

As I suggested earlier in this article accessibility is not the only governing principle in the layout of a drug store to permit the production of maximum profits. Other principles of similar importance will be the subject of the next article in this series.

WHY WE TEACH PRINCIPLES OF WINDOW DISPLAY.*

BY L. C. ZOPF.¹

Why we teach Principles of Window Display in the College of Pharmacy, State University of Iowa is a question asked us many times. I am sure that all colleges of pharmacy have had similar questions asked of them. The familiar question of why do the colleges not teach more subjects which will be of direct application to the general routine of the store can be answered in two ways; *first*, in the two-year course there was absolutely no time available for the teaching of such courses and *secondly*, the duty of the colleges of pharmacy is to educate students to be competent pharmacists.

In the three-year course we have only been able to find one hour for an additional commercial course. After a thorough study and discussion by our faculty it was decided that the course of greatest value, from the standpoint of actual use, would be principles of window display.

Possibly the paramount reason for the introduction of such a course was the demand made upon us by the students enrolled in our College. It was not a very uncommon thing, and is not at the present time, to receive letters from prospective students asking us for a bulletin listing the courses given by our College and particularly asking if we are in position to give a course in window display work. This one reason, above all others answers the "why" of this question.

If men, who are entering this profession, can see far enough ahead to demand such a course, it is apparent that the men who have been in the field for several years should be able to predict just how much value these men would receive from such a course.

With this thought in mind our faculty made an analysis of the graduates of our College. This survey revealed the fact that 72% of our graduates enter and remain in the retail division of pharmacy. This means that these men will have use for such a course from the first day they receive a position in a retail pharmacy.

The remaining 28% of our graduates are employed in manufacturing or research laboratories, in hospitals, in teaching, as salesmen; some enter medicine and other professions. Of these 28% many are in position to use such a course, for at times it is necessary for them to seek employment in a retail pharmacy while waiting for an opening in their desired division.

A thorough study of the requests made of a graduate pharmacist when first entering the retail store, revealed the fact that the employer wanted not only a competent pharmacist, but preferred a man who also had a thorough business knowledge.

It is not uncommon for the owner of the store to ask the pharmacist during the first week he is employed to change the display in the window. If he is not in

* Section on Commercial Interests, A. PH. A., Miami meeting, 1931.

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position to do this it is necessary for the employer to require this service of one of his other employees or do the work himself. In most cases the inability to make a display disappoints the employer. It is true, the young man can say that he was employed as a pharmacist not a window trimmer, but nevertheless in this particular period and especially during this time of depression the average drug store is endeavoring to conserve expenditures in every way possible.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century when every drug store was doing a satisfactory amount of prescription work, the art of window decorating was just in its embryo stage. The pharmacist at that time used his windows to display some of his highly colored liquid preparations and his odoriferous and curious drugs.

As the modern windows developed, the pharmacist was forced to bring his displays up to the standards of the time. If you will study a city with a population of 10,000, you will notice that the dry goods merchant, the clothing merchant and, in some instances, the shoe dealer has a display man whose duty it is to devote his entire time to displaying the stock in such a manner that they attract the attention of the passerby and stimulate the desire to purchase.

It is to be regretted that one line of products which rightfully belongs in the drug store is to-day being sold by many of the dry goods and general merchandise stores; namely, cosmetics. In this product the druggist is up against a real problem when it comes to the display of the articles. The dry goods merchant, employing a man who is trained in the principles of display, attracts attention of prospective customers to his window. The pharmacist on the corner may be a man who has had scientific training with a scientific knowledge of cosmetics and is in position to give advice as to their uses, but his sales fall off because he does not have the ability to display merchandise in a manner which attracts the passing public.

Another reason why I feel that such a course should be taught in a college of pharmacy is that the pharmacist, if he is to maintain his standing on a par with other business men of his city, must be able to show his merchandise in an attractive manner and add prestige to his store.

Approximately 50% of the students who come to us have had some training in store work, not always in a drug store. If they have had such training before coming to school, they will endeavor to use that experience in their merchandise displays, when they get back into business.

There are no definite rules applicable to pharmacy displays which are not applicable to other lines, but there is a background in drug store displays which does not obtain in other types of business. For example, the window display material which the National Wholesale Druggist Association is supplying has a background and a far-reaching effect which other lines of business cannot make use of.

Recently, I inquired of a wholesale druggist of our state how the retail pharmacies were reacting toward the maps and other material so generously furnished by the Association. I was very much surprised when he stated that when they first came out his company had aimed to send a map to every retail pharmacy, but now they bought only about a hundred and all of these were not required. This goes to prove that if these men, who are in retail pharmacy, had the training and proper attitude toward their profession they would accept of the opportunity and use this material. If the larger companies deem it a valuable asset to the extent that

they feel justified in employing a specialist in this work, surely the pharmacist should know the basic principles of window display.

A specialty company offered to pay a druggist in a city of about 50,000, a sum equal to his rent for the use of one of his windows and a front display case in his store. Were the windows of this drug store valuable? Yes, but the druggist had no conception of their value until this offer was made to him.

You might well ask the question, will these men, who are taking this course, do any more in the way of window display than the men who have not had it? That question I cannot answer at this time, since we have only taught the course for two years. Some of our students have entered pictures of their windows in several national contests and others have submitted pictures of their National Pharmacy Week displays to the pharmaceutical journals.

We must admit that in the average retail pharmacy of to-day it is necessary for the pharmacist to be a merchandiser as well as a professional man, and window displays are one of the best and most reliable means for increasing his sales. If graduates in pharmacy have an inferiority complex toward their competitor in the field of merchandising they will realize that they lack something in their training, which the competitor has obtained.

You might ask, what value will a man receive from this course who is going to engage in professional pharmacy? I can cite only one example—a graduate of our College was in my office recently and commented on the display which we had installed in our model window; he is the owner of a successful prescription pharmacy and remarked that he would like to know a little about the arrangement of merchandise and the proper method of display. In reply to my query as to the value that would be to him, he said, "We have a display case in our waiting room in which we keep a display of rubber goods and other sick-room supplies and it is impossible for me to arrange that case in a manner which is attractive so that it will sell merchandise. Furthermore from time to time I try to display some of the products which we manufacture in our laboratory and I am at a loss to display these in an attractive manner."

There is a possibility that some might raise an objection to making this a required course. Although many of our students intend to enter a laboratory, they may be called upon to do service in a retail pharmacy or, perhaps, some day do this type of work in their own store. The average college student on entering pharmacy as a freshman does not know definitely which division of the work his inclinations will follow. The benefits of this course would be of no hindrance to a laboratory man, and the chances are that he may have some use for such work in the display of some of the laboratory products.

The duty of a college of pharmacy is to train men and women in the science and art of preparing, compounding and dispensing medicine. All colleges have endeavored to fulfil this duty, but the demands on the pharmacist have increased and he must now be a business man as well as a professional man, and the courses of the colleges of pharmacy should be arranged accordingly.

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