

# Promotions for your shop

*By using a few easily obtained materials, you can create exciting promotions to bring members into your shop in a buying mood.*

by Charles E. Cumming

This is one classroom where I'm sure a lot of the students are smarter than the teacher. Many of you have a natural flair for merchandising, advertising, display, and general promotional savvy, and some of you have had a good bit of experience. But you may not realize quite how much talent you do have to get people into your shop and put them in a buying mood.

Now it's a fact that no matter how smart or talented a man is, he'll be a better merchandiser if he'll plan ahead. For this you need a calendar of promotional events for the coming year. You needn't, of course, follow it religiously, but it will help organize you, your time and your budget.

The calendar should include a checklist of things to do for each promotion, such as: laying in stock by such and such a date; picking a promotional theme; deciding what kind of advertising and display props to use, and whether to run a special event, such as a fashion show, as part of the promotion.

Here's what a good comprehensive promotion calendar, planning guide and checklist might look like. We're creating such a calendar for pros who handle Etonic merchandise. (Photo 1) If you would like one, we'll see you get one.\*

Now, let's see how a promotion will work out in practice. Take Father's Day, for example. For a theme, how about, "Make life with father a joy this Father's Day, June 16!" Let's color in these words on a large poster board. What I am using here is a standard-size 30-inch by 40-inch illustration board or oak tag, which you can buy at any art supply store or stationery store.

The illustration board is heavyweight enough to stand up by itself and costs about \$1 or \$1.25 a piece for a 30" by 40" poster. The oak tag is lighter and is easier to work with, but doesn't stand up well by itself. You would probably use this for tacking on the wall.

Establish a Gay 90's decor. A barber pole is a symbol of the "good old days." Make several out of white cardboard, with diagonal red stripes and rounded on top like a ball. You don't have to be an artist to pin up big paper mustaches (bought at the

dime store or drawn by hand) all around the shop. If you're a little bit artistic, you can suggest a whole face like I've done on this poster (Photo 3).

Men's magazines use plenty of old-fashioned Gay 90's photos, sketches and other graphic elements in ads or to illustrate stories and articles. With your faithful scissors and ever-ready paste pot, you can become an instant promotional artist, by cutting out such pictures, trimming off anything you don't want and gluing it onto your poster.

Of course, it's always better to use actual merchandise from your stock. Just a couple of samples of your hot, new items will not only call attention to your promotion, but they can stimulate your members to want to buy the items on display. I would use only a couple of articles so as not to take away from your sign which is establishing the atmosphere of the particular promotion.

Don't be afraid to play with color. You can use a few colors or a lot of colors. Sometimes the most eye-catching way of all is to use one color, and use it on just about everything in sight. Make it a color appropriate to the event, such as red or rose for Valentine's Day, or red, white and blue for the Fourth of July.

Another reason to use one color is to promote an apparel color on which you've heavily stocked. For example, suppose you're loaded with green styles for men. You can broadcast the fact that green is the "in" color this season—the fashionable color to give for Father's Day. Make a prominent display of green shirts, slacks, windbreakers, rainwear, gloves and shoes, plus green bags and club head covers. Your display posters should also be in green, and here are a few ways to use it. (You could use the same approach with blue or any other popular, fashionable color.)

You could paraphrase the well-known Rodgers and Hammerstein song and use the theme, "Green is bustin' out all over!" with musical notes and the color green splashed all around. (Photo 2).

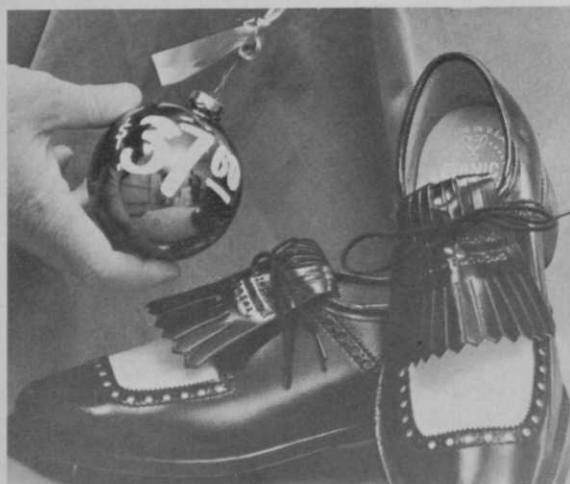
What I am showing you here is called a self-easel. This is simply a cardboard sign with an easel backing so that the sign stands up by itself. Without the easel, the sign can be tacked to a bulletin board, or stuck to a wall with a strip of masking tape with adhesive on both sides. The easel is made from

\*For a copy of the promotional calendar, together with some suggestions on its use, write: Editor, GOLFDOM Magazine, Universal Publishing and Distributing Corp., 235 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.





