

WHAT IS YOUR NAME WORTH?*

BY ROBERT P. FISCHELIS.

Two specific instances, in company with a host of general ones, that have come to the attention of the writer, have served to focus his attention on the subject of this paper.

At the Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting of the Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, held last June, David W. Horn, one of the two surviving charter members was called upon to give a message to the present generation. He said, in substance, that after an experience of sixty years in retail pharmacy he had come to the conclusion that the greatest asset to professional and business success is the preservation of the individuality of the pharmacist. Summed up in modern slang his message to the on-coming generation of pharmacists was "Be Yourself."

Just previous to the meeting referred to above, the Vice-President of the largest chain drug-store organization in the world told the New Jersey Pharmaceutical Association that the independent retailer who could make his personality felt in his community could compete successfully with any chain-store organization. A competent student of corporation-store methods recently cited instances where chain-store units had actually been moved away because they could not break the hold which their independent competitor had upon the people.

With evidence of this kind before us, it is pertinent to ask why so many independent retailers go out of their way to hide the identity of the one who is responsible for the policies and management of their stores. Granted that there are often valid reasons for the adoption of abstract titles for pharmacies, it is nevertheless certain that the use of such titles in place of the name of the dominant personality of the establishment is a handicap and should be avoided. A name may be difficult to pronounce or write but even so, it presents less of a handicap to the average citizen as far as association goes than the use of a term which may be totally irrelevant and conveys no thought of personal integrity, reliability, or service to the customer.

In their very interesting volume on modern sales and advertising methods, entitled "Your Money's Worth," Chase and Schlink touch on the subject of names. They say: "There are endless trade names by which a usually common-place and often unpatentable product is sought to be given predominance in the consumer's subconscious processes; so that when he thinks of roofing he will think of "Certain-teed;" of wall board he will think of "Celotex;" of soap flakes, "Lux." One recent number of one magazine reveals the following: "Celotex, B. V. D., Bondex, Pro-tex, Insulex, Ceco, Eno, Nokol, Synchronphase, Rhodogro, Ozite, Kaltex, Almco, Florazona and others.

"When one or two manufacturers in a single industry used this stamp-in-the-name technic as the spearpoint of a national advertising campaign, they may have profited, but when many manufacturers are doing it, their efforts cancel out as the consumer becomes increasingly confused. He can no more remember all these trade names than he can remember the provinces of Siberia. The process is on the way to a *reductio ad absurdum*. It becomes more and more difficult

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for the consumer to buy plain paint or chintzes or wall board or washing soda for the haze of 'exes' and 'ums,' 'oes' and 'ols' that surrounds them."

And so it is with the fanciful names for drug stores. "Purity Pharmacy," "Red Cross Pharmacy," "Cut Price Drug Store" and the many other coined names convey no personality to the customer. They simply register "drug store" in his mind; any kind of drug store. The name of the owner, on the other hand, registers not only "drug store," but also the personality of the proprietor, in the consciousness of the customer. Which is the better from a business standpoint, the cold, abstract mind-picture of any kind of store, or the virile, living impression of personal service that comes to mind at the mention of the name of the man responsible for the creation, development, or present status of the business?

Estimates running into the millions have been made of the value of such names as Wanamaker, Field, Ford, Tiffany and hundreds of others. The name of the individual pharmacist in association with a high type of service is proportionately valuable. Why not use it?

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

Mr. Hunsberger contended that a name other than that of the proprietor does not give the patron the information he should have relative to the one responsible for the compounding of prescriptions. He also referred to a drug store, in Philadelphia, using the name of a famous medical institution. When the owner was asked for the reason of such designation he replied that there is no more objection to doing so than naming a cigar after a famous person. He also held that the good name of the school would reflect credit on the store. Mr. Hunsberger asked the owner if he was entitled to such credit—if not, he was making wrongful use of the name; if he was deserving of the credit, he should not be ashamed to use his own name. Mr. Hunsberger said the time would come when it will be required that the one responsible for the activities of the store must place his name conspicuously before the public.

In **Mr. Rudd's** opinion the public views a store with some degree of suspicion if the name of the owner is not shown. He always wanted to know the name of the owner of the store which he patronized.

W. Bruce Philip stated that the subject of names was part of the Commercial Pharmacy course. Some stores in new sections of a city are opened with the idea of selling them after development; a change of name detracts to some extent from the value of the store; hence, when that is a purpose a name is adopted which will remain with the store. The names of streets or points of interest are often applied to stores. The deductions of students were that the name of the owner should also be made known.

Chairman Keene stated that foreigners frequently adopted fanciful names for their stores, believing that their nationality might adversely affect the trade. In his opinion a good name represented a great asset in the drug business.

Mr. Hunsberger referred to a change of location of a certain proprietor because of questionable business methods; in fact, persuaded to leave one section of the city because of such practices, this individual established himself in a locality where his prior conduct was not known.

JAPANESE PEPPERMINT CROP.

The peppermint crop of 1927 is equivalent to about 450,000 pounds of menthol crystals, as compared with 675,000 pounds for the previous year. The carry-over from 1926 production is said to have been about 250,000 pounds of menthol as compared with a carry-over from 1925 of 150,000 pounds.

The Japanese government does not make official crop forecasts, but private surveys are made by scouts of Kobe menthol trading and producing houses who visit the peppermint growing areas during the latter part of July and early August, at which time it is possible to determine the acreage devoted to peppermint, and to ascertain the extent of the first two crops in the main districts. (Vice-Consul G. J. Haering, Kobe, Japan.)