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Put a Fashion Show in Your 1972 Plans

A fashion show is one of the best ways to promote new stock and attract potential customers into the pro shop. Here is a step-by-step guide to conducting a successful fashion show

By Jean Conlon



David Crystal's publicity director Michele Abruzzo narrates a well-rounded fashion show featuring childrenswear.

So you're going to give a pro shop fashion show . . . and you don't really know where to begin. Just the thought of all the preparatory work seems overwhelming, so chances are you'll shelve the whole idea and put it off for another year. But did you ever consider that the pro shop fashion show you're so easily, thoughtlessly giving up could mean a difference in this year's final sales figures? Well, GOLFDOM did and therefore decided to pass along to you some concrete suggestions on how to give a pro shop fashion show, step-by-step. They're easy to follow and hopefully

will eliminate some of the pre-show panic which often admittedly sets in any time a professional embarks on such a venture. The following results have been carefully researched through interviews with top golfwear manufacturers, distributors and several professionals who have already given successful pro shop fashion shows.

Where to begin: From the beginning, *get assistance.* Many professionals are unaware that manufacturer salesmen like to help their favorite professionals put together a fashion show. Take advantage of personal and pro-

fessional friendships with salesmen and ask them to help. Or, quite often the pro shop distributors are more than happy to be of some assistance. Ernie Sabayrac, for example, invites professionals to ask him, or one of his 32 salesmen, for help, according to a recent article which appeared in the August issue of "Carriage Trade News": "We do feel that we have a vast amount of 'stored' up knowledge which might help you to come up with a solution to your problem," fashion shows included. Although distributors do not normally get involved with the actual fashion show itself, they are willing, as Sabayrac is, "to direct the pro to the right people and manufacturers who will make sure the merchandise needed gets to the pro on time."

When to begin: Don't think "fashion show, that's a good idea" and then expect it to miraculously materialize the very next day or even the next week. No, fashion shows take a lot more time than you initially think. It is agreed among the sophisticated pro shop merchandisers that planning a fashion show, although not difficult, is timely. For example, golf professional Fred Philipps of the Riverton CC in Riverton, N.J., started working on his fashion show in January and set the date for early spring, around April. He thereby eliminated the possibility of uncomfortably tight merchandise deliveries of the necessary garments he had to have on hand for the show and extra stock for after-show sales, plus he gave himself the distinct advantage of doing a great deal of pre-show publicity. Likewise, generously grant yourself plenty of weeks to prepare the show and allow for any unanticipated snags.

When is a good time: Pros and manufacturers alike feel that a good time for a fashion show is in conjunction with the Ladies Opening Luncheon. Jack Lust, vice president of DiFini Originals, claims, "For spring styles experience has proven the first Ladies' Day Opening Luncheon is ideal. The best time to start the show is right *after* lunch has been served so as to avoid the noise of rattling dishes." Another helpful hint from Lust: See that the invitation for the fashion show goes out with the invitation to the luncheon. Best yet, ask the club manager or ladies' committee that plans the lunch



Professional Fred Philipps and model-members of Riverton CC schedule fashion shows to coincide with club luncheons.

to send one invitation only announcing both events. That way the show will be guaranteed a bigger turnout than if scheduled as a separate event.

How to prepare merchandise: So often a professional will not have enough of the latest styles in stock for a really special fashion show. However, if a show is readied well enough in advance, as previously suggested, there should be enough time to place special orders with the manufacturers whose merchandise will be modeled in the show. So advises Lust, "Ask your salesman to write up a separate fashion show order which will be expedited with high priority to arrive early in the season."

"But even before ordering," suggests Michele Abruzzo, director of advertising and publicity, David Crystal, Inc., "decide what kind of show it will be and what kind of audience will be attending. If there is a possibility of some men being there with their wives, show menswear; if the audience is filled with grandmothers, be sure to show some children's styles. Grandmothers always love shopping for their grandchildren, so childrenswear in your show will automatically win the audience over!" If the pro shop does not normally stock the little extras needed to spark up a fashion show, Michele advises, "Have local shops (non-competing

ones, of course) participate by lending their furs, childrenswear, accessories, etc., to further enhance your show. As a way of reciprocating, the local shop and its location in town can be announced to the audience before or during the show. They'll welcome the additional publicity."