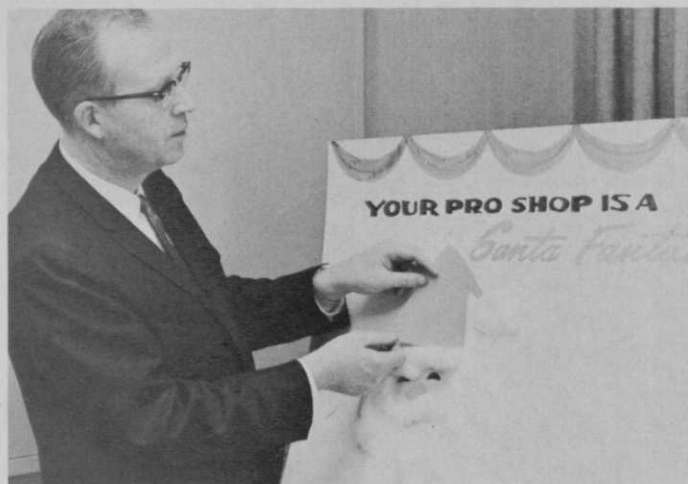
5. Work your price tags into the promotion theme. Here's a Father's Day mustache, for example.



6. At Christmas, hang little Christmas balls from the garments, with prices painted in white enamel.



7. Use mustache motif on handbills for lockers, left, and on postcards to the members' wives, right.



8. For Christmas poster, you can use fluffed-up cotton for Santa's beard, and for pom-pom on his red hat.

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most of you should use price tags. They can help sell apparel.

A member may think a sweater or sport coat is so elegant it's too expensive, and he's timid about asking the price. The price tag quietly tells him he can afford it, and there's no embarrassment.

You can work the price tag into the theme of your promotion. For example, for Father's Day cut out black mustaches and write the price in white ink. (Photo 5).

**A**t Christmas, hang little Christmas tree balls from the garments, with the price written in white or colored paint. (Photo 6). Little jars of enamel, like those used on model airplanes, are available in local stationery stores and art supply shops. Or just mix plain watercolor paint with a little soap and it will stick to the shiny surface of the Christmas ball.

The big black mustache would also go on handbills that you put into members' lockers, and on promotional postcards or letters that you send to their homes. It's very easy and inexpensive for your job printer to print this simple line drawing along with your written or typed message. Here's how it might look on a handbill for lockers . . . and on a postcard sent to members' wives or lady members at home. (Photo 7).

If you're running a clearance sale, make it more interesting by putting "handicaps" instead of discounts on the marked-down items. I personally think of close-out sales as a necessary evil. It's much better to clear out slow sellers to make room for hot new items, rather than to keep your money out of action in goods gathering dust on the shelves.

However, instead of emphasizing the word "sale," make it a positive promotional event. Instead of saying "Marked down," which tends to cheapen the apparel, you might use golf scorecards like this:





9. All you need to create posters, fliers, etc., are these basic items available in any stationery store.

"6 Handicap Cardigan	
Par	\$32
Your Handicap	\$ 6
<hr/>	
Your Price	\$26"

Now fellows, this is just a gimmick to get your members' attention, when you are giving a price discount of just a few dollars, say from \$9 down to 3 or 4 dollars off on the garment. This is not something you would use for an expensive set of clubs where you might be taking off \$30 on the retail price. You wouldn't want to say something like 35 Handicap.

What we have done with Father's Day can be applied to any promotion, every promotion, all through the year. Pick a theme and carry it through all your advertising and shop decoration.

Going back to our Promotion Calendar, here are some typical themes you might choose from for other promotions:

- Valentine's Day—"Ain't love grand, when you say it with golfing fashions?"
- Saint Patrick's Day—"Come-all-ye to the Pro Shop"
- First Day of Spring—"Choices of Spring, at the Pro Shop"
- Mother's Day—"Queen of Your Heart . . . Treat Her Royally"
- Memorial Day weekend—"Family Fashion Days at the Pro Shop"
- Fourth of July—"Revolutionary Fashions in Red, White and Blue"
- Labor Day—"Autumn is A-comin' in . . . get set for fall at the Pro Shop"
- Thanksgiving—"Values to Be Thankful for . . . Thanksgiving Clearance at the Pro Shop"

You might want to schedule your men's and women's tournaments, or an interclub tournament to coincide with some of these holiday events, to take advantage of the greater crowds of members and

guests who come out to the club, at these times.

