

Survey year in the changing of windows, as well as displays inside the store and observing the effect that these changes have on sales results.

There is little question that selling is not sufficiently aggressive in the average independent drug store. We are making thousands of observations of sales transactions in the stores under investigation. In these observations we are already able to detect many striking instances of good- and poor-selling effort. Many details which are likely to be overlooked seem to affect sales results. The character of sales suggestion used by the sales person and the manner in which the commodity is presented to the customer seem to be of great importance. In this field, as in that of window display, some experimental work will be undertaken, as well as merely recording current practice.

The service policies pursued by the stores studied is also being made a subject of investigation. Stores in the group vary from those which are of a strict cash and carry type, to those which do more than 50% of their volume on a credit and delivery basis. There are also stores in the Survey which perform many unusual services for their customers as a means of trade promotion.

Most of the stores in the Survey engage in special sales to some degree. The results obtained by this means vary greatly from store to store; some merchants list items for sale which are not in stock at the time of the sale. Others seem to have learned by experience just what items can profitably be exploited by this means in their neighborhoods. As a result of this phase of the work, it is hoped that some general facts may be presented as to just what items carried by drug stores are best adapted to sales promotion through the cut-price sales. These are only a few examples of the type of information on the sales promotion side of retail business which will come out of the Survey paralleling that other important body of information already referred to having to do with the problem of cost control.

THE STANDARDIZATION OF PHARMACIES FOR EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS UNDER STATE PHARMACY LAW.*

BY GEORGE C. SCHICKS.

The question of the standardization of pharmacies for experience requirements under state pharmacy law is one which has frequently come up for discussion. We are all probably in accord with the idea that there is a real need for adequate professional training of the pre-registered man. It would also be conceded that the student must in some way receive enough experience so that he is competent to safely compound and dispense prescriptions.

Just how this experience is to be gained is a problem which confronts both the colleges training future pharmacists and boards examining them. Any plan advanced must markedly improve apprentice experience conditions of to-day or there is no real reason for its existence. It must also be one that is workable and enforceable.

Boards of pharmacy contend that applicants appear before them for registration licenses lacking practical experience and skill in compounding prescriptions. Many drug store apprentices feel that their opportunities to gain professional ex-

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perience are not adequate in the present-day drug stores. Drug store owners and managers complain that newly registered men lack experience and hence are not as valuable as they should be.

In considering the problem at hand, let us take first the viewpoints which may be assumed by the boards of pharmacy. Among them might be the objection that in certain types of stores so few prescriptions are compounded that it would be impossible for an apprentice to obtain any appreciable amount of professional experience. Commercialism in drug stores has advanced very rapidly during the past ten years. This does not mean, however, that all stores that have increased their service to the public by offering the sale of commodities in addition to the compounding of prescriptions have done so at the expense of the latter. It does mean, however, that in such stores there is an increasing number of duties of a non-professional nature which make such demands on the time of the apprentice that he is left a very limited time in which to acquire his professional experience. Then, too, it is sometimes said that the colleges do not give enough practical dispensing laboratory work. In some cases this objection may be well founded. I, however, will speak only for my own college which gives sixty-four hours of lecture and one hundred sixty hours of laboratory in dispensing pharmacy during the last two years of the three-year course. In the judgment of some this may or may not be adequate time, but I believe it compares favorably with the majority of the colleges. Unfortunately lack of time in which to collect the necessary data has prevented me from giving you a survey of the time devoted to dispensing pharmacy as given by the various colleges.

From the viewpoint of the drug store apprentice let us consider his problem. He feels the need of obtaining professional experience but scarcely knows where best to go for it. If he seeks employment in a small store where, let us say, one apprentice is employed, there is always routine work to be done. The business is small, the general store experience is varied and in most cases valuable, but the acquisition of professional experience must suffer for the prescription business is too small.

In a larger store doing from five to twenty-five prescriptions a day, the conditions from the standpoint of the apprentice become more nearly ideal. He has the same advantages of becoming acquainted with general store conditions as has the man in the smaller store, with the additional opportunity of both watching and participating in the compounding of a greater number of prescriptions. In a store doing a large commercial business as well as a good prescription business, apprentices are kept so busy manning their respective counters that the opportunity to gain experience in the prescription room is perhaps negligible.

Many apprentices do feel handicapped because of the lack of professional experience. I base this statement on the results of a questionnaire given to our sophomore and senior students, and I assume the interest in their profession in our student body at Rutgers is no different than the professional interest found in other colleges. The questionnaire pertained to the fourth year's work in the new four-year program. It will suffice to say that in the group of subjects which our students recommended for the additional year—the request heading the list was for more work in dispensing pharmacy. This I feel shows the need for more professional experience, inasmuch as our students are already receiving two hundred and twenty-

four hours of work dealing only with the compounding and dispensing of prescriptions.

