

PGA exhibitors rate show high

GOLFDOM's survey reveals that sales and attendance at the Florida show in January were well up to the companies' expectations.

Despite the continued success each year of the PGA Merchandise Show, it is always possible to make improvements. It was with this thought in mind that GOLFDOM recently conducted a survey among the exhibitors at the show held last January in Florida.

Interest in the survey was high, as indicated by the 64 per cent return on questionnaires. (A survey conducted among the professionals attending the show will be published in August.)

While pro attendance was considered satisfactory by all but 5 per cent of the respondents, there were a couple of sour notes sounded about this and especially the question of barring the general public from the show.

Nearly two-thirds of the exhibitors were for restricting the show to professionals only, mainly because they considered this a trade show—designed for sales, and not just chit-chat—where the public was so much useless, and time-consuming clutter.

Although few in number, there were some negative comments on the physical plant of the show and the eating facilities. There were also suggestions that the show has got to the point where it should be held in a permanent structure.

On the question as to whether there should be a second PGA Merchandise Show in a western location, to be held shortly before or after the Florida show, the exhibitors were about evenly divided. The "Noes" won out by six per cent.

Sales were good at this year's show, as shown by nearly 70 per cent of the

exhibitors experiencing higher sales over the previous show. Only 10 per cent had lower sales. Also, the fact that 97 per cent of the exhibitors have decided to exhibit at next year's show augurs well for PGA shows held in the future.

Here are the results of the survey:

How long has your company been exhibiting at the PGA Merchandise Show?

1st year	9%
2 years	8%
3 years or more	83%

Did you find pro attendance at this year's show:

Satisfactory	95%
Unsatisfactory	5%

Do you think the general public should be barred from future shows?

Yes	64%
No	36%

Do you plan to exhibit at next year's PGA Merchandise Show?

Yes	97%
No	3%

Would you like to see the 1968 show held at the same location as this year's show?

Yes	97%
No	3%

Would you like to see a second PGA Merchandise Show held shortly before or after this show in Southern California or some other western location?

Yes	47%
No	53%

Were your sales at this year's show more than, equal to, or less than your sales at last year's show?

Sales more than last year	68%
Sales equal to last year	22%
Sales less than last year	10%

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Do you find more pros waiting for the show before buying for the season, buying before or after the show, or doing all three?

Waiting for show to buy	12%
Buying before show	8%
Buying after show	5%
Buying before and during show	20%
Buying during and after show	5%
Buying before, during, and after show	50%

In your exhibit did you show

Clubs and bags	18%
Balls	14%
Apparel	21%
Shoes	8%
Accessories	17%
Golf cars	6%
Pro shop supplies	6%
Golf course supplies	2%
Other (listed below)	8%

Golf carts, gloves, specialized luggage, turf trucks, novelties, putters and related items, golf films and publications, driving range equipment, new golf club refinishing system, practice range equipment, display fixture for the pro shop.

Exhibitors' comments

One of the questions in GOLFDOM's survey invited the exhibitors at the last PGA Merchandise Show to express constructive criticism of the show. A representative sampling of the answers follow:

"Professionals should be required to wear a name badge of a certain color. Assistants should have another color and guests, another color. Would like to see show run five or six days. Timing of show should be between club championship and seniors. Suggest the supply of advance material, so manufacturers can help advertise show. We send gummed labels out on invoices."

"It was obvious that not too many of the southeastern Pros were there. Of course these are the accounts we like to build. Perhaps you could push more in this area."

"I would suggest to the committee allotting booths that they keep all club

manufacturers, ball manufacturers, and related items together, rather than take a club manufacturer and put him off all alone in a corner with golf cars. I feel a pro can make better comparisons if he doesn't have to run all over the area."

"Have special hours allotted for professionals only."

"The eating facilities are very bad. There is one small dining room, and everyone tries to get up there all at the same time. Other facilities, we think, should be arranged."

"Retain the show date of just prior to the Seniors, as used this year. Limit the show to professionals only so that all the time spent at the show by exhibitors can be devoted solely to potential buyers."

"Somehow, get the pros to attend the show. It's their show—for their benefit. They can see all kinds of merchandise, make comparisons, get sales help, but this is possible only if they take advantage of the displays."

"Good old common drinking water in the tent area and more snack and coffee bars."

"Limit the exhibitors to those who call on and sell the pros year round and perform a real service. Eliminate those who come to the show and sell four days and never see a pro again until the next year."

"Completely satisfied with the running of the show."

"Eliminate the public. All this does is to give a false idea as to how many people are there. If you want a show for the public, then have it at a different time. They clutter up your space and then the real buyers or potential buyers go because you are too busy!"

"Continued cooperation between the P.G.A. officials and the Manufacturers & Distributors Organization has upgraded the show tremendously and with the qualified people serving both organizations it is bound to be better. Encourage all P.G.A. members and all exhibitors to

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present their ideas to one or another of these groups."

"Extend the length of the show to six days."

"Better lighting, exclude general public, unless accompanied by a golf pro."

"Excellent show."

"The P.G.A. should stress better attendance by their members."

"Insist that every professional wear the badges given to them."

"More news coverage in trade journals calling attention to show thus establishing it as a yearly fixture resulting in pros planning their buying accordingly."

"Overlooking the obvious suggestions, such as providing an exhibit tent without holes in the roof, etc., there could, and should be, a much more effective education job done by the P.G.A., aimed at the buying golf professional, concerning his obligation to support this merchandise show."