If your shop is open at Christmas, you could take a theme like, "Your pro shop is a Santa Fantasy." Very briefly, here's one way of doing it visually.

Instead of the big black mustaches that sprouted everywhere for Father's Day, use Santa's beard. Make it out of cotton, all fluffed up and easily stuck on with a few dabs of Elmer's Glue-All, (Photo 8). That worked pretty well, so let's give him a red hat, and then add a cotton pompom. An easier way is to buy paper or plastic Santas at the five-and-ten. That's the Santa, and now for the Fantasy—some of the handsome pro-shop quality apparel your members dream of getting for Christmas. Spread them around your poster like gifts under a tree—or even add a little artificial tree.

Now let's liven it up some more—but not too much. Christmas has so many symbols connected with it that it's easy to go overboard and have so much tinsel and stuff you can't see the merchandise. Instead, do something restrained. For example, use one large red Christmas ball on a piece of white satin or silver ribbon, and put it around the club, on posters or easel cards reading, "Your pro shop is a Santa fantasy." Now in this case, unless you're pretty talented, it would be better to have a local printer print the signs for you. You can add the red ball and ribbon. An easel board is quite easy to make, as we've seen.

If your club is open in winter, you can make money selling soft goods in the pro shop but there are certain things you may have to do. Number one is make sure people know that the shop is open for business. Put on Christmas promotions and rope in your members' entire families so they will think of the club as a place to go both to have fun and to buy Christmas presents.

For example, you might invite your members' kids to enter a contest to create the best poster for the shop or around the club. The winning window decoration or poster gets a good prize, but be sure that every kid who enters the contest gets some minor prize, like three golf balls, so that he isn't tee'd off at you. Also, have the judging done by somebody else, such as a panel of three childless club members.

I've saved a dull but vital part of promotion and merchandising till last, and that is money—how much to spend on a single promotion, and on your promotional activities for the entire year.

Dun & Bradstreet, the national credit rating firm which keeps track of such things, has figures showing the average percentage of gross sales spent on advertising by various types of stores runs from exactly one per cent to just under three per cent of annual dollar sales. So, if you do a gross volume of \$50,000, you would allocate between \$500 and \$1,500 a year on advertising.

Now in my opinion, a downtown retailer can't get very much attention with that kind of money.

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But you can. For one thing, you are advertising and merchandising only to your own members and their families. You aren't spending money advertising to thousands of people who will never come to your pro shop.

**Y**our main promotion expenses—aside from salaries—ordinarily will be the cost of having handbills, signs and direct mail cards or letters printed; postage; an artist's fee if you use a professional artist; a decorator's fee if you use a professional display man; the cost or rental fee for special props. The biggest expense of all is one that you don't have, namely the cost of newspaper advertising space and radio or television commercial time.

Take your annual gross—say it's \$50,000. You decide you can afford to give 2 per cent of it to advertising and promotion. That's \$1,000. You can now run five pretty good promotions at an average cost of \$200. Using that as a rough estimate, have

a talk with your printer and get an idea of his rates for various kinds of work in one and two colors, and in various quantities. He'll tell you also how much lead time he needs for different kinds of jobs. If you don't trust your own artistic or decorating ability, consult a professional artist or display trimmer and find out what their services cost.

Knowing these basic costs, you can start pinpointing the probable budgets for each of the five promotions. Not all promotions will get the same budget. You may want to make a big splash for Father's Day, and spend \$400. You may want a second big splash at Christmas, for \$300. That leaves only \$300 out of the \$1,000 for the other three promotions, so they will be comparatively modest, with roughly \$100 available for each. Even that \$100 can go a long way.

But stick to your budgets. If you get carried away, you're liable not only to shoot all your profit on the cost of the promotion, but get so soured that you'll say "To hell with promotion from now on!" and that

would be the biggest mistake of all.

Before I finish here, let me just run down the list of basic items you should have on hand to create promotional materials such as I have shown you today: a nylon-tip pen for lettering; Magic Marker, a set of ten or eight colors which you can buy in your stationery store; scotch tape; masking tape, both single and double-sided; drug-store cotton; illustration board; oak tag board; decorative ribbon; wax crayons; water color paint; a ruler; rubber cement; scissors (Photo 9).

In case I scared you with all this artistic material, I want to point out to you that you may not have to do your own artwork or hire a professional artist. There is an awful lot of artistic talent around that you can draw on. I'll bet your wife would love to help you, or a talented shop assistant, or even one of your members' kids might be glad to sit down and work with the crayons and art materials. Or look around your pro shop. You might have talent right on your own staff that you don't know about. □

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