

section describes the different methods for the determining of the advertising appropriation and gives some of their advantages and disadvantages.

The second part of this thesis takes up and discusses advertisements appearing in magazines within the past twenty-five years. The purpose was to compare the advertising of, say, twenty-five years ago with that of the present time.

At first difficulty was encountered in the finding of old advertisements, as the many volumes of old magazines inspected were bound without the advertisements. Finally access to the library of the Curtis Publishing Company was obtained where fully bound volumes of the *Saturday Evening Post* with the advertisements were found. Most of the work was confined, therefore, to this one magazine as a very fair representative of what advertising is or should be. The investigation was limited to toilet articles and sundries.

As far as has been investigated it must be truthfully said that advertising has greatly advanced and will continue to advance even further. This is especially true of the working up of color in advertisements and in the printing of more elaborate advertisements; they have changed very little in the actual wording and statement of facts. It is true that some advertisements occupy a larger space than formerly but this is due to the fact that company advertising has grown.

The last few pages of the thesis is made up entirely of a description of actual advertisements selected from magazines. (Advertisements were shown by the author.)

PROFESSIONALIZING COMMERCIALISM.*

BY ROBERT J. RUTH.

Pharmacy is a profession. I make the statement without reservations. If a pharmacist practices pharmacy, then surely he is practicing a profession. The very nature of his work makes this true. If two-thirds of his time is devoted to commercial store-keeping and one-third to the practice of pharmacy, the situation is not altered—he is still a professional man, practicing his profession. If a physician sits in his broker's office all morning manipulating his capital on the stock market, plays golf all afternoon and has office hours in the evening, it does not make him one-third a professional man, nor the practice of medicine one-third a profession. Even if Dr. Charter's survey had not resulted in the substantiation of my statement, I would defy anyone to refute that the unadulterated practice of pharmacy could be classed as other than professional practice.

It follows then that the pharmacist is a professional man, even though he may be surrounded by an atmosphere distinctly commercial in all of the scenes familiar to his patrons, in which he appears in the title rôle. The public is rarely privileged to see the pharmacist when he is engaged in the pursuit of his professional duties. Those who enter his store know, if they think about it, that he is engaged in mysterious and highly scientific practice behind the "no admittance" sign leading to his laboratory, but they devote little time to such speculation, as they are busily engaged in viewing the post cards on the rack, perusing the magazines, or in smelling, in turn, the fragrant perfumes, highly scented soaps and other toilet

* Read before Section on Commercial Interests, A. P. H. A., Philadelphia meeting, 1926.

accessories. In the meantime, the pharmacist is weighing a highly potent medicinal substance upon a delicate balance—tritulating with mortar and pestle, or perhaps compounding some more than ordinarily interesting prescription involving chemical decomposition and recombination—resulting in a beautifully finished product which delights his soul. By this time the patient has tired of his exploration “out front” and impatiently gives himself over to mental interrogation as to the pharmacist’s ability to read properly the prescription or fill it without error.

On the other hand, while the patient was in the physician’s office prior to coming to the drug store, he watched the physician take his temperature, pulse and blood pressure—answered various and sundry questions and was highly entertained and mightily impressed by the whole procedure. Thus is the pharmacist placed at a disadvantage, and the plate glass partitions which some drug stores have installed to replace the non-transparent prescription cases commonly in vogue, have a strong argument in their favor, as they are instrumental in permitting the patient to watch the pharmacist engaged in his professional duties, and in this manner is the patient entertained and probably impressed by the startling revelation that his “druggist is more than a merchant.”

If the pharmacists of America were permitted to choose between professional pharmacy and commercial pharmacy for their stores, the net income to be equal in either case, I’m sure that nearly one hundred per cent of them would indicate their preference for professional pharmacy—although I am not unmindful of the lure of commercial pharmacy, especially as much of the merchandise is of such an attractive nature—beautiful perfumizers, handsome stationery, fragrant domestic and imported perfumes, bristle goods of the most excellent quality and hundreds of other equally pleasing items which it is interesting to select when buying, fascinating to display and pleasurable to sell.

