

Superintendent 'sales planner'

The best method to get what you want from the green committee is to know how to ask for it.

By CLYDE T. NORMAN

New Orleans District Manager, Johns-Manville Pipe Sales

Superintendents have to be super-salesmen. The most knowledgeable golf course super can do no more effective job than his budget allows. Selling this budget to those in authority is perhaps his biggest job, yet many superintendents just don't know how to go about it.

I recently attended a turf grass conference in South Alabama. A manufacturer's representative expounded the benefits of his product to grasses.

A superintendent next to me whispered: "This is fine, but it's not my problem. I know almost all the products and techniques, but how do I get this over to the people at my club? If I learn something here that costs money, I have to convince the greens committee that it's worth it."

This calls for a definite plan of attack,

and the purpose of this article is to give you that plan. It is not just an idea, but a program that has been used successfully for many years. We call it the "Sales Call Planner." This denotes a "call" for the purpose of making a "sale," and this is exactly what superintendents must do.

In the formulation of this presentation, you will want to follow a logical procedure, and I suggest these eight interlocking subjects that follow in sequence—one interrelated with the next. This will give continuity to thought and make acceptance of the plan easier.

The first basic point is what are you trying to do? It is fundamental at this point to write down your primary aim. It will steer your thinking along a definite line to your objective. Let's say,

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SALES CALL PLANNER

1. PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

2. THE PROSPECT: (Who? What business? Why does he need _____?)

3. BEFORE-CALL CHECK OF SALES AIDS:

(Be sure they're complete and ready to use. Remember, put a sample in his hands.)

Samples of promotion material

4. OPENER: (What are you going to say for a start?)

5. LAYING OUT YOUR PRESENTATION:

SELLING POINTS

(Features—in planned order
of presentation)

HOW WILL THIS MEAN MORE MONEY TO YOUR CUSTOMER

Benefits to him or
his customers

Proofs to use

6. PROBABLE OBJECTIONS OR QUESTIONS:

HIS OBJECTION

YOUR ANSWER

7. YOUR CLOSE (Write it down):

(Remember, it's not a close if it doesn't have a question mark.)

8. RESULTS OF THE CALL:

(Fill this out after the call, if you want. It will give you information and ammunition for another call.)

WALKER

Jato

EXECUTIVE

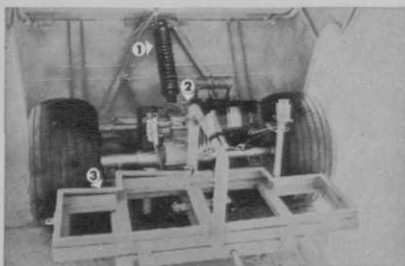


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SALES PLANNER

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"I need some new gang mowers, and I'm going to try to get three sets of six each." With this in mind, you're ready to start your next point.

Second, to whom are you going to talk? This also is a rather simple thought, but analysis of greens committee members will help immensely. What are their good and bad traits? What do they like and dislike? Do some of the members have "petty hates" you should avoid mentioning? Such analysis can bring to mind selling points to make in your presentation and show pitfalls to avoid. Knowing your "prospect" can pay off.

Third, be sure you are ready with all of your sales aids. Does the salesman of the mower you want have a film to show the committee? Did he give you photos, prices and operational details? Do you have a model? Do you have a better plan for mowing the course with the new equipment? How much day-to-day expense will it save? Would a blueprint of the course help put your points over? Would it help to have a typed sheet of prices and specifications to pass around?

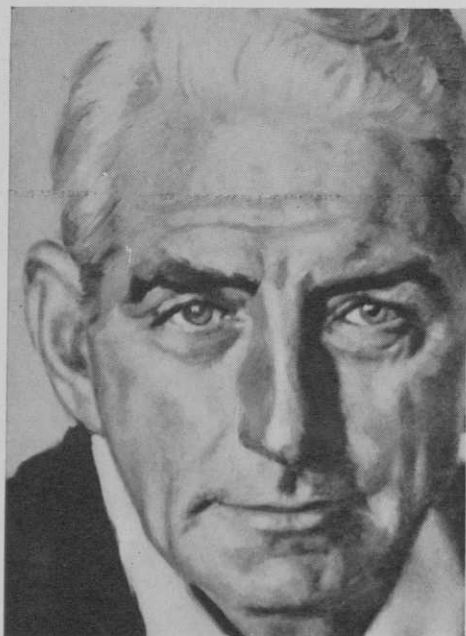
Fourth, how do you answer the committee members when they say, "Well, Joe, what do you want this time?" How do you win over the club president or some influential local politician? To do this, it is important for you to "open" your remarks with the right approach.

