

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 will also 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.

ADVERTISING AND SELLING PROBLEMS IN DRUG STORES.

Store Layout and Arrangement—Concluded.

BY PAUL C. OLSEN.

Retail pharmacists have many legitimate complaints to make about the conditions and problems they are compelled to meet. One of the most unusual complaints I ever heard, however, from a retail druggist was one expressed to me by the proprietor of a southern Indiana drug store.

I had asked him if he had had any experience in his store with a display table featuring first-aid supplies. This was his answer.

"Yes sir, I had one of those displays right in the middle of that floor space you see there for two weeks and finally I had to give it up. You know I had to spend fifteen minutes to half an hour every morning right after the store opened, straightening up the goods on that table and looking up merchandise to put out to replace what had been sold!"

I suppose this druggist is better off without such a display and its daily interruption of the tranquility of his morning routine. Incidentally, I suspect, the major part of his morning routine consisted of a thorough reading of the Indianapolis morning paper and then a sidewalk conference with the hardware merchant next door. The invariable upshot of these sidewalk conferences, I am sure, is an agreement that the local people don't appreciate the hometown merchants and are going to Indianapolis in steadily increasing numbers to do their shopping.

The druggist expressed in reverse English a principle which is well known to all successful merchants. Displays, if they are at all successful, will sell merchandise. Careless customers, too, will upset displays and thus handicap their selling power. All this means that the store proprietor must exercise, through the day, constant care and watchfulness to see that his displays are well arranged and in order.

Disorderliness and a lack of care and arrangement become apparent more quickly in the case of some displays than is the case with other displays. This danger of lost sales and profits is present, however, in all types of displays. It just is a little more apparent in the case of some.

Harvey P. Frank told me, for instance, that in a drug store in Florida which he managed soap would sell steadily and in large volume when displayed in a wire

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