However, in the great majority of cases, the pharmacist finds himself without the opportunity of choosing. An individual named *Overhead* has chosen for him, and this party is becoming more authoritative every day, so that if the pharmacist wishes to conduct a conveniently located, ground-floor establishment, catering to the many wants of his patrons and giving them the valuable pharmaceutical service which he is qualified for and which is indispensable to his patrons, he finds himself confronted with an overhead so great that he is compelled to largely meet it by adding a great many lines of merchandise to his stock. In other words, he is giving the same great service in the interests of the conservation and protection of the nation’s health and he has made this possible by resorting to so-called commercial pharmacy. The pharmacist has had this situation forced upon him and he has accepted it somewhat grudgingly. Whatever has been his status in the past—whatever it may be in the future—the fact remains that this is the condition of affairs to-day. And so he resents the fact that he is often considered but a semi-professional man and he has eagerly accepted the opportunity to tell the public, through the medium of “National Pharmacy Week,” just what his qualifications are and what he is capable of accomplishing in assisting in public health work. He hopes for a more sympathetic understanding of his problems, and that the public will be less apathetic, if not openly hostile, to proposed protective legislation in the interests of his status and the public health.

Sometime ago he adopted the slogan, "Your Druggist Is More Than a Merchant," which implies that he really is a merchant, and something else.

It is not a disgrace to be a merchant, as long as he must admit that he is one part of the time; especially, if he glorifies his position as a merchant, and it seems to me that in making the very most out of commercial pharmacy lies his opportunity to elevate his entire status. In other words, by *professionalizing commercialism* he can make commercial pharmacy the very highest type of commercial business existent.

Just the other day while I was in a drug store, three customers came in. The proprietor was alone in the store and so he waited on all three of the customers. One laid down a dime and said, "Could I have two nickels, please, to use the phone?" The proprietor made the change reluctantly, showing his apparent disapproval of having to make change and throwing the two nickels on the case without a word, turned to the next customer who asked for a fountain beverage. The proprietor said, "Large or small?" whereupon the customer answered, "Small." The proprietor plainly showed his disgust that the customer should spend only five cents instead of ten cents and he said not a "thank you" or anything else to the customer, but his entire manner was churlish and disagreeable. I do not blame the customer at all for ordering the small glass instead of a large one. I don't know who originated the large ones, but they never taste as well and the drink is too big and I don't care for them any more than this particular customer evidently did.

The proprietor turned to the third customer, who asked for a pound of absorbent cotton. The proprietor brought out a dirty, ragged, undusted package which he wrapped up dust and all, and turned a miserably wrapped, untidy package over to the customer, made change and allowed the customer to go out of the store without receiving a "thank you" or a "good day." Furthermore, I know that all three of the customers noticed the discourteous attitude of the proprietor and I doubt if they were impressed by his uncivil treatment that that druggist is more than a merchant. He isn't even a good merchant.

The bankers have taken a business, which in the centuries past was looked down upon as a Shylock money-lending occupation, and through new methods applied, splendid service rendered, utmost courtesy practiced and beautiful banking houses erected, they have so glorified their calling and embellished their business quarters that they have created the respect and admiration of the public. One might say that they have professionalized their business.

Although the practice of law is about seventy-five per cent devoted to pure business, such as the drawing up of mortgages, deeds, bills of sale and similar instruments, the attorney is respected as a dignified, professional man. So it would seem that the mere commercializing of the drug store need not rob the pharmacist of his dignified, professional standing.

To professionalize commercialism as applied to commercial pharmacy and thereby create a dignified impression, there are many things necessary to consider.

The drug store should be immaculately clean and attractive. The windows and show cases should be brightly polished, and dust, dead flies and other unsightly and inexcusable detractions should be conspicuous for their absence.

Not only should the floor be kept clean, but some attention should be paid to the walls and ceiling which often show an accumulation of spider webs and col-

lected dust. Old, discolored, dusty, tipped-over cut outs left above the fixtures are not only unsightly, but they lend an atmosphere of carelessness and untidiness to the entire establishment.

The stock should be kept well dusted and attractively displayed and orderly in arrangement. Adherence to these rules will often sell merchandise by pleasing the eye of the prospective customer and creating a desire to purchase.

It should be a rule that employees present a clean and neat appearance. They should refrain from loud talk and deportment unbecoming to a dignified establishment. Deference and respect should be shown upon the part of all lesser employees to the registered pharmacists. The proprietor should insist upon this if he would infer that the druggist is more than a merchant. The employees should appear well-groomed, and there should be an absence of dirty finger nails and grimy white coats.

Pleasantness should be substituted for surliness * * * Attention for inattention * * * The employees should meet customers courteously and show a polite interest in their wants, which need not in any way indicate servility.

Proprietors should take a keener interest in the schooling of employees, and a stricter adherence to the old system of apprentices in drug stores would have a vastly beneficial effect upon pharmacy, especially if the proprietors would attempt to instill the traditions of pharmacy into the plastic minds of their young embryo pharmacists. It should be the object of every employee to make of his junior clerks, highly trained and efficient pharmacists.

Proprietors should not be overcome with all of the talk they hear about relative sales, suggestive sales, multiple sales, etc. The good salesman will use tact and diplomacy and he will know when to suggest and when not to—just what to suggest, if he does suggest, and how far to carry it, and he will not take pride in selling six items to the timid soul who came in to the store for one item, and who spends a great deal more than he wanted to for things which he probably does not need—for he will nurse a smouldering hatred for the salesman and the entire establishment and firmly resolve to stay away from the place in the future. A good salesman is not just merely one who can sell merchandise—he must go farther than that. He must have a keen sense of perception and not only make the sale but he must sell himself and create trust and good will and send his customer away with the satisfied feeling of having been well treated, and with a full confidence in his purchase—glad that he made the transaction.

The pharmacist should be reluctant to add to his stock certain items or lines of merchandise entirely unsuited to the drug store. He must study his patrons and judge what will not offend them in their selection of his pharmacy for their needs of the things which form the entire backbone of his business.

There are certain lines of merchandise which have always been naturally classed as drug-store merchandise, and I often have observed that many stores are so set upon selling alarm clocks, dolls and a thousand and one "flyers" which are not directly related to the drug store, that in so doing they neglect the opportunity to sell more tooth brushes, hot water bottles, abdominal supporters, trusses, crutches, ankle braces, male and female rubber urinals, elastic hosiery, sick-room supplies and hundreds of similar items which are definitely related to the drug store and which can be sold more profitably and with a better grace.

Perhaps some pharmacists will question the above statement and argue that the average drug store will not sell one male or female rubber urinal in a year, or a half-dozen pair of crutches, but I am talking from having had experience in merchandising just such items. Many a sufferer lives in distress for years because he does not know that such a device as a rubber urinal exists, because he has never seen or heard of one. If he does have one, it was probably purchased at a physician's supply house. A miscellaneous window of sick-room supplies, elastic hosiery, elastic bandages, rubber urinals, trusses, crutches and similar items, will in the majority of cases pay a larger net profit than a window devoted to merchandise unrelated to the drug store.

And so by observing rules of cleanliness, courtesy and conduct, making the drug store the most attractive of all mercantile establishments, the service the most pleasant and efficient and intelligent—the pharmacist can truly professionalize commercialism, and the public will know that its druggist is more than a merchant—yes, even in his merchandising.

Don't criticize the colleges of pharmacy for turning out graduates who do not meet your store requirements. Don't forget that these boys must have several years of practical experience in the drug store before they may take the State Board examinations. They get those years of practical experience with you in your stores, and not in the colleges. Take a greater interest in your apprentices.

The colleges of pharmacy have met the situation of the day. They realize that the great majority of drug stores must commercialize to be successful, and so in addition to the complete, splendidly rounded out professional education which they offer, they have also added courses in Business Administration which are adopted to the needs of the pharmacists.

The students are given courses in bookkeeping, salesmanship, advertising—they are taught what it is necessary for them to know concerning the various forms of insurance. They learn about the pharmacist's relation to the jobber, manufacturer and banker. They are taught that their credit is something which they should guard as a thing sacred. They see practical demonstrations on salesmanship, window dressing, store and window lighting. They learn to write and to criticize advertising. They are taught investments, and learn about stocks and bonds, notes, leases, mortgages and inventories. They get a course in business law, and are taught how to order and keep their stocks of narcotics, alcohol and liquors. In short they are taught more about business than you were. If they fail in the practical application of all that they learn at college, it is your fault, Mr. Employer, for not having given them the proper groundwork during their years of gaining practical drug-store experience.

During the year of 1925, the business done in the drug stores of the United States showed an increase of nineteen per cent, which was greater than the increase shown by any other line of retail merchandising, including department stores, five and ten cent stores, chain stores of all descriptions, and mail order houses.

It would seem that there is plenty of drug store business and that the drug business is not so bad after all. Let us protect this splendid volume of business and at the same time raise our status by professionalizing commercialism, so that all may know that the druggist is more than a merchant.