

Section on Commercial Interests

Papers Presented at the Fifty-Ninth Convention

THE SHOW WINDOW AS AN ASSET.

B. E. PRITCHARD.

In my home city there is a firm engaged in the business of drug merchandizing in a retail way, but in a rather strikingly wholesale manner. This concern occupies store rooms on seven of the most prominent thoroughfares, and its annual rentals mount into figures that sound somewhat startling to a retail druggist. I have exact knowledge only as to the rental paid for three of these locations, and feel that the other four will measure up proportionately.

These that I quote run, respectively, \$12,000, \$10,000 \$6,000. This firm believes in and practices advertising in a large way. Newspaper space and large, attractively painted sign boards, located at prominent points throughout the city and its environments, it uses constantly. This matter of publicity is rarely used, however, in a manner to cause demoralization. At one time in my official capacity, in company with other officers of our local organization, we interviewed the manager of this concern with reference to securing his co-operation in the maintenance of a fair schedule of prices and reasonable methods in the competition for business, in which it is a pleasure to say we were successful, and thus this strong chain of seven big stores continues to this day to help maintain good conditions and to play fair with the smaller stores, to an extent that is very gratifying, considering the possibilities within the power of such large buying capacity.

While, as has been mentioned, this concern practices the science of advertising in a large way in its campaigning for business, it depends mostly for returns upon the proper use of its show window displays. The firm employs an expert display artist, Mr. Wm. T. Gwyer, who, after the manner of most men who thoroughly know their value in any line of endeavor, is modest, quiet and thoughtful in demeanor. It has been my good fortune to have for some time enjoyed the acquaintance with this man, and to have at times conversed with him concerning his methods, and in this paper it is my purpose to draw largely upon the information obtained during interviews upon the subject here being treated.

Before entering upon this field of information, however, permit me to explain that Mr. Gwyer does not personally do the actual work of trimming his windows, no more than does an architect with his own hands put into material form the structure that he designs.

The windows, as well as the very large number of show cases used in the seven stores that are under his care, are all arranged by a corps of helpers, the

members of which work from designs originated by this artist in his studio, and the sketches for each individual window or case are worked out by his hand with pen, pencil and brush. When the work is completed and approved the designer takes a flash light picture of the display which he carefully dates and notes the nature of the article or articles used therein, this information and picture are then filed in a portfolio. While any display is on, a record is kept of results in the matter of sales during its life, which is made a part of the information accompanying the picture. Thus the drawing power of every display ever made and its selling value is accurately known, which forms a most valuable source from which to draw inspiration for future displays.

Mr. Gwyer contends that it is quite as necessary to use the windows, the awnings, and, in short, the outside as well as the inside of the store as it is to use good newspaper copy. Although newspaper space is costly and most of your advertising appropriation must go that way, it does not follow that the best advertising is confined to newspapers, as a matter of fact we consider our window space of even greater value as an advertising medium.

The selling force of a good window trim is often overlooked. Almost any form of advertising will show results, but window advertising is the least expensive and the results are almost immediate. It arrests the attention of the passer by as no other form of advertising can, and it is but a step into the store while the desire to purchase is still fresh in mind. The merchant who wisely uses his windows brings into his store the possible purchaser of a commodity that has been widely advertised in magazines and newspapers, and the window acts as the proper connecting link between newspaper and store.

Some druggists, I know, look upon their windows as a sort of nuisance, and under such a condition the passer by who looks into them is led to agree with that view. Men are usually judged by the clothes they wear; the drug store is, in like manner, sized up by the condition of its show windows.

As a rule window trims should not remain unchanged more than one week. The fewer the windows the oftener the display should be changed. Every trim should have an appropriate show card, or a number of them. Signs should at all times be accompanied with price quotations. A display of any sort of goods in a show window without business-like looking price tickets is like making bread without yeast, it fails to raise the "dough" (this latter quaint remark, parenthetically, shows that our friend Gwyer, like most quiet fellows, has a sense of humor in his make up).

Keeping forever at it, week in week out, applies to window displays just as it does to newspaper advertising. To paraphrase an old maxim, "Eternal advertising is the price of success in modern merchandising."

If a window display does not draw it should be taken out after two days. If it does draw it should be allowed to remain three days. There is nothing like teasing the public, Mr. Gwyer thinks, and it is infinitely better to come again with a successful window than to keep at it until it grows stale.

If a special sale of an article is to be featured in the window Friday is the best day on which to spring it, for reason that it is usually a dull day in almost every community, therefore the best time to make a special bid for business. The policy of putting on display certain goods to be sold at a special price two or

three days later has proven unwise—now is the accepted time—seen today it may be forgotten tomorrow. Failure to appreciate the value of their window, so prevalent among druggists, Mr. Gwyer classifies as almost a crime.

THE DRUG STORE CRISIS.

CHAS. M. FORD, PH. G.

It is not the purpose in this paper to sound the alarm of some new danger that threatens the members of our craft or to announce any newly arrived condition. Rather, to call attention to what is the common knowledge of all the dispensing pharmacists of the country and see if we are doing individually and collectively our full duty in meeting those conditions, which are thrust upon us by a revolution in medical practice.

This revolution is so fixed and widespread that even the general public have observed it and are a part of it, as much as pharmacists and physicians.

This writer, since his retirement from active business about a year ago, has enjoyed a more advantageous viewpoint than is afforded from a position back of the prescription case.

The aforesaid viewpoint was made even more advantageous when, two months ago, the Colorado State Board of Health created the office of state drug inspector and conferred the same upon this wandering pharmacist.

In the brief period that has elapsed since entering upon the state's pay roll it has not been possible to look in upon all my fellow pharmacists of the city of Denver.

Fifty such official visits have been made to as many different stores and a few facts gathered from each visit are herewith laid before you.

There are, all told, 181 stores in Denver.

The fifty here reported are not all in one section but from different sections of the city, so as not to impair the average.

In the fifty stores, 211 persons are employed, including proprietors actively engaged and help of all kinds. Of these 211 persons, 84 are registered pharmacists. There are 307 new prescriptions dispensed daily.

We have one firm operating several stores in the center of the city, who dispense about 200 prescriptions daily. This firm should obviously be excluded from any calculations to show average conditions.

The 307 prescriptions now dispensed at fifty stores could easily be dispensed at ten stores without any of the remaining forty stores suffering any material loss. In fact the apparent sacrifice might, to each of them be a gain, if an effort were made to secure business from other undeveloped sources.

For instance, assuming that about 250 families are tributary to each store and the wants of these families in such articles strictly appropriate for druggists to handle were carefully considered the drug store might become a much more useful institution in the community than the present so-called prescription pharmacy, which is such only in name and disappointed hopes.