DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Conducted By Paul C. Olsen.*

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE INVITED AND WELCOME.

Readers are invited to submit comments, criticisms and suggestions regarding the material which appears in this department. The Editor also will undertake to answer questions regarding general problems of business management. Letters of general interest will be published, but the writer's name will not be revealed without his permission.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EFFECTIVE DISPLAY.

(*Continued from February* JOURNAL.)

The extravagant settings and impossible situations in many of the present-day motion pictures frequently are the butts of criticism of competent judges. Yet these same motion pictures continue to attract millions of people every day.

The drawing power of the motion picture to the great mass of people lies in the entertainment it affords at a reasonable cost. To a person whose life is varied and active, the pictures have perhaps no particular appeal; but to the tired mother chained day after day to the same monotonous household tasks, to the shop worker endlessly performing one simple operation, to the office worker constantly mulling over interminable columns of figures which do and can mean nothing to him—to all these people, the pictures offer a relief from the humdrum sameness of their everyday work and life.

To be sure, the relief is intangible and not physical, but it is none the less real. Few people in the United States can enjoy personally the winter sports at Montreal. To the millions who cannot go there themselves, the motion pictures offer a partial and somewhat satisfying substitute. In imagination, at least, they are permitted to witness the joys of Montreal winter sports.

Imagination is defined as the picture-forming power of the mind, the ability to create ideas or images independent of the external world. Expressed in another way, imagination is the power to see mentally that which is not present physically at that moment. Motion pictures, in the example just mentioned, so stimulate the imaginations and memories of people that for the time being at least their thoughts and ideas are lifted above the deadly monotony of their everyday lives.

In the same way, the appealingly-told love story of a beautiful and wealthy heiress and a handsome, accomplished hero transports in imagination the audience to the happy, interesting realm in which the people in the picture story are shown to live.

Imagination is the power to call to mind that which never before has been experienced. The Florida child, for instance, may never have seen any snow, but when he sees motion pictures of Montreal winter sports, his imagination per-

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mits him to feel, nevertheless, how much he would enjoy them, were he to have the opportunity to do so.

Memory is the power to call to mind that which has been experienced before. The young couple who spent their February honeymoon in Montreal enjoy these happy days again in memory, when motion pictures of winter sports there call back to them all these pleasant memories.

Thus the powers of imagination and memory are invoked in similar ways; the basis of difference between imagination and memory simply is that imagination recalls the unreal and memory the real.

Now consider the practical application to effective displays of appeals to imagination and memory. The two things a display has to do in order to become effective are to attract attention and to hold attention. There are mechanical ways to hold attention (these were discussed in the preceding article in this series) and there are ways to hold attention which are inherent in the characteristics of what is being displayed.

One way in which imagination or memory operates to hold attention once attracted to a display is as follows: The floor of the window is covered with green grass. In the background is a khaki tent, appropriately furnished. The center of interest is a man frying bacon over a most realistic-looking camp fire, while to one side the feminine member of the party is busy at a camp table completing other preparations for breakfast.

To the person who has never camped, isn't that display an incentive to transport him in his mind's eye from the dull, hot sameness of his daily work to the glorious, cool freedom of the green woods? Many such people are bound to be impressed. They want to camp. In order to camp they must have equipment such as is shown in the display. What is more natural than that they should go to the store where it is displayed?

To the person who has camped, happy memories operate to call back to mind the joys of camping which are suggested by this display. Again, in order to camp, it may be necessary to secure additional equipment. Why not buy it at the store which displays it so temptingly and convincingly?

Appeals to the instincts and to the emotions can be used effectively in holding attention to displays. The reason that appeals to the instincts and emotions can be so successful is because everybody has instincts and emotions in one degree or another and therefore tends to respond to them where appeals are so directed. That is to say, the natural thing for a person to do is to respond to an instinctive or emotional appeal. Conscious control has to be exercised to keep from doing so.

The success of the well-known appeal, "four out of five have it," is laid to its shrewd excitement of the self-preservation instinct and the accompanying emotion of fear.

Displays of bathroom supplies hold attention with their appeals to the cleanliness instinct.

The foundation of the whole toilet goods business is of course upon the elemental human desire for beauty and attractiveness.

Customs, traditions and habits also may be made use of to hold attention to displays. They operate similarly to the instincts and emotions. The difference is that instincts and emotions are universal—everybody has them—while customs,

traditions and habits apply only to particular groups or classes of people. Nationalities are frequent dividing lines for customs, traditions and habits.

Displays expressing the spirit of the various holidays are probably the most frequent way in which appeals to customs, traditions and habits are made. A large group of people are interested in St. Patrick's day. They are therefore attracted to and interested in displays which express the spirit of St. Patrick's day, and the hope is that this interest will carry over to the merchandise which is shown in this display because its purchase will make the celebration of the holiday more enjoyable.

There is a danger in carrying to extremes this tie-up of various kinds of merchandise with the celebration of various holidays. "Give Mother a carpet beater for Christmas," or "Give Dad a snow shovel" makes not only that display ridiculous, but tends to discount and weaken the effectiveness of all holiday displays.

Mother's day, June weddings, graduations are all customs to which appropriate merchandise displays may be joined.

There is an old saying that appeals to the heart are quicker and surer than appeals to the head. In the light of the discoveries of modern science, this statement is entirely correct if appeals to the heart are considered to be appeals to instincts and emotions; to customs, traditions and habits; and to imagination and to memory. Appeals to the head may be defined as logical reasoning.

The reason that in window and store displays these so-called appeals to the heart far outweigh in importance and effectiveness appeals to the head is that window and store displays get at best in most cases but hurried and casual attention. Logical reasoning involves deliberation, weighing of arguments and choice. Window and store displays, by the very nature of the quick and casual attention they receive and hold, are but rarely likely to receive any such analysis and logical unfoldment of conclusions. A display, if it is to succeed at all, must appeal quickly and directly, and these quick, direct appeals are, as mentioned, appeals to instincts and emotions; customs, traditions and habits; and imagination and memory.

THE COMMON-LAW OBLIGATIONS OF THE PHARMACIST.*

BY WILLIAM J. HUSA.**

The work of the pharmacist is so regulated by law that to the casual observer it may seem that every aspect of the drug business is covered by some national, state or local law or regulation. But in addition to the statutes and regulations, which have their origin in the action of legislative bodies, there are the less explicit, though no less binding, obligations of the pharmacist at common law. These obligations are enforceable by civil suits for damages. In case of injury caused by some alleged neglect of duty on the part of the pharmacist or his agent, any situation which is not covered by a statute must be decided according to the rules of common law, which are to be found in the decisions of the highest courts in similar cases previously tried.

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