

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 will also 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.

ADVERTISING AND SELLING PROBLEMS IN DRUG STORES.

BY PAUL C. OLSEN.

Introduction.

The object of this series of articles is to present in a concise, convenient form facts about advertising and selling methods which can be used profitably in retail pharmacies.

To-day the bulk of the merchandise which is distributed in the drug trade reaches consumers and users through retail pharmacists. Retail pharmacies are the last steps customarily in the movement of goods from the place in which they are made or produced to the place where they are to be used or consumed.

Efficient and profitable operation of drug stores is of the greatest importance, therefore, not only to retail pharmacists but also to all others engaged in the drug trade.

There is a mass of material available upon this subject. Very excellent books upon advertising and selling problems and methods can be consulted. Useful magazine articles on these subjects are appearing constantly. Profit-making ideas in this field are to be obtained from attendance at state and national conventions, other meetings and from wholesalers and manufacturers and their representatives.

The trouble is that when a man works from eight or nine in the morning until eleven or twelve at night several days a week, he has precious little time to read books and magazines and to go to conventions and meetings. This is not a denial in the least of the great importance and high value of constant reading and frequent attendance at meetings. The facts are, however, that only a small proportion of those concerned with the advertising and selling problems of retail pharmacists do take advantage of the opportunities enumerated above to get helpful facts and useful information in this field.

This series of articles is intended to be a simple, systematic description and analysis of the advertising and selling principles and policies which can be used in building up the business of a retail pharmacist. It is written, primarily, in the interest of those who, for one reason or another, find it impossible to read all that is published on these subjects and to attend all the meetings at which these subjects are discussed.

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The purpose here is to select from the mass of facts available upon the general principles and problems of advertising and selling those which have a special usefulness in the profitable operation of retail pharmacies. Another purpose is to indicate the special peculiarities and limitations upon the use of general advertising principles and selling policies in the profitable operation of drug stores.

The responsibility which is indicated in the paragraph above is undertaken for those who, with a minimum of time and effort, want to or have to acquaint themselves with profitable advertising and selling methods.

Much of the material which is published on advertising and selling problems is incomplete or inaccurate. A person looking for help in working out advertising and selling ideas in a retail pharmacy is therefore up against two problems.

One is to find, in what time he has available for such a search, ideas which will answer practically and profitably his questions. The second problem he faces is to make a judgment upon the value of what he does find. The object of this series of articles is to survey this whole field and evaluate the ideas which are current.

Thus, with a minimum of time and effort, one can become acquainted with the advertising and selling principles and policies which can be used in building up the business of a retail pharmacy and, at the same time, assure oneself that what is read is correct and in accordance with the best practice. To my knowledge no such effort as this has ever been made before.

Questions and suggestions from readers are particularly welcome. The value of a series of articles such as this depends to the greatest extent upon the practical use which readers can make of the principles and policies set down here.

The following is a list of the general topics to be included in this series of articles:

1. How to determine the potential value of a location. Factors which affect favorably or adversely of a drug store location.
2. Determining how much and what stock to carry. Deciding what to do about cut prices and other price problems.
3. Store lay-out and arrangement. Making a floor plan. Deciding what fixtures and equipment to use.
4. What kinds of displays attract and hold the most attention and make the most sales.
5. Arranging displays to have the greatest selling power.
6. Equipment for displays. Fixtures, decorations, lighting.
7. Bringing in business with advertising: Newspapers, neighborhood papers, programs, electric signs, billboards, street car and bus cards, novelties and samples.
8. Effective appeals in drug store advertising.
9. Getting the biggest returns from letters.
10. Planning advertising campaigns and special selling efforts.
11. Success in personal salesmanship. Elements of the sale. Types and classes of customers.
12. Management of the sales people. Getting their interest and best efforts.