

SERVICE HELPS SUCCESS.*

BY E. H. BRECKON.

Service Helps Success. Now there is no argument to this proposition, it certainly does, and it does not matter whether it be in the Drug business or in any other line of trade or profession; poor service leads to poor business; good service leads to a good business or trade.

I remember while touring from Los Angeles to San Diego, California, I drove into an old Mission town and being in need of some motor fuel we pulled up to a filling station and before I could get out of my car an attendant was filling the radiator of my auto with water and then asked what he could do for me. I told him what I wanted and he promptly gave it to me and, by the way, this attendant was dressed in a white duck suit that was white, a white cap; his shoes were well cared for and this at a filling station. And for this service and for this gentlemanly attention I paid no more than at other places.

I can to this day see the surroundings, the bend in the road, the old Mission opposite, and I certainly would not pass that way ever in the future without stopping to purchase something, if I could possibly use anything they had for sale.

I have always made it a rule in my store to let it be known to all of the help that all customers should be treated and waited upon as my help would like to be treated were they on the opposite side of the counter.

I do not mean by this that it is necessary to make a slave of one's self to satisfy customers; I hardly think it is necessary to deliver postage stamps, for instance, to every able-bodied individual who is perfectly able to walk to the store; still, there are occasions when this service is advisable. Neither do I think it necessary for the store to deliver sodas to perfectly healthy women day after day for them to enjoy upon their verandas, though there are times and circumstances when it is good business to give a service of this kind; women sometimes are not dressed for a trip to the store but may be just as hungry for a soda after a house-cleaning, as we men are for a cigar after a hearty meal.

Therefore I say use judgment in your service and in doing so it will be appreciated by those receiving it. It is good future business advertising; do these things in a reasonable way and do not make yourself a slave in this service, but do it as you would like to be served in a like position.

There was an interesting discussion on "service" in this branch Tuesday, and there is not a druggist in business or out of it, if you please, but must recognize that good service pays.

A salesman called upon me one day and had a sales help or some sort of advertising which he was promoting. After listening to his story I told him that I was not interested and he asked why? I told him that we had a better one whereupon he inquired what it was and asked if I was willing to divulge it.

I told him that what I had in mind was Service—the best that we could give at all times, tempered with common sense. He looked over my force of clerks and said, "Mr. Breckon, if you work that to the limit with your help, there is no saleshelp that will equal your service nor anywhere near approach it." He thanked me for my time and departed, leaving a good impression upon me. Some day he may sell me his idea.

* Section on Commercial Interests, A. Ph. A., Buffalo meeting, 1924.

Another example of service that helped success: Several years ago a young artist was engaged to paint—for a catalogue house selling flower seeds—Sweet Peas from a natural bunch of the flowers. He did so but the colors were not as bright as the proprietor thought they should be and he asked the artist if he could not brighten them up a little. He looked at the flowers he had painted from and said, "they look true to color;" but, said the man, "those are wilted and faded, just touch them up, if you will."

The young artist asked if he could not have a fresh bunch to paint from. The flowers were given him and he painted an entirely new picture, submitted it for inspection making no comment about extra time and material and to-day he is still painting for this same firm. That was several years ago. "Did service pay in that instance?" It certainly did!

Service in a drug store of the right kind is the greatest trade producer, but it must be linked up with a clean store, bright fresh windows, a clean up-to-date stock, and to this let me add—as complete a stock as is possible to carry for the capital one has had and for the trade one serves. This necessitates a very active want list kept right up to the second; and when I say second, I mean just that; for, if you neglect to use the want list at the second you should, you may forget the next second and your next sale of this article may be lost.

Tuesday, the necessity of women's help in the drug store was mentioned and I quite agree that a young lady graduate is just as essential to a store to-day as a man. I have found them invaluable in the prescription department, the stationery and toilet goods departments. They are usually more accommodating than men and have far better taste in arranging goods in an attractive way, thus giving better service for the store and to the customers.

Several years ago I happened to be passing through Toronto and while waiting for train connection I wandered up town and into a very small cigar store; this store had a four-foot candy case in which was displayed, I should say, not more than a dozen boxes of candy; in front of each box or adjacent to it was a price card designating what it sold for; it gave me an idea for my store and I became so absorbed in the idea that I was going to leave the store without cigars when the proprietor asked if there was anything that he could do for me. This latter query awoke my cigar hunger; his alertness was service to me and a profit to him.

I carried the price tag idea back to my store and now every box of cigars is marked on the lid—the price that they sell for; every box or every variety of candy has its price ticket; every Kodak and every box of stationery has a price, visible to the customers; all toilet articles in show cases have price tickets displayed—you may ask, "what has this to do with service?" Just this, your customers are often in a hurry and while waiting for a moment they can decide upon the article they want and the store can give them quick service; this price marking very oftentimes makes a sale, when if the customer did not know what your price was, he would not ask. Consider these little things as service and cash in on them.

There is another kind of service that leads to success or helps it—it is vital to the success of the owner and that is the service the help renders the owner; such as arranging stock, keeping the want list alive, offering suggestions for improving the store and last, but not least, the service to the customers as outlined in the first part of this paper.

Do not be small about making exchanges, replace faulty goods, especially the better and more expensive rubber sundries; if a prescription is brought back which the customer says does not taste the same as or is of a different color from the last, you are doing a good service for your business by offering to refill it, checking up very carefully and then, should there be a slight difference in color, explain; the mental effect is, in nine cases out of ten, a wonderful stimulant to your future business. Let the arguing druggist tell the customers the prescription is all right and he knows it and that is all there is to it; when this customer has a prescription to be filled some one else will fill the next one for him.

All large business concerns to-day are recognizing the worth of good service. The banks are advertising to the public the service that they are willing to render, the railroads are doing likewise, and even the United States Government is telling the people about the service they can give them in different ways. How much more should we, the retail druggists of this country, put our efforts forward to render our customers and the public the best service in our power to give and with this giving receive success in proportion to the service that we render.

There are two mottoes that could well be displayed in the back room of the store for all engaged therein to see each day—first, consider the customer as nearly always in the right, and second, treat all customers as you would like to be treated.

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

F. W. E. Stedem inquired whether Mr. Breckon considered the service of women more satisfactory than that of men in the prescription department.

Mr. Breckon replied he did to a certain extent. He had now a young lady in that department, who had been in the store for 10 years. She is a graduate of the University of Buffalo, and her service is more satisfactory than that of several young men, formerly in his employ.

Mr. Stedem said this did not agree with his experience; he considered women good as clerks, or in part time work in the prescription department, but it seemed that continuous work as prescriptionists was too much of a strain for them.

Mr. Breckon said the prescriptionists in his stores also waited on customers, there was not sufficient work in the prescription department to keep them constantly employed.

Mr. Stoddard said that his experience was about like that of Mr. Breckon's. He was paying some of the women larger salaries than men, for he believed that salaries should be fixed according to results, sex should cut no figure. Quite naturally, his experience varied with the individuals.

LINKING MEDICINE AND PHARMACY.*

BY L. E. SAYRE.

A reversion to the old time inclusion of pharmacology, etc., in the medical curricula seems to be assured. The first steps have been taken.

Specializing in medicine, where the graduate plans his work to be done in a single branch of public service, has grown to such an extent that the treatment of a single patient in a family may call for successive collaborative visits from three or four "specialists"—no one of whom regards the "case" as being in his restricted personal charge. Three or four bills greet the *pater familias* when the sick one has recovered, in the place of the one that the "family doctor" used to tardily present.

* Section on Education and Legislation, A. Ph. A., Buffalo meeting, 1924.