Practice a few statements: "I can save the club \$50 a day," or "How would you feel if you knew every time you hit a ball it was costing the club 50 cents? I can save us that much." Attract their interest right off the bat, and they'll listen. Too many good sales presentations start negatively. You have to overcome a bad start before achieving success. Why not start off positively and stay ahead?

Now you have finished with your opener and start on the fifth point. This, to me, is what each of us does every day. When you try to convince anyone of anything, you start talking "features" of your subject and the "benefits" to be derived. If your opener was dollar sav-

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GOLFDOM



Tommy Armour reminisces about . . . golf shafts

"It was some 40-odd years ago that I teed off with my first set of steel shafted clubs. At the time, steel shafts were a controversial item. Mine were by Union—now a part of Brunswick Corporation—and they were great.

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SALES PLANNER

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ings, keep on this course by setting out the features of the new mowers that mean dollar savings.

The mowers themselves do not have to have all the emphasis. Better maintenance might mean money saved, and shorter mowing time could mean less labor cost. Make a list of your features in order of their importance to your presentation, and include a dollar benefit opposite each. Also think of benefits other than dollars. Maybe a wider cut will make the course more beautiful, so aesthetics can be brought in. Maybe the new mowers will make the course easier to play.

Don't neglect to substantiate the savings you outline. Remember, this plan won't "charm" anyone, and the committee can think of many reasons why you don't need the mowers.

The proof phase brings us to the sixth point—overcoming objections. If you have ever tried to convince anyone of anything, you know you'll get objections. The best way to handle this is to anticipate what the objections will be. Here is where your previous study of the committee members comes in handy. If you have analyzed them properly in phase two of this outline, you can very nearly tell what their major objections will be.

You may have a "tight" member who wants to get top quality for the least money. You might have the member golfer who wants to keep you out of his way and is interested in the fastest mowing possible. Anticipate what they will ask; write down these objections and what you'll do to overcome them.

The seventh phase of this outline is to "wrap it up." Be sure to write down how you plan to close. The closing remarks can take many forms, but usually you're "asking for the order" in some form or other. You may be asking for permission to install a new sand trap, or for permission to buy the new mowers.

An important thing to remember here is to leave with a question of "something or something," *never* "something or nothing." Don't allow "no" to become a satisfactory answer to your question.

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SALES PLANNER

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Try this close: "I can have these mowers delivered now, or would you rather have them delivered after the first to be billed next month?" Or possibly, "I can get that trap dug next week or would it be better to wait until after the weekend play?" Always try to close by giving them a choice.

The eighth and final phase is to analyze how successful you were. This is another simple step that may be overlooked, and one that never should be. If you win your point you may neglect a review in the excitement of success. If you were not successful, you may be too dejected to care. This is exactly why the eighth step is so important. In the first case, an analysis here would let you see *how* you were successful. There never was a success in any field without the individual having "know-how." A successful sale does something definite to increase your knowledge. See what caused your success, store it in your mind, and try it over and over again.

You also need to analyze why you weren't successful, so you can see where you went wrong. If you keep repeating this wrong approach, you're dead. How many times have you seen a pro golfer practice his swing after a shot. He was analyzing. You have your Sales Call Planner—look at it again, and recall the reaction of your audience. Did someone present an objection you couldn't overcome, or ask a question you couldn't answer? Did your opener "fall flat?" Did the mower salesman ask why you didn't mention the most important feature of the machine?

Use the entire outline. Don't let "old man lazy" sell you on his idea—he has a pretty good outline, too. Work this out on paper several times, and the system will come to you. Many things will become automatic, and with practice you can do many things mentally just as you do things physically. However, you are not born with this type of knowledge. It takes a definite outline of logical reasoning, and practice with critical analysis of your results, good or bad. •