

**Pros:**

# Are you missing the mark(et) ?

If you are missing out on sales, you may be running  
the wrong kind of shop for your course

By **HARRY OBITZ** and **DICK FARLEY**

Merchandising practices for the pro shop at a municipal course, resort course and private course vary. But the basic principals of successful merchandising never change.

For example, one pro shop operator may sell golf balls mainly in the \$1.25 range. Another operator with a different clientele may do most of his golf ball sales in the \$.85 to \$1 price range. One shop may sell most of its shirts in the \$8 to \$12 range, while another shop's volume may be in the \$5 to

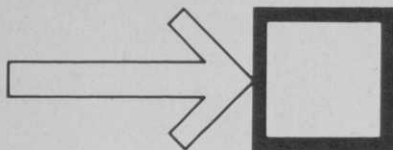
\$7.50 price category. The most popular-priced golf bag for one pro may be \$65, but for another pro, the \$30 bag is his bread-and-butter number.

The clientele determines what type of merchandise a shop carries, modified, of course, by the degree with which an operator can up-grade his clientele.

Most authorities say that success in merchandising is determined by the buying methods. There is much truth in that statement. If a pro spent more

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## COMING EVENTS

**Golf Course Superintendents Field Day**, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I., August 20.

**Lawn & Utility Turf Field Day**, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I., August 21.

**Fifth Annual Turfgrass Management Conference**, Hawaii Turfgrass Assn., East West Center, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, August 27-29.

**V.P.I. Turfgrass Field Day**, Virginia Polytechnic Institute Experimental Plots, Blacksburg, Va., September 3-4.

**Annual Turfgrass Field Day**, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich., September 4.

**Landscape Architect's Seminar**, University of California Conference Center, Lake Arrowhead, Calif., September 5-7.

**Sod Producers' Field Day**, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich., September 10.

**National Sporting Goods Assn. Trade and Consumer Exposition**, Astorhall, Houston, Tex., September 25-28.

**National Hardware Show**, Coliseum, New York, N. Y., September 20-October 2.

**Central Plains Turfgrass Conference**, Ramada Inn, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan., October 15-17.

**1969 Southern California Turfgrass Equipment and Materials Educational Exposition**, Brookside Park, Pasadena, California., October 15-16.

**NSGA Western Market**, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev., October 24-25.

**Ninth Annual Missouri Lawn & Turf Conference**, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., November 5-6.

## KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

*continued*

time organizing his buying program, he would need less time making his sales. If a pro doesn't buy the right items at the right price in the right style for his particular clientele, the items will be very difficult to sell, no matter how good a sales staff he has.

### *Municipal course*

In the past, the municipal operator catered to the middle-to-lower-income person and had to stock the type of merchandise his customer could afford. He usually stayed with low-end items. Increased affluence and leisure time, however, have allowed the municipal operator to provide the full spectrum of prices because his customers who can now afford the very best merchandise do, in fact, insist on quality lines. However, the municipal operator may continue to do most of his sales in the lower price ranges and he must remember to concentrate his buying accordingly.

Many of his customers are beginners because, generally, the municipal course is where the fundamentals of the game are learned. These beginning golfers always want to buy something that promises to improve their game.

Club repair, once a declining art, has come back with the advent of the easy-to-apply one-piece grips, and profits from this area can be quite substantial.

### *Resort course*

The person who plays on a resort course is usually on vacation and he is more likely to spend an extra dollar for items he would not ordinarily buy. Selling time is short, usually from one day to two weeks. If a resort operator does not have the merchandise in stock, in the size and color the vacationer wants, the sale is lost. Special orders are out of the question because of the time element.

Quite often, the resort areas are seasonal. Special sales become an

important part of his merchandising program. It wastes money to carry large stocks of summer merchandise through the winter. The chances of damaging them is high and styles change from year to year. It is vitally important then to start clearance sales early.

### *Private club*

The private country club professional has one great advantage over the other two types of course operators: He knows his membership and their habits. He can buy specific items for specific customers and be reasonably sure they will sell. During the year, country clubs usually hold many golfing events for which the club professional in most cases provides the prizes. This can be a sizeable account.

In every type of golf shop operation, special promotions and holidays are very important. Most downtown retail stores use these special days to launch sales and promotions. Mother's Day and Father's Day are two of the best promotion periods. Promoting both holidays should start at least two weeks ahead of time with signs and displays. Let your whole shop reflect the theme. Have your sales personnel promote the holiday at every opportunity. Send a card to the members announcing the promotion and list a few of the more attractive items available.

Most people are always looking for an unusual birthday gift and for the golfer, a golfing item is just perfect. This can be a year-round promotion.

Regardless of the type of shop you operate—municipal, resort or private—if you have not bought well and if your selling techniques are not the best, you still have one possible last resort, *service*. Service is the most important single phase of any operation and can, in fact, does, overcome many shortcomings. Good service will not remedy all bad buys, but it will go a long way toward establishing good customer relations. □