

pounded. That's when the related characteristics of tact and courtesy are especially important. The skilful salesman deftly switches the conversation in a way which leaves the talkative person pleased and satisfied and the salesman free to do his work.

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### OUR BEST CUSTOMER—BABY.\*

BY SAMUEL KRONE.

Isn't it true? It would indeed surprise you to check the amount of money invested in baby merchandise.

Even in depression and unemployment, when every necessity is considered a luxury, baby's needs come first. He is the druggist's most consistent and exacting patron.

What are we doing to make this business one of our features and specialties? Except for an occasional display in a window, a table or so, a few leading items at cut prices, the baby goods are spread out all over the store. The rubber sundries one place, foods in another, bottles somewhere else and specialty items in the rear.

The modern mother demands the best for her baby. She has her doctor but cannot go to him every day and for each little thing. There can be some one there—the neighborhood druggist.

Why not be a headquarters for the baby? The mother must go somewhere for her needs and it may as well be you.

Secure pamphlets from the Labor Department, state and local health authorities on the care of the infant from birth up to three years of age.

Become familiar with all the needs, symptoms, and in every way each step of the baby's growth. Teach your clerk to speak intelligently on this subject. Secure additional information from your favorite physician. Give this advice freely and with authority, and let the people know about it.

Reserve a complete section of your store exclusively for baby merchandise. Add many items not usually carried, such as bibs, layettes and summer suits and scales.

Have everything marked plainly and be ready to answer questions on any of the merchandise offered.

Keep your stock fresh, return all old foods for exchange, and complete the atmosphere with pictures of prize babies.

Once a year have three or four drug stores run a baby show for the neighborhood. With each dollar of baby goods purchased a free entry is given. Have your known local baby specialist take charge. It means added publicity and the cost will be reasonable. The writer will gladly demonstrate the success of this plan.

Issue prizes and print the photos of the winning infants in the local paper. Have photographs of leading contestants in your window.

Department and furniture houses do these things successfully; why not the druggist? He is certainly entitled to the business, if he will only go after it.

"A baby drug store" will mean more professional respect, added confidence and a business that cut prices cannot even touch. It is a good business. The

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\* Section on Commercial Interests, A. P. H. A., Miami meeting, 1931.

druggist needs it. A little coöperation or else he can do it alone. The writer can go into further details with those who are interested. Eventually a good baby business means a good prescription business. A good prescription business is the foundation of a good living and professional attainment for the proprietor-pharmacist. It means a real service to his community. Let others cut prices and worry about sundries and consignments.

Become "a baby druggist." It pays.

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#### CONSERVATION OF DRUG STORE ASSETS.\*

One plan to render assistance to a merchant in conserving the capital in his business is to provide for his consideration the methods and practices utilized by successful merchants. Quite a different plan is to set forth the inefficient methods used by unsuccessful merchants. A knowledge of the wrong way to operate a business is perhaps just as important as knowing the right way. A few, of course, fail because of conditions over which they have no control. In general, however, it may be said that most business failures lack the necessary knowledge to make a success and when analyzed disclose the incompetent manner in which they functioned.

The experiences of a failed druggist can be turned to profit only when the causes thereof have been investigated, and the results applied. As soon as a merchant fails a new man with new capital seems always available to step in and try his fortune. In the past no lesson has been drawn from the accumulated experiences of the vast number of failures that have taken place, because in the majority of cases, the system of elimination has been such as to preclude outsiders from learning the causes of failure. In the report just released by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce on "Causes of Failure among Drug Stores," one of the purposes has been to set forth the experiences of the druggists who failed. Prevention of failure to some extent, another objective of the study, can come through a system of general education through dissemination of the experiences of others in reports in the press and schools.

Another purpose of this record of business failures is to indicate the deadly effects of administering to a weak and poorly managed business an overdose of credit. Factual data in the report indicates that the liberality of some creditors was a primary cause of failure, for the majority of these druggists should never have been encouraged to enter business.

There are undoubtedly many individuals engaged in business to-day who are not fitted by training, experience or ability to manage a business successfully. Unfortunately, it is not generally recognized how difficult it is to make a success of a retail store to-day. Many a business venturer, it would seem, little realizes or appreciates the necessary requisites for success. With only an optimistic expectation of profits, many enter business through the assistance of credulous and liberal creditors. These venturers apparently have an utter disregard of the risk of failure, difficulties to be encountered, and the capital required. In other words, they lack

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\* An address by Victor Sadd, in Charge of Business Failures Studies, Department of Commerce, before The Drug Store Survey Conference, St. Louis, Missouri, April 26, 1932.