Once the ordered outfits arrive, start immediately on model fittings. Trudi Montgomery, wife of professional Ray Montgomery, Mill River CC in Upper Brookville, N.Y., tries "to pick the garments to be used according to how well they look on the person modeling them." It will not help to sell the merchandise, if the outfits worn do not look "absolutely right" once out on the runway. But the biggest problem to avoid, fitting-wise, according to professional Philipps, "is not having the correct sizes for your models. It is so very important to make sure plenty of time is set aside for fittings and making proper sizes available."

How to select models: There's a variety of opinions on model selection among manufacturers and professionals. On the one hand, Jack Lust feels the pro should "enlist the support of your ladies' golf committee and let the chairman select the models—three or four girls modeling three outfits or six girls modeling two outfits each will prove adequate." Trudi Montgomery,

on the other hand, does model selection herself. "I take a dozen or so girls from the club membership and ask them to participate in the show. They are always the ones with nice figures, who wear anywhere from a size eight to a size 12." Michele Abruzzo claims, "Women golfers are often slim so why not use the members?" However, members alone should not be the only models. Miss Abruzzo warns, "Do not do an all-amateur show, but be sure to use some professional models." Jack Lust agrees. "It is advisable," he concurs, "to have one professional model or ex-professional model to help carry the show. The candid models who are club members will create greater audience interest and participation." That way, a nice balance of model presentation will be obtained.

What props to use: A runway is a must. If the models walk among the audience, the show will bog down, because the models are often stopped by someone curious enough to touch the fabric of the garment modeled or another who might just want to talk to their model friend. Either have your show on the club's auditorium stage or build a runway at least 18 inches



An elevated runway sets the stage for DiFini fashions.

high. As Michele Abruzzo points out, "That way everyone can easily see all the fashion details. Be sure to have cloth, sheet or carpeting tacked down on the runway surface to avoid unpleasant accidents such as tripping or slipping."

Music is another must. By using
(Continued on page 45)

DiFini invented comfort apparel for golfers. So what else is new? The DiFini® Golfer On-The-Mark Shirt. New? It's the new Status Trevira® Shirt with detachable ball marker! New? Its got new softness, featherweight luxury—from the raglan sleeves to the collar that stays neat always! New? Its new, conversation-piece zipper tab holds the marker. Snaps out...snaps on...snaps up the game. Machine washable, of elegantly masculine 100% Trevira® Polyester, it's everything you—and your customers want in a golf shirt. Get On-The-Mark. Now.

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accompanying music, you will get the audience in the right frame of mind. After all, a fashion show should be remembered as "fun and entertaining," according to Jack Lust, and therefore music helps to create just that right atmosphere. Plus, music "keeps the models moving and the show nice and lively," according to Miss Abruzzo.

Sometimes a microphone is necessary if the room in which the show is held is exceptionally large or your audience is seated far away from the commentator. Have the microphone checked immediately before the commentator goes on stage so that there will be no awkward delays over a "dead" mike.

Narration . . . the who's and how's: Some professionals like to do their own narration, others prefer bringing in an outside MC. Mrs. Montgomery modestly admits, "I myself am not very good at it, so I usually have an outsider do the presentation." To have a visiting commentator, especially someone connected with the golf and fashion industries, often enhances the show's program. Professional Philipps invited the fashion editor of GOLF Magazine to do the narration which was well received by his audience. "But be certain," explains Michele Abruzzo, "that the outside commentator knows the clothes and is acquainted with the audience beforehand." There is nothing worse than a commentator talking to the audience while trying to fumble around for descriptions of the clothes.

