

HINTS ON PUSHING CHRISTMAS TRADE

By Arthur Conrad.

AFTER all is said and done it is the period between now and December 25, that is the bookseller and stationer's harvest-time. His stock is one that is peculiarly suited to the demands of the holiday shopper. His store is always the centre of attraction during the rush weeks, preceding Christmas, or, if it is not, it should be. Bearing this in mind, a few suggestions on how to make the most of this period, should not come amiss.

At this late date, it is hardly in order to make much comment on the character or extent of the stock. Doubtless the bulk of the Christmas goods have been received, or, at least, have been ordered and it is now too late to give much advice on this phase of the problem. Still, it is never too late to repair an omission and it would be as well for dealers to make a careful study of their stock and see that each department is fully equipped.

Are You Fully Stocked?

The first item, then, is to examine the stock carefully and find out, in the light of the experience of previous years, if there is a sufficient supply of each particular article likely to be in demand. Dealers all know that they are liable to shortages, which they regret after the season is over.

Particular care should be taken to have a good supply of Christmas and New Year post cards, as it is evident that there will be a big run in this line this year. Calendars and Christmas cards are also assured of an excellent sale. Holiday papeteries appeal to a great many people and the beauty of this year's designs will render them particularly suited for gift-purposes.

Is Your System Arranged?

If it be too late to say much about stock, it is certainly not too late to refer to system. An immense amount of the success of the season's business will depend on the adoption of a sound system. Dealers all know, when they look back at their earlier experiences, that an absence of fore-thought, which is only another name for system, has hampered their actions and diminished their profits. If they would be guided by the dictates of their own common-sense, they would utilize the comparative calm of November to work out a plan of campaign, which would relieve their minds of much worry and keep things moving smoothly in December.

About Handling Goods.

Some importance should be attached to the handling of goods. Many dealers are careful up to a certain point. They pay a great deal of attention to the sale of goods but, once an article has been sold, it seems to lose interest to them. It is bundled up carelessly and sent to the purchaser's residence in a don't-care manner. This is a big mistake. Arrangements should be made early for a tasty and careful handling of goods sold. Something a little nicer than the ordinary wrapping-paper, something a little neater than twine, will give an air of distinction to a parcel, that will in time pay a dividend to the merchant, who adopts this plan. Little holly seals or address labels decorated with holly, are also very pleasing and will tend to show purchasers that you have a care for their purchases.

A Programme of Window Display.

A second piece of advice is to arrange a programme for window displays. The frequency with which changes should occur depends on circumstances. With a large stock to draw from, plenty of help at hand and good display facilities, daily changes may be possible, but this is not often the case. The average dealer can only aim at semi-weekly changes, or even weekly changes. The point is that the changes must be made with regularity and in a progression towards a climax about December 20. The dealer should aim during the period selected to bring before the public eye, every item in his Christmas stock. Here is a time-table which may be found useful:

Date.	Right Window.	Left Window.
November 19	Calendars and Gift Books.	Writing Sets and Papeteries.
" 22	Leather Goods.	Toys and Games.
" 25	Xmas Cards and Albums.	General Fancy Goods.
" 28	Pictures and Xmas Magazines.	Playing Cards and Games.
December 1	Sets of Books, Prayer books, etc.	China and Glassware.
" 3	Picture Post Cards and Albums.	Leather Goods.
" 6	Special Stationery.	Calendars and Gift Books.
" 10	Toys and Games.	Framed Pictures.
" 13	General Fancy Goods.	Christmas Decorations.
" 17	Composite Window.	Composite Window.
" 20		

This table is merely intended as a suggestion. It may suit one dealer and be of no use to another. What is desired is that the dealer should make out a similar programme of displays, suited to his particular case and adhere faithfully to it.

It is not intended that the window should be entirely re-dressed each time. A skillful dresser can retain back-grounds and slip in changes with ease in the foreground, altering the character of the window without much trouble.

Pre-Arranged Advertising.

It will be found helpful to pursue a similar plan with your advertising. When the Christmas rush comes along, you have no time to think out and write down advertisements. These should all be prepared before-hand. If your paper be a weekly, it will not be hard to make out the six or so ads to go in between now and Christmas. Try a different tack each time and hit home six times. If you advertise in a daily, it is imperative to change your copy every issue. Suppose you have not time or inclination or ability to handle daily changes yourself, get the young man at the newspaper office to help you out. He will be glad to do it in order to retain your patronage. In your advertising, impress on the public the advantage to be gained by trading with you and make the advantage real. Let the people know the arrangements you have made to facilitate their buying, the novelties you have secured. In fact, be as personal and direct as you can.

Mailing Facilities.

A useful suggestion is to bestow some attention on the large number of purchasers of Christmas cards and calendars in the way of providing writing and mailing facilities. In the corner devoted to the sale of these lines, there should be placed a writing desk, a supply of envelopes of all sizes and a private post-box, to which a card should be attached telling how often it is cleared. A good idea is to put on