From the viewpoint of the drug store owner there is still another angle to the problem. He will contend that he gives apprentices in his store as much opportunity as possible to obtain their professional experience. Here is a man in business. He has his business obligations and possibilities, his overhead and his own livelihood to consider. Is it fair to him to expect that he is going to consider the acquisition of professional experience of every apprentice he takes into his store before he does his own business interests? If it is the best business to put an apprentice in the prescription room to assist the registered man, that store owner will place him there. If it is to the pharmacist's interests to place the apprentice at the soda fountain or behind the toilet goods counter why shouldn't he do so? He is paying the apprentice for his services and it is only good business to place that apprentice where he is the most needed.

But so much for the need for professional experience. The need exists and my subject to-day is one of the solutions offered to overcome the need of such experience—namely, "The Standardization of Pharmacies for Experience Requirements under the State Pharmacy Law." The advocates of standardized pharmacies have in theory a plan which they believe will solve the problem. From a practical point of view, however, that theory appears difficult either to make workable or enforceable.

A pharmacy law demanding that the pharmacist permit the apprentice to obtain certain professional experience would be no assurance that the apprentice would really receive it. In these days of unscrupulous competition and high overhead, even though a pharmacist might want ever so much to give his apprentices every opportunity to obtain professional experience—how long could a store last whose owner did not think first of his business organization?

Neither would such a law be any definite assurance that the apprentice would receive the proper professional experience. With the great changes in present-day education, with the advantages of constant scientific research, pharmacists graduating from colleges to-day have had their scientific education so broadened that present-day course contents can scarcely be compared with those given but a very few years ago. Pharmacists who have been out of college for a considerable number of years or perhaps did not go to college, do not refresh themselves to such an extent that they are always in a position to give as much information as might satisfy the present inquiring apprentice. Not only that, but it is even difficult for men actually engaged in college work to keep abreast of the research being done by our leading institutions and pharmaceutical houses. A practicing pharmacist may know of such new preparations and developments but might be embarrassed by too many questions being asked him—especially when a control law might make a pharmacist feel that he is obligated to give information when asked for by the apprentice. An apprentice may also feel that he is entitled to ask more questions since the pharmacist is obliged under the law to give him certain instruction. It is not difficult to see that such conditions might not long be conducive to the best results.

It may be interesting to consider here how the colleges might become involved, even though they were not directly concerned with the operation of the

standardized pharmacies law. Suppose that an apprentice asked a pharmacist in charge of a standardized store, a question pertaining to the professional work being done. The pharmacist would feel obliged to make some sort of a reply. The reply might not agree with what the apprentice thought he was taught in college and in order to prove his point he takes the question back to the college. Even though the college might be ever so tactful in handling the situation, it would be difficult to know just how the apprentice would relay that information. It can be readily seen how an inexperienced apprentice could unconsciously misconstrue either the reply of the pharmacist or the reply of the college. In any event, it leaves open between the college and the pharmacist an excellent avenue for misunderstanding and antagonism.

Another hardship which such a law might work on the colleges is that they could easily be made a complaint tribunal in case the apprentice felt he was not receiving the proper training or didn't have competent supervision in the standardized store.

Another difficulty with the proposed law would be in the selection of stores to be standardized. With approximately 60,000 drug stores in the United States a classification of all stores would have to be made. Only stores meeting certain requirements could be considered for standardization. This would mean that many areas would be without a store in the class which could be standardized, which in turn would mean that men living in those areas would find it impossible to obtain their professional experience. In more thickly populated areas there would be more stores in the class meeting the requirements for standardization than perhaps the area could use and there would then be the problem of choosing specific stores among the qualifying group. Stores not meeting the standardization requirements or stores rejected for other reasons could, if they chose, make it rather unpleasant for the standardized store by hinting to the latter's customers and the public in general, "our store employs only registered pharmacists to compound prescriptions while the store down the street trains beginners who have not had enough experience to become registered." Is the layman going to consider the fact that the store down the street is a standardized store and therefore authorized by law to train apprentices? Is that man going to take into consideration that the beginners in the prescription room are always working under the supervision of a registered pharmacist? That means nothing to him. He reasons thus, "I will have no beginners experimenting with my prescriptions. I will go where I know registered pharmacists are employed."

Just such conditions exist to-day regarding other things so there is no reason to believe that those stores standardized under pharmacy law would not receive the blunt of much unfavorable criticism.

Let us assume for a few minutes that such a law were passed. If it were accepted by some states and not by others, which would undoubtedly be the case, a confusion in reciprocity between states would result. It would mean that those states having such a law would have a check made on how the individual applying for reciprocity obtained his experience. If he came from a state in which there was no standardized experience law it would probably be impossible for him to meet the requirements of the state which has such a law. It would seem that opportunities for reciprocity between states should be increased rather than retarded

and to inject such a measure would only tend to increase the difficulties of unification of state board reciprocal requirements.

Then again, if such a law were passed demanding that facilities to obtain professional experience be made available, it would not only increase the work of the boards of pharmacy but it would necessitate the organization of an adequate force of inspectors to see that the law was enforced. Such a force of inspectors could not be expected to render their services gratis, so there would result the big question of where money to pay for the enforcement of the law could be obtained. If the law depended on the good will of the pharmacist to enforce it with no paid adequate inspection, it would be too lax to be of any value.

The pharmacist has plenty to pay for now. If such a law were passed and the pharmacist were expected to supply the money to pay the inspectors, each drug store owner would have to be taxed, for the governing body under whose supervision it operated, could not select the group of stores to be standardized and then charge just those stores for the privilege of training apprentices. It would be a long drawn out proposition in most cases to obtain money from the state for the regulation of such a law. Nor would it be fair to charge the apprentice for such experience—instead he should receive payment for services rendered in the store.

Such a law as the one proposed would work a handicap on the apprentices. In scarcely populated areas a standardized drug store might be many miles from the home of a pre-registered man. The salary paid him would undoubtedly be insufficient for him to reside other than at home. In the more thickly populated areas in which large numbers of apprentices could expect to obtain professional experience, many may be unable to do so owing to the fact that the number of apprentices which could be trained in the standardized store would be very limited. In these same areas an excess of apprentices would tend to lower the wages.

Before closing my argument concerning the standardization of pharmacies for experience requirements under state pharmacy laws, I should like to bring to your attention what I feel is a very important differentiation in types of experience obtainable in a drug store.

It is a very important part of a pharmacist's training that he become thoroughly acquainted, so to speak, with the "atmosphere of the drug store." A model drug store in a college, while it may serve a very valuable purpose, will not replace by any means the actual experience to be gained in an operating store. The arrangement of the store, familiarity with patent medicines and toilet preparations, sick room supplies, drug sundries, soda fountain, cigar counter, the actual contacts with customers, encounters with salesmen, division of labor and invoicing cannot be satisfactorily duplicated anywhere but in the actual drug store. This orientation is one very vital factor determining the degree of usefulness that the newly registered man can be to his employer.

Although orientation is a vital factor in experience we must still be assured that an apprentice's professional experience is such that when he becomes registered he will be a safe compounder of prescriptions. The problem of insuring this professional skill is still a long way from being solved. I am reluctant to believe that standardization of pharmacies for experience requirement under state pharmacy laws would prove either effective or enforceable.

When I was asked to present this paper the scope of my subject provided

for no discussion other than that of standardized pharmacies, but until some other solution can be devised to assure adequate professional training the colleges might to some degree come to the aid of the situation. Although they can help but little in bringing the real "drug store atmosphere" to the college for the correct orientation of the student, there does seem to be an opportunity for them to give the student greater opportunities to acquire professional training.

If each college was to enlarge upon its present course content in dispensing pharmacy it would not involve any great expense to any one college—nor would it require any marked increase in the staff for instruction. The experience would be centralized in a place where the student is already obtaining information and the instruction would be authentic and complete. The busy druggist would not then be worried about a law requiring him to give instruction concerning much information which is not many times at his finger tips. It would seem that colleges with their equipment and teaching staff could help accomplish the desired end with a minimum of effort.

While I am not in any sense offering the college plan as a solution to the problem or a substitute for the standardization of pharmacies, still the colleges may be a valuable factor in making up the lack of professional experience which is apparently not available to the apprentice in many of our modern drug stores.

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"Apotheke Klattau" dates back 150 or more years to ownership of a member of the Firbas family, of a long lineage of Austrian Apothecaries.—From a bulletin of Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Pharmazie—by Dr. Otto Zekert, Vienna.

ACCURACY.

No pharmacist need be told that accuracy is one of the important qualifications of a pharmacist; the public judges him accordingly—therefore, a sign, as well as a label, advertises the pharmacy. Avoid errors in spelling.