The pro should have all the information about the garments modeled written down on individual three by five cards before hand, and should be given to each model just immediately before she goes out on the runway. This method will help avoid panic and confusion, which often occurs when a model shows up out of turn and only information line-up sheets are being used. Remember, the audience must be talked to continually, knowledgeably and informatively.

Tell the audience about the garment *in detail*; never presume every pocket, zipper, button and underskirt culottes can be seen. Talk fabric, colors available, sizes, prices, even suggest how and where the style should be worn. Any fashion information fed the au-

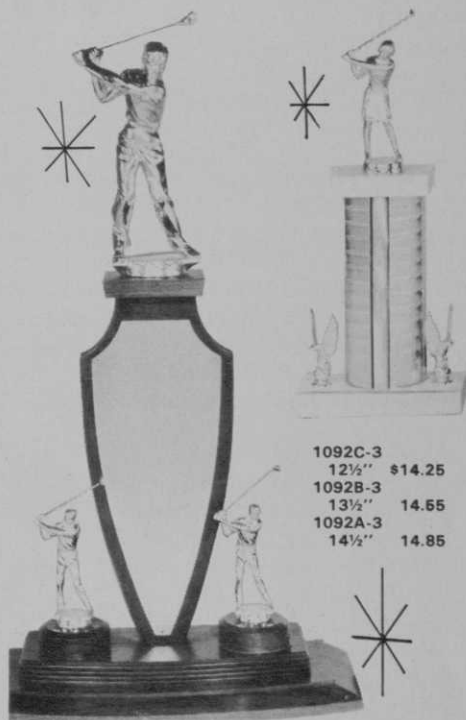
dience will help to sell the merchandise. Then tie it all together with some entertaining anecdote done in a candid manner.

How long the show: Keep the time of the show down to a minimum. A fashion show should not be overly long and therefore possibly boring. The Mill River fashion shows usually run one half hour from beginning to end; Riverton's are about the same; Michele Abruzzo, who puts together very high fashion shows for David Crystal, such as the one done recently at the Hotel Pierre in New York, clocks her shows to run 45 minutes. She allows approximately 45 seconds to a garment, in an average 60 piece show.

The extras: Why not give a door prize or a table gift to the guests? After all, presents add new dimensions to the already expected fashion show format. Fred Philipps gave a golf towel with the club ensigna and ball marker to each of the ladies attending his last year's show. The cost to the professional? Approximately \$1.50 per gift. The DiFinis like to hold an audience participation competition: guess the price of a special DiFini outfit and if right, it's yours! Another idea pointed out by Jack Lust is that many perfume manufacturers are willing to send professionals sample gifts of their products to be given out, with their compliments, to the guests. Or, treat the audience to a glass of champagne with the luncheon. The extras are always well appreciated.

The results: Pro shop fashion shows mean pro shop business. Although the fashion show may not produce immediate sales, it will help to attract the curious browsers, the potential customer. "Right after the show is not the buying period," Trudi Montgomery has found, "but more and more people will come into the shop as a result and become familiar with other merchandise available. In the long run, the show pays . . ." And, goodwill (possibly the best by-product of giving a fashion show) is automatically created. As so well summed up by Miss Abruzzo: "The pro's members will admire him for giving the show and will most likely trust his future judgement that much more in his selection of fashions for his pro shop." It's all about projecting the desirable image of a sophisticated pro shop merchandiser. □

GOLF AWARDS

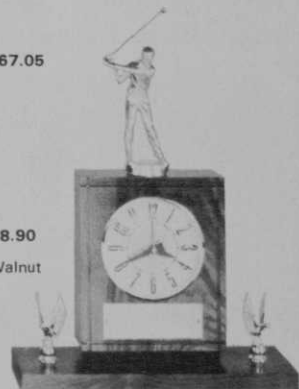


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the original batteries in heavier cars, you will buy five replacement sets through 48 months. The CAROCHE should get 24 months' service from the first set, with only one replacement set needed through 48 months.

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golf cars (or \$600.00 per car) over a four-year period can make the initial price tag on the heavier golf car look *very* expensive and make considerable difference in your net profit price.

