

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 OF DRUG STORES.

DIRECT ADVERTISING.

BY PAUL C. OLSEN.

Direct advertising includes a variety of media. When advertisements are sent by mail by a drug store, they may be in the form of letters, postal cards, booklets, folders and even magazines or newspapers published in the interest of the store.

The same forms of direct advertising can be distributed from house to house, or they can be handed to customers when they come in the store. Another form of direct advertising frequently used by drug stores is through samples, novelties, literature, booklets, blotters, etc. A pharmacy cannot afford to use literature that misinforms, or samples that bring the establishment into a class beneath that desired by the owner.

As is the case with newspaper advertising, the advantages and limitations of which were described in the preceding article in this series, effective direct advertising is prompt in the results it produces. Wrap, for instance, a sample tube of cold cream with each purchase by a woman customer. If the product is a meritorious and appealing one, and none other should be used, the pharmacist soon begins to receive calls for larger quantities of the cold cream. Similarly, a letter is sent to physicians in the neighborhood of the store saying that it now has on hand an ampul that has been given publicity in medical publications. Almost immediately, orders begin to be received by the druggist for this ampul.

A second advantage of direct advertising is its flexibility. Much is written and said, for instance, about the waste of sampling. When samples are passed over the counter of a pharmacy it is not a very difficult matter to confine their distribution to the customers who appear to be most likely to make purchases of the product being sampled. It is much easier to do this than is the case, for instance, when coupons from newspaper and other periodical advertisements are presented at the store to be exchanged for samples.

The flexibility of direct advertising permits special advertisements to be sent to different kinds of customers. Physicians receive one kind, dentists another, and veterinarians and nurses still other forms. When direct advertising is used, special advertisements can be written and their distribution confined to mothers

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