

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.

IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONAL STANDING OF A DRUG STORE.

BY PAUL C. OLSEN.

SOME OF THE INFLUENCING FACTORS.

1. *A Clean Store.*—Cleanliness in the external appearance of a drug store has a tendency to make people think that the prescription-filling activities are carried on with similar care. This impression is created both with professional and with lay patrons. How many physicians would direct their patients to take prescriptions to a drug store in which they knew that prescription utensils and ware, if washed at all, were washed in cold water?

2. *A Drug Store Atmosphere.*—A store which is instantly recognizable as a pharmacy is the type of drug store to which people like to take prescriptions and to which professional people like to refer their patrons. This means, in turn, that the departments and side lines must not be so predominant that the character of the store as a pharmacy is overshadowed.

3. *Superior Soda Fountain Service.*—The connection of superior soda fountain service with the professional standing of a drug store is often not understood or is misunderstood by drug store proprietors. But customers have a habit of thinking that if quality and service are extraordinarily good at the fountain and they see that scrupulous care is exercised there, similar superior quality service and scrupulous care likely obtains in all departments of the store.

4. *Alert Intelligent Telephone Order Service.*—Most of the professional services rendered by a pharmacy are to professional people and to their patients, usually patients who are not in health. This frequently means that such customers are not in a position to come to the store. A telephoned request to call at a patient's home for a prescription is one result of this service. Still another and more frequent one is the telephoned prescription from the physician himself. Certainly a pharmacist must be alert and understanding to properly transcribe and fill these telephone orders in a way which will inspire confidence in his professional understanding and ability.

5. *Prompt Efficient Delivery Service.*—A necessary concomitant of alert intelligent telephone service is a delivery service of similar quality. A prescription which is promised at 8:00 P. M. and delivered at 9:30 P. M. not only may seriously affect the patient but, even if this is not the case, it certainly does not enhance the store's reputation for dependable service.

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6. *Discouragement of Undesirable Attempts at Self-Medication.*—No pharmacy can hope to win the confidence of physicians and other professional people if the store is full of displays and signs urging the self use of medicaments which professional judgment dictates should not be employed without medical direction.

7. *Suitable Prescription Room Equipment and Supplies.*—Many of the pharmacies with the largest volume of prescriptions make a feature of the open prescription room so that all people visiting the store can see the skill, care and precision with which prescriptions are filled. While in a pharmacy with a concealed prescription department, deficiencies in prescription equipment are not likely to be evident to customers coming to the store, there is usually no way to conceal these deficiencies from visiting physicians. A physician will not be favorably impressed by a "hole-in-the wall" prescription room with a soiled iron sink, neglected balances, apparatus and utensils and a disordered array of prescription ingredients.

No physician needs to be reminded that the potency of a number of important preparations is affected by age, light and other influences. Carelessness in prescription room stock keeping is sure to be taken as a certain sign that all preparations used are not likely to be of standard quality and condition. Customers may be lost by one carelessly washed bottle or a soiled, smeared label.

8. *Up-to-Date Knowledge of Pharmacy and Related Sciences.*—It is only natural that physicians will hold in highest regard those pharmacists who not only impress them with their professional confidence but who also are able to discuss intelligently with them the mutual problems of medicine and pharmacy and related sciences and, from time to time, give to physicians facts about new preparations which they may consider useful in their practice.

EXCERPTS FROM PROPAGANDA ISSUED BY WISCONSIN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

"It is surely as important that your medicine be prepared by a properly qualified pharmacist, as it is to have your disease treated by a competent physician, or your house built by a master carpenter, or your children educated by experienced teachers.

"The only persons allowed to perform the responsible duty of preparing medicines for the sick, in this store, are the pharmacists who have had years of experience in this work, and are properly licensed by the State Board of Pharmacy.

"To be chosen to compound your prescriptions is to show your regard for our professional ability. May we solicit your trade on the following basis: Absolute accuracy, pure drugs, immediate attention, reasonable price, prompt deliveries, but above all, because we have prepared ourselves by years of study and training to execute the physician's orders correctly."

"That the ethical pharmacy has been and is being conducted on successful merchandising lines is becoming more and more apparent, as we see it, the successful pharmacy can no more be conducted without recourse to modern merchandising methods than can any other line of business. The present-day pharmacist is not following his vocation simply for his love of pharmacy, much as he is inspired by the humanitarian aspects of its contact with his fellowmen. He is engaged in pharmacy as a means of livelihood and in the hope that it will yield for him a competence to provide the necessities of life in his advancing years."—L. O. BRECKWOLDT, Sargent's Pharmacy, Chicago.