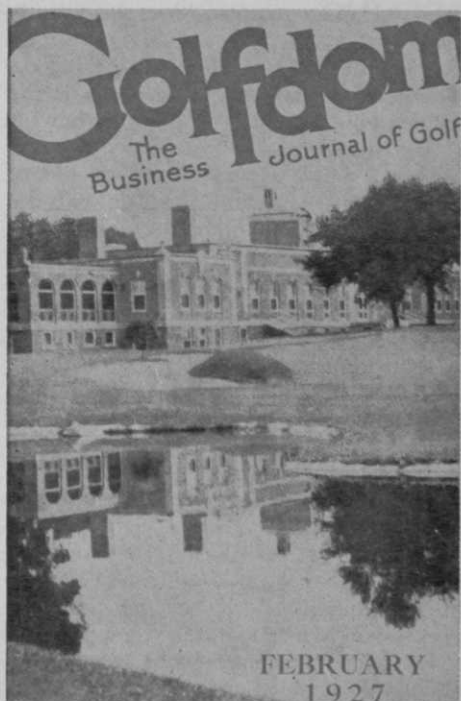
By HARRY O'HAGAN

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Salesmanship, as one of the manager's duties, may be relegated to a dangerously minor detail due to the press of other important and urgent duties, but it is one of the important parts of his job.

The successful manager sells his club to its members and keeps it sold. The foundation of every selling campaign is the product and here is where the manager figures as a manufacturer as well as the sales manager. Primarily he must make his service better than the other fellow's. Then he has the basis for a continuous and energetic solicitation of patronage on the right platform, better value for the money. There is a common tendency to think of the manager's province as restricted to the departments that the average club member thinks of as merely a vest pocket edition of a hotel and restaurant business, operated solely for the convenience of the members and guests, with the commercial side of the picture out of sight until the board sessions come at the end of the year.

Several factors are serving to correct this condition. Development of the golf club managerial ability has been hastened by competent men who have been working in the golf club field. One of the first signs of recognition of the calibre of men



Reprinted from GOLFDOM's first issue (above).

now at the top of the golf club management profession has been the appointment of these men as general managers of their clubs, with duties and responsibilities in keeping with their titles. This involves, in some cases, general supervision over the entire grounds, as well as over the operating details of the clubhouse. Under this arrangement the general manager serves not only as an executive but as a liaison officer between the committees and the major employees. The outcome is a co-ordination of each phase of the club's work so its selling proposition is made better and the club benefits from its increased and satisfied use by its members.

The club official will realize what the manager is up against in preparing a good selling proposition when he will think of the club as a business like the official's own. What would happen to the sales curve if the owner's manufacturing, purchasing, accounting, shipping and sales departments were tangled up all the time? There has to be a practical operating head with authority if the enterprise

Continued on next page

is to proceed steadily and profitably. This idea of general management as the foundation of a successful campaign for selling the club to its members is available in a practical way. There are plenty of managers who will make it go with the co-operation of the club officials.

Campaigning for trade—Energetic selling of a club to its members can be quickly put over in a club that is favored with alert elective officials. I had one case in the East where my club's dining room business had run down so it was being operated at a decided loss. The clubhouse was ideally situated; a short drive from the center of an active manufacturing town. Members of our club were active in other clubs around the city, Rotary, Kiwanis, and other business and luncheon clubs. I sold them on the idea of having their luncheons out at their own club, where they'd get as good a luncheon as money could buy and a change of scenery and escape from distraction that would add pleasure and business value to their meetings. I also played up the comparison of home meal costs and the labor-saving ideas so ably used by the washing machine and other household device manufacturers, so we built up the evening meal business. This was done by a few words here and there among the members. Naturally the wives were for the idea and with their O. K. the house accounts for meals could increase without the criticism that might come from the actual head of the household when the nominal head is thought to be spending too much at the club.

Following this line, the first year I was with the club I doubled the business, and during one month (May) made the club a profit of \$1200 out of its dining room. I made a specialty of bridge luncheons and special parties. By picking out the most active hostesses in the city at the start I was able to get this detail over quickly, for it soon became the proper thing to hold the really nice parties at the club.

At Sunset Ridge since we opened, three years ago, we never have lost in any department and have showed a fair profit, which is almost a record for a new

club. The club probably has the youngest average membership in any club in the Chicago District. The members are lively, but discriminating spenders, and the way that we have kept their entertainment money coming to the club in a volume is by food and service that we confidently rate as the best one will get in the entire Chicago District. By establishing and maintaining a character of cuisine and service that has won a reputation we have been able not only to sell Sunset Ridge to its members for extensive use, but each of the members is a salesman for the club. The members boast about the meals and the service at their club and the force never throws them down. We always have big attendance at the Saturday dinners and dances during the season, no matter what the weather may be, and our business on Thursdays and Sundays when the domestic help at the homes of the members are taking their half-holidays is large throughout our operating season. We do a big bridge luncheon business and I have found that close co-operation with the women who are giving these affairs, although full of exacting details, always pays the club and builds our business. I see to it that the tables are decorated in good taste with flowers from our own grounds, and have the force trained so the efforts of the hostess are minimized.

Remember the children—In your selling campaign, don't forget the children. We always have some party favors in stock and I make it a point to give the youngsters of the members some little thing to carry away with them. This is one of the easiest and surest ways to sell a club as a popular family eating place, and about all it costs is a little thought and cheerfulness on the part of the manager. He soon will find the youngsters are doing a great job of boosting for the club and for the manager and his force.

With the volume we do, we are careful to see that we are not kidding ourselves on the gross. I not only supervise the buying of all foodstuffs, but have supervision of buying of all supplies used for clubhouse, grounds and greens. We are operating our place, not to make big money, but certainly to run comfortably ahead of our losses. •