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FRAMED

Pro Shop Finances, In-Depth

By Pat Williams

**Professionals should think in terms
of the total profit picture to get
an honest appraisal of how much
it costs to run a shop**

We are now getting into that cycle of the year when the majority of golf professionals are starting to give a lot of thought to next year's lines. The new merchandising lines and the new equipment lines are now being shown and are available for sale. The old "wheels" are grinding away trying to figure out what is going to be "good" next year. The astute professional realizes that the fall and winter months are the most important months of the year. Why? Quite simple. Things ease off a bit and he realizes that he now has some time to think and reflect on his business operation. As a professional you have to take advantage of this opportunity and put it to the best possible use.

The present cycle you are in and how well you plan are going to dictate what next year will be like: Profitable, unprofitable or maybe just a "sort of" type of year. You are getting ready to gamble your investment money on future returns. It is virtually impossible to do this planning, budgeting or buying un-

less you have an honest appraisal of what it costs to run your business.

Let's pose a simple question. Before you buy do you actually think about how much merchandise you have to sell just to recoup your personal investment? Very few people do. There is a general tendency to think only about the gross margin per unit rather than the net profit for that particular line of merchandise. By thinking in terms of specific units you may be blowing the total profit picture. The following basically outlines just how easy it is to think in terms of the total picture for better profits.

When anybody is involved with running a business on a day-to-day basis, there is a tendency to think about the separate little parts of the business rather than about the whole business. This thought process is natural. We tend to think about facts such as, those slacks cost me \$14.80 a pair; my assistant is paid \$375 a month; my phone bill last month was \$63, and so on. How many of us can say, "It costs me \$120 a day every day

I open the front door of the shop." Profit and loss, whether involving specific item or the whole business operation, must be based on a *break-even analysis* of that particular item you sell in the shop.

Basically, break-even analysis is concerned with developing those cost figures which you need to determine what sales and/or income figure you must obtain to make a profit. As was mentioned, it is applied to a specific items or to the entire operation. Preferably break-even analysis should be applied to major departmental categories. In the golf shop operation this would include such areas as golf cars, men's apparel, women's apparel, shoes, balls and clubs.*

In any business operation you have
(Continued)

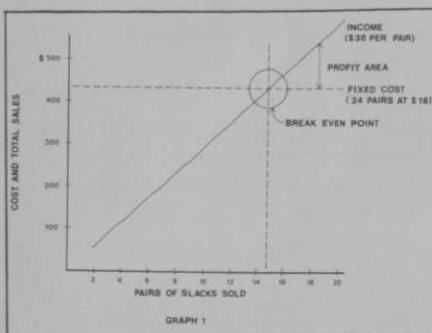
*The author is aware that this explanation of break-even analysis will be out of context with true economic theory. However, small business operations do not normally conform to formal theory, but rather to a more practical and usable approach.

fixed costs and variable costs. All this means is that some costs remain constant over a long period of time and some costs fluctuate depending on the activities of the business. In big business an item such as rent would be considered a fixed expense; an item such as wages would be considered a variable expense. This is not true of the small operation. For the most part all expenses in small business are really fixed. In the golf shop, most merchandise is bought before the season starts; the number of employees will probably not change during the calendar year, and utilities are generally the same. If there are variations in the operating costs of the shop throughout the year they are usually minimal variations.

Let's look at a simplified example of break-even analysis as it applies to one specific item. Assume that you have purchased 24 pairs of slacks from a supplier. The retail price is \$30; your cost was \$18 per pair or a total investment of \$432. (If we were fooling around with variable costs, we would also consider alterations on the slacks and freight, which would make total cost slightly higher.)

Now the real question comes up. When you bought those slacks you knew they cost \$18 a pair and that you had invested \$432 of your hard earned money in them. Did you ever stop to think when you were buying them how many pairs you must sell just to break-even? Chances are you didn't.

It is really a simple process to determine how many. All you have to do is divide \$432 by \$30 and you get 14.4 pairs you must sell to break even. To make this article academic, let's throw in an academic looking graph which proves the point of 14.4 pairs of slacks.