"Considering my company's total investment in the show, covering transportation samples, personnel models etc., we as one exhibitor spent a few thousand dollars in order to be in attendance there, and it is a little heart-breaking to find so many of the golf professionals using the exhibit as a means of doing their own personal shopping rather than shopping and buying stock merchandise for their club shop. This is certainly an area where the P.G.A. could provide enormous help, even if that help were limited to issuing a bulletin to the attending professionals reminding them of the amounts of money exhibitors have spent to bring their 'business' to Florida and that this expenditure should be respected."

"Public admission to this show is at best a nuisance, and at worst a complete interference with the running of a business out of the exhibit booth. This is a professional, wholesale manufacturers

show and there is no place in it or at it for the consuming public."

"One more note concerning a question in your survey about the possibility of an additional merchandise show somewhere out west. I had the misfortune to attend the 'Western P.G.A. Merchandise Show' held in Las Vegas last September. As usual, manufacturer cooperation was high, but the cooperation from the local professionals and the P.G.A. section heads was missing completely. These shows must deserve more intelligent educational effort on the part of the P.G.A. officials before they can succeed in drawing manufacturer interest as exhibitors."

"Make the pros aware that the show is for their benefit and stress the importance of attending."

"More golf tournaments during show time to attract more pros."

"You might consider a drawing at the end of each day with a non-golf item as a prize. Each booth would carry a number of blanks to be filled and signed by the exhibitor only after pro purchased X amount of dollars (to be determined by show management). It would be the duty of the pro or buyer to see that his number which would correspond to his ticket filled out by the exhibitor is put in the barrel for the day's drawing."

"Would suggest show be held in the fall, October or November in a central city of U.S., St. Louis or Memphis, Tenn. would be great."

"Would like to see better booth arrangements and better tent. Also additional booth space."

"More space in aisles, and better ventilation facilities."

"Insist upon the P.G.A. to instruct members to come to the show and to buy from manufacturers. We're there to do business and not just to show off our merchandise/line and talk about the weather. We want and need orders."

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"More advance publicity . . . this should be given three-four months of advance publicity in all golf magazines that would hit the golf professional . . . The Greatest Shown on Earth. etc. etc."

"Having all pros register and wear badges listing name and club. Management should supply exhibitors with list of all pros registered."

"The exhibitor service organization has insulted our intelligence with their prices. Show should be in permanent type structure. Booth positions should be drawn, not placed by P.G.A. Only those companies which actively sell the golf profession should be allowed to exhibit."

"Mailer to all professionals indicating time and dates of show, also indicating its purpose to serve them."

"Pro show only. Public not admitted at any time. More lights contributed by P.G.A. as part of booth expense for brighter and lighter displays."

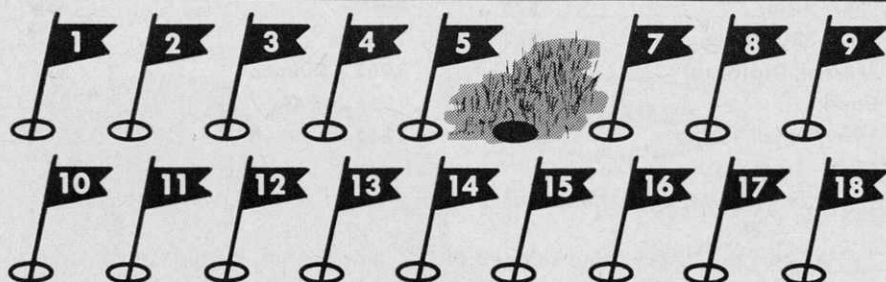
"Don't limit attendance to pro only."

"Show should be promoted as 'last chance' to see all lines and fill in where buyer missed, to promote this show as the place and time to buy would be the worst thing that could happen to a pro's merchandise program. He would get 'no deliveries', always behind fashion'."

"There were two problems areas which I feel should be remedied:"

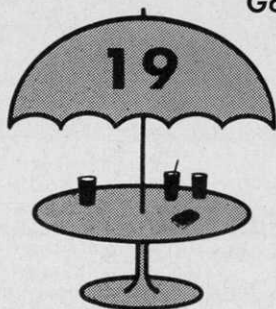
"First of all, the problem of 'who is a pro and who isn't' was extremely aggravating and frustrating when trying to determine whom to quote prices to and whom not to. It was my understanding that Monday and Tuesday would be confined to 'pro only' days at the show and each would wear a badge. This was certainly

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not the case, as I observed several people not affiliated with golf in any way, attending the show and asking prices both Monday and Tuesday.

"Secondly, there was the problem of booth arrangements. The way they were arranged, somebody had to suffer from poor circulation. Unfortunately, my company had booths which were located at one end of the tent in the middle aisle almost completely surrounded by soft goods manufacturers. We manufacture clubs, balls, bags and accessories. To top it off, we were at the very end of this aisle and most of the people passing on the other aisle were looking down our aisle and continuing on without actually passing our booth."

"We were not the only disgruntled exhibitors as several others on both ends of the tent voiced their complaints as well. Certainly, something can and should be done to remedy these problems before the next show. Since we all pay the same rental for booth space, something should be done to insure that all exhibitors receive the same exposure to the traffic."

"It is virtually impossible to please everyone, however, our company's booth was placed in a very bad spot for pro traffic. A lot of their wives were in our area because of the soft goods, but we received very little traffic otherwise. On the other hand, the traffic flow in the center aisles was heavy."

"I am sure it was coincidental, however, it appeared that the majority of the larger companies and distributors had the 'choice' center aisle locations. We are a relatively new company in the pro market and we need all the exposure we can get. By this, I don't mean that we are asking for special favors, but because of this, we must have, at least, an equal opportunity to gain the pros' attention. We do not feel we had this opportunity at the last show." ●