



# THE "GOOD" PRO SHOP CUSTOMER

## Who Is He? What Are His Buying Habits?

by VINCENT J. PASTENA

A recent GOLF Magazine subscriber study provides the answers and offers professionals statistical tools for rating their clientele and setting their 1974 sales goals

The successful merchandiser, before allocating and committing funds for the coming season, sets sales goals for himself—goals that present a solid challenge, but are not so high that they border on fantasy. How can the merchandiser know, with any certainty, that he is cutting out for himself a challenge instead of a piece of "pie in the sky"? No crystal ball is required. He simply gathers, absorbs and analyzes as much pertinent information as possible—his own records, price and supply forecasts, current economic trends and recent industry statistics.

One piece of information de-

veloped this year that will help the professional set realistic sales goals is a recent survey of GOLF Magazine subscribers. It gives the professional an accurate view of what constitutes a good pro shop customer. With this standard of measure, plus his past sales records and knowledge of his clientele, the professional can estimate how many of his customers meet the standard; how many, bolstered by a strong merchandising program on the professional's part, have the potential to become "good customers" next season, and how many are unlikely candidates regardless of his efforts. (Don't write off

the latter group completely, however. Some may never become "good customers", but you can strive for some improvement.) The compilation of these estimates gives the professional a key ingredient in determining his needs for the coming season.

The "good customer," as drawn from GOLF Magazine's study, is no figment of the imagination. He is feasible, because he is a composite of actual golfers. He is a "good customer" because he is well above average in three important respects: 1) degree of participation in the game, 2) buying power and 3) buying habits.

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It is the third aspect with which we are primarily concerned. The first two will be covered in depth in a future issue of GOLFDOM, but just to ascertain that we are on solid ground regarding participation and buying power, here is some of the more obvious evidence.

The survey respondents have played golf for an average of almost 14 years; their average score is 90.1. They play an average of 63 18-hole rounds a year. This figure is far above the 15 rounds per year that the National Golf Foundation uses as the delineation between the serious golfer and the "dabbler."

As to their buying power, more than 65 per cent currently belong to or have belonged to a country club. Putting this figure into perspective, only an estimated 16 per cent of all golfers belong to country clubs, according to NGF figures. Another indicator: The respondents spent an average of \$1,240 on 29.3 vacation days in the past year. Clearly, then, the survey respondents are both active and affluent golfers—the type who possess excellent potential to become good pro shop customers, if they are not already.

What are the actual buying habits of this above-average group of golfers? Here is a rundown on the average GOLF Magazine subscriber, offering some prime indicators on his buying habits:

*Golf clubs:* 2.2 sets of clubs owned by members of his immediate household, including his own; purchases a new set about every three years, compared with the estimated national average of every seven years; personally owns 1.7 sets of woods, 1.6 sets of irons and 2.2 putters.

*Golf balls:* purchased more than three dozen in the past year.

*Golf bags:* owns 1.6 bags.

*Golf shoes:* own 2.3 pairs and has purchased 1.1 pairs in the past year.

*Golf gloves:* owns 2.5 gloves; purchased 2.6 in the past year.

*Golf slacks:* owns 5.0; purchased 2.8 in the past year.

*Golf shirts:* owns almost 8; purchased almost 4 in the past 12 months.

*Golf hats:* owns 2.4; purchased 1.2 in the past year.

*Golf sweaters:* owns 3.2; purchased 1.1 in the past year.

To really make these figures take on significance for you, multiply the purchase figures by the number of members at your club. The product is your ideal sales potential and probably is mind boggling.

But the larger question is, where does the GOLF Magazine survey respondent purchase all of this merchandise? The pro shop is getting the lion's share of his equipment purchases—an average of 62.5 per cent. Broken down by products, the pro shop's percentages work out this way: balls, 71.5; woods, 64.5; irons, 63.7; putters, 62.0; bags, 50.9. The remaining purchases are distributed among sporting goods stores, department stores, discount houses, and so on.

However, the picture changes in the apparel category. The professional should not be deluded by the increases each year in pro shop sales of apparel. It is the percentage of the market the professional is capturing that indicates how successful he really is, and in strictly apparel items, the "downtown" competition, specifically, the department store, still gleans the majority of the business. Over-all, the professional receives only an average of 21 per cent of the combined market for golf slacks, golf shirts and golf sweaters. The department store alone takes 55.5 per cent. And remember, these figures come from a group of survey respondents who are higher than average in participation and affluence.

In the areas of golf shoes and golf gloves, the professional is holding his own: golf gloves, 65.9 per cent of the business; golf shoes, 48.4 per cent.

From a more optimistic view, apparel presents a challenge for the professional, because the combined efforts of the industry in their area to date have barely scratched the surface of this lucrative market.

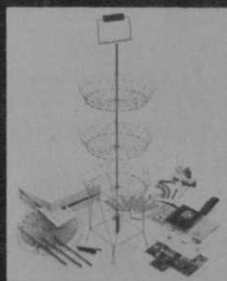
Now, what remains is for the professional to stack up his own clientele against these figures which represent a composite of good potential customers. Then, he must set his sales goals and budget accordingly. □

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