

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 also will 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.

POPULARIZING THE PREPARATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPŒIA (*continued*).

BY PAUL C. OLSEN.*

The promotion problems of proprietary preparations, as contrasted with those of the non-exclusive preparations of the United States Pharmacopœia and National Formulary, are basically different. Because of this basic difference, it is clear, I think, why some retail druggists are likely to interest themselves in promoting individual proprietaries, while others are or should be concerning themselves with the promotion of the sale of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations. This is not because of any merit or lack of merit in either group of preparations; it is simply a result of the greater appeal or practicability of one promotion plan as contrasted with the other, in so far as the situation, talents and inclinations of the druggist are concerned.

What is this basic difference?

The very nature of a proprietary preparation indicates individuality, something which is different, at least in some degree, from all other preparations. In contrast, a preparation of the United States Pharmacopœia or National Formulary is standard, regardless of the particular manufacturer who made it. It is thus apparent that the promotion problem in connection with a proprietary preparation is to get acceptance for it to meet a therapeutic need, which, perhaps, has never been met before, or for which the existing medicaments are not believed to be as effective as the proprietary.

On the other hand, the U. S. P. or N. F. preparation, by its very inclusion in these standards, shows that it already has this acceptance for the therapeutic need it is designed to fill. This means, in turn, that the problem of the individual druggist, trying to promote the sale of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations, takes the form of endeavoring to persuade professional and lay patrons to continue to buy U. S. P. and N. F. preparations. In the preceding articles in this series, I have tried to indicate in as specific a way as possible the means by which this can be done, both among professional and lay patrons.

Stated as briefly as possible, therefore, this basic difference between the promotion problems of proprietary preparations and those of the U. S. P. and N. F. is one of gaining the acceptance of new things as contrasted with promoting the continued use of that which is already accepted. In this connection, it is well to point out

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once more that the United States Pharmacopœia lists those substances and preparations, which, in the judgment of the Revision Committee, are at the present time pharmaceutical necessities and of approved therapeutic value. Similarly, the National Formulary lists those substances and preparations which have found wide acceptance and use among physicians and other professionals. The problem of promoting the continued use of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations is by no means one of trying to force the acceptance of the out-moded and the out-of-date for the U. S. P. and N. F. are both revised decennially.

These contrasting promotion problems are to be found in many other professions and industries. For instance, the manufacturer of aluminum office furniture is in a position similar to that of any manufacturer of a new proprietary. The manufacturer who makes and sells the substantial mahogany and oak office furniture which we have known and accepted so long, is similarly situated to the druggist who wants to promote the sale of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations.

Some people are more capable and talented in the pioneer type of work, designed to gain acceptance for new products. The ability of others lies in the direction of efficiently distributing and promoting the continued sale of that which already is accepted and usual. Any druggist can determine for himself, readily enough, into which group his own talents and inclinations classify him.

The really unfortunate situation is the one in which the pharmacist, who is talented in one of these classifications, does not take advantage of it. He loses opportunities for personal profit and, of course, does not give to the world the full benefit of all his talents.

I have said before these two contrasting problems exist in many professions and businesses. There are, however, special considerations which apply to-day in the field of pharmacy. As I have said in the preceding articles of this series, there are to-day many opportunities which retail druggists have to promote the continued use and acceptance of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations among their professional and lay patrons. It is unfortunate that any druggist, who could apply and profitably develop these opportunities, has not done so. The profession of pharmacy is not understood or appreciated as it should be by the general public and by many in its collateral professions. The pharmacist, therefore, who has the opportunity and talents to develop additional demands for U. S. P. and N. F. preparations, not only profits from the additional demands he creates directly for them, but also from the improved professional status which he creates at the same time for himself.

Specifically, the things to do to bring about this improved professional status and profit from additional demands for U. S. P. and N. F. preparations are the following. (This is simply a summary of the specific recommendations which I undertook to explain in detail in the preceding articles of this series.)

First, consider U. S. P. and N. F. preparations not as a group, but individually. The demand which exists or can be created for each one them varies from store to store. Furthermore some preparations are household remedies and others are used only in prescriptions, or at least under professional direction. The simplest way to determine the sales possibilities of specific household remedies, is to display them in the store and in the windows, but do not bring them into merchandise displays.

The effectiveness of displays can be increased by packaging the household

remedies as professionally as prescriptions are packaged. Sometimes, too, the effectiveness of the display is increased by well-worded display cards, giving a history of the constituents, the sources of supply, etc.

With specific preparations of the U. S. P. and N. F., which are in the professional group, promotion plans must be confined to physicians and other professional people. U. S. P. and N. F. preparations useful in the practice of an individual physician can be suggested to him tactfully and informatively from the pharmacist's own knowledge of the nature of this physician's practice. The very permanency of the pharmacist in his locality makes possible inexpensive detailing of this kind not only by personal calls upon physicians, but also in telephone conversations and upon their visits to the store.

THE RELATION OF PHARMACY TO THE PUBLIC.*

BY AMBROSE HUNSBERGER.

The radical change in pharmaceutical practice which the passing of the centuries has wrought is perhaps most strikingly evidenced in the retail field. The evolution of the latter-day pharmacist, from his prototype in the person of the humble dealer in crude drugs performing his circumscribed task of assisting the doctor of his day, to the present-day graduate with his high school education, four years' pharmaceutical experience, a pharmacy college diploma in one hand and in the other a certificate from his state pronouncing him qualified to practice, represents an advance, indeed. In proportion to the increase in his cultural attainments, the position of the pharmacist as a community factor became more important and his responsibility greater.

By virtue of the character of service which may be rendered by him, the pharmacist is brought into more frequent and intimate contact with the domestic affairs of a community than is any other single element in the social structure. Be the problem in question one concerning health, hygiene, church, politics, morals, ethics, finance, or what not, the assumption is a fair one that at one stage or another in its solution you will find that the pharmacist is consulted.

The duties involved in fulfilling his obligation are exacting and the responsibilities grave. There is no middle course along which to steer. Complying with all the requirements concerning licensure, registration, permits, etc., constitutes a primary detail of preparation. Then must be provided an establishment properly equipped with official records and formularies, journals, apparatus, stock, and competently manned. Supplies must be provided in sufficient variety to meet without delay emergency calls for any one of many thousands of medicinal substances, surgical aids or hygienic devices. Proper storage facilities must be available for the protection of articles susceptible of deterioration through exposure or age. Care must be exercised in the purchase and manufacture of preparations in order that the official standard of quality may be maintained. An alert and ready force of competent assistants to meet any demands upon these resources must be on duty during many hours of each day. Constant vigilance in the field

* Closing remarks of a Public Health Talk before Philadelphia County Medical Society.