You don't actually make a profit on the first, second or even third pair of those slacks you sell. You only start making a profit when you have sold more than 14 pairs. It's obvious that you will make a profit of \$288 if you sell 24 pairs. Twenty-four pairs bring in \$720. Subtract the \$432 cost and you have a profit of \$288. The graph also reflects this profit area.

The whole purpose of this example is to prove one point. You must equate costs with potential sales just to break even. You cannot, repeat cannot, think of profit on a per item basis. Profit can be thought of when all costs are paid.

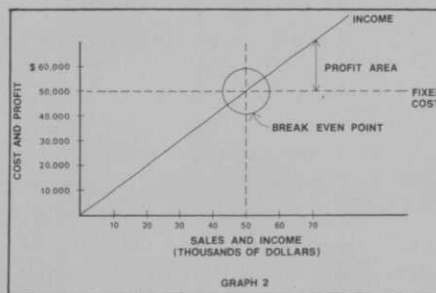
Let's take a brief look at this principle when it is applied to the entire business operation of a golf shop. We have included only the major items for the sake of simplicity.

Assume that we have the following expenses for one year:

Salaries and wages	\$15,000
Merchandise inventory	\$25,000
Overhead	\$ 5,000
Miscellaneous	\$ 5,000

Total fixed expenses \$50,000

This obviously means that somehow we are going to have to generate \$50,000 in sales and income before we can even start to think about how much profit we are making. Take a look at the following graph:



You may be sitting there thinking, "Well this really doesn't fit my situation." However, there is a lot of information in that one little graph.

First, No profit is made on anything until your income and sales reach \$50,000.

Second, It shows you how much it costs you to sell a certain dollar amount of goods. In a real case the income line would be curved indicating that your costs are not proportionate to sales. In other words, salaries are going to cost you the same whether you sell \$5,000 worth or \$50,000.

Third, It shows you the profit po-

tential based on cost and projected sales and income. Likewise, the loss you might incur if sales are off.

Fourth, It shows you what it costs to run your business. Let's say you have a nine-month operation at your shop and you are open six days a week and your expenses are \$50,000 a year. Did you ever stop to think that you have to average \$214 a day just to break even? So, it costs you some "dough" to turn that key in the door each morning.

In conclusion we are not advocating that every golf professional sit down and draw charts and graphs and all that fancy stuff. We are simply advocating that you should think break-even analysis. There are no disadvantages with this kind of thinking—only advantages. Put it to work and see.

If you take in \$500 one day and you know that you have not reached that break-even point for the year, you are going to need part of it tomorrow to help you turn the key in the door.


When you are buying merchandise you don't think about the profit made on selling one of the items, but how many of these things you've got to sell before you get your money back and start making a profit.

When you are thinking about new things which are going to increase your operating costs, think about how many dollars you have to come up with before the idea is profitable to you.

Finally a point to consider. A major difference between big business and small business is that big business can afford to make more mistakes and still survive. You cannot make many mistakes and survive. So, the more sound business management techniques you implement in your operation, the risks you take are proportionately reduced.

Think about it. Take this year's financial statement and see what it costs you to open your door everyday. Then, plan accordingly. □

Pat Williams served for four years as director of education and special projects for the Professional Golfers' Assn. and has had experience in urban land planning and financial capacity programming techniques. He recently formed a golf course architects and operations consulting firm with golf course architect Don Sechrest.



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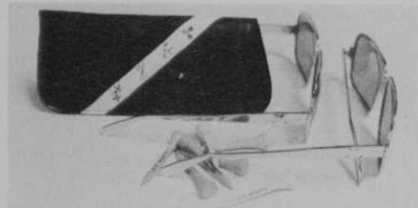
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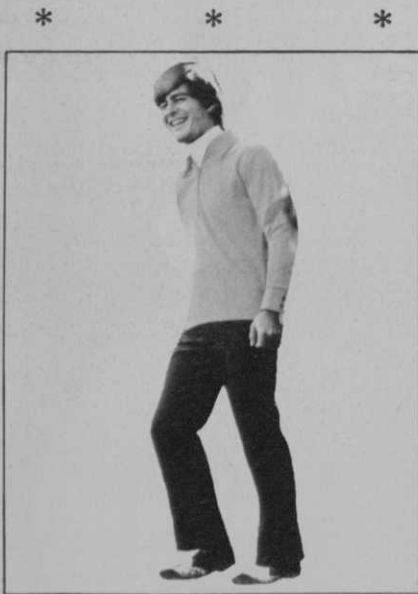
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SIGN IN: For a day of golf wearing *Renauld's* insignia sunglasses (\$10 with carrying case), shown here, anybody can play like a pro. The sporty frames with status golf stick insignia come in gold or gunmetal with polarized lenses in gray or bronze. They're a great way to reduce all that reflected sunny glare.



* * *

EITHER OR: Both solids and herringbone are *the* favorites in golf sweaters, slacks, jackets and sport coats by *Bernhard Altmann* for *Spalding*. Why not take the entire collection in *Spalding's* exclusive nine color selection? And, while you're at it, mix 'em up and match 'em up for with-it pro shop merchandising.



ARNIE'S AGE: Once again, Arnold Palmer comes out the winner, this time 'round in a new line of *Arnold Palmer Slacks* by *Shelby* (a division of *Robert Bruce*), shown here. It's a total knit look with the Dacron polyester doubleknit slacks designed to coordinate with the sweaters and golf shirts. Best of the lot: solids (\$25) in 12 smashing colors, checks (\$25) in blue, navy, brown, red, plus more, and the golf jean (\$22.50) with white top stitching. All cut in stylish taste with a gentleman's flare.

pro's par

By JEAN CONLON



IN PRINT: Headlining the women's golfwear news these days is *CoberKnit's* 100 per cent nylon golf jacket (\$19), shown here. And just to give the pro's buying life a bit of variety, *CoberKnit* does this water repellent, wash and drip dry jacket in 75 different assorted prints. So Mr. Pro . . . select away!

* * *

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS: And what could be a better pro shop fashion item than *Puritan's* sweater and shirt ensemble? They're all packaged up nice 'n Christmas-y for nice 'n easy pro shop merchandising. Shown here, Dacron and cotton long pointed collar shirt of no-iron fabric with color blending U-neck sweater (\$20, the set).



BOTTOMS UP-TOP: Right at the waist is where the action is at *Thomson Trousers*, where their newest golf slack (\$30), shown here, has "cumbertop" Ban-Rol extension waistband. *Thomson's* VP, Herb Cohen, is predicting that the white doubleknit trousers of 100 per cent Fortrel polyester with contrasting waistband in choice of red or blue will be the pro's top selling number this year.

* * *

DID YOU HEAR??? That *David H. Smith, Inc.*, has appointed Leonard F. Wirtz director of their pro shop division, heading all aspects of sales to pro shops . . . that *Leon Levin* has an exciting group of 18-inch length skirts in *Trevira* polyester knits and *Klopman* polyester prints, plus they, like many of their 7th Ave. cohorts, are going the way of good (imported, in *Levin's* case) Dacron and cotton seersuckers . . . that an "exclusive golf shop in an exclusive community in Florida" is looking for a manager (exclusive, too, we presume), according to a recent *Women's Wear Daily* ad . . . that the status of status luggage makers *Vuitton* has a golf bag for a mere \$375, and not-to-be outdone *Gucci* has a golf club carrier at \$110 (is that a bargain?) plus four club covers at \$35, for the set—natch! . . . and that, speaking of status, 7th Ave.'s multi-award winning designer, *Anne Klein*, has a new line of golf, boating, skiing and tennis wear, all created under her new label—*Super Sports* (editor's note: loved everything we saw, *Anne*, and wish you much luck with your latest fashion venture) . . . and, and, and . . . □