

# The proper approach to training assistants

*Well-groomed, enthusiastic shop salesmen spell the difference between profit and loss.*

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Well-trained assistants can often mean the difference between profits and losses in the pro shop. The head professional has the know-how, but is often on the lesson tee many hours each day. His assistant is in constant contact with the golfer—selling, answering questions about merchandise and providing services.

To help your assistant do a better job, make him aware of the cost of the entire pro shop operation. Show him all the expenses required to run the show—salaries, administrative costs, supplies, etc.—then explain how much in sales is needed just to break even.

For example, a golf operation with expenses of \$1,500 per month would require sales of \$3,750 (with an average markup of 40 per cent) to break even. This means sales of approximately \$125 per day, seven days a week, 30 days each month. Daily sales must be far higher if there is to be a worthwhile profit.

Knowing this basic information, it is easy to set daily sales quotas to meet expenses and provide a profit. It is a formula which can be tied to any size operation. Quotas can be fun. Besides being a definite guide to the success of the business, they provide a challenge and a form of competition that will make some long days shorter and more exciting for assistants.

The number quota also can be effective in a specialized situation, and can be applied to many items in the shop. For

example, if you take an inventory and find you have 600 shirts and only two months left in which to sell them, your number quota is 10 shirts a day. If you can sell 15 the first day and 15 the second day, you are one day or 10 shirts ahead of schedule. Give rewards for beating quotas, and your assistants will beat them.

Have the assistant check the equipment your members favor and the clothes they wear. The easiest sales can be made to customers who actually have a need for a product. It may be an item they have just put off buying, and a simple suggestion will do the trick.

Have the assistant look over the equipment in the club storage room and make a list of those who need new bags, clubs, head covers, etc. He should update this list monthly to keep it current. Have him study the type of clothes certain members wear and suggest items that will appeal to their tastes.

Urge him, when selling, to make combination or multiple sales. When selling a pair of slacks he can suggest a shirt or jacket to match. With ladies' Bermudas he can show a blouse and sweater, etc.

Learning something about golf club specifications—shaft weights, grips, lengths, etc.—would be helpful to the assistant in selection of equipment for prospective buyers. Basic club repair, especially whipping woods and installing grips, should be mandatory.

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## EIGHT POINTERS FOR FUTURE HEAD PROS

Here are some helpful suggestions for assistants:

1. **Know the products you sell.** Learn about the new miracle fibers and blends that are being used in clothing today. Get to know about the new materials which make golf bags lighter and stronger, shoes, clubs, etc. better.

Learn about golf ball construction and the different compressions. Study the tailoring of a garment—is it full-fashioned, etc. This general information can be used in selling, and will make you much more knowledgeable than the average salesman. Don't forget basic golf items when a customer is in the shop. Ask, "Is your golf ball supply adequate?" or, "Do you need a new glove?"

2. **Remember to "sell up."** For example, when a customer asks for a \$15 sweater, always show him the sweaters you have in this price range. However, it is a good idea to show him a \$25 sweater and point out why it is better. However, never show him the more expensive item without first showing the customer what he requested.

3. **Be enthusiastic.** A study of salesmanship reveals that enthusiasm is the primary force in selling. You may have sincerity and tact, but if you lack enthusiasm you'll never be an order-taker. Enthusiasts invariably leave the customer with a desire to return to the shop, whether they make a sale or not.

4. **Watch your inventory.** Advise the professional of slow-moving items and suggest special sales. When you have a "hot" item be quick to suggest that he order more.

5. **Practice good manners.** A good salesman is ready to meet customers when

they walk through the door of his shop. His appearance and the impression he makes during this brief moment are most important of all. Indifference and discourtesy can be costly. When a customer gets mad and stamps out, he won't return unless someone can find a way to make amends. Most customers who are offended just slip out without saying a word. Either way, this business is lost.

6. **Know the customers' names.** Get the club roster and study the names. If you don't know a name, don't be afraid to ask. If you didn't hear it clearly, simply say, "I'm sorry, I didn't get your name." Always address male members as Mr. and women as Miss or Mrs.—never call them Tom, Charlie or Helen.

7. **Watch your appearance.** Remember that you are "on stage" at all times. Neatness in dress from the inside-out is most important. It is hard to sell fine wearing apparel to anyone if you are sloppy. You need not have the most expensive clothes so long as they are kept neat and clean.

8. **Keep the right attitude.** A wrong attitude can be harmful and cost you your job. When a problem or complaint arises, try to solve it without going to the professional. Learn to be an assistant in the fullest meaning of the word.

Don't ask, When can I play golf? When can I practice? What's wrong with my swing? When can I have some time off? If you do your job, meet your quotas and help the pro make a profit, the time can always be found for these things.

Some day you may be a head professional and have a shop assistant of your own. Now is the time to start practicing for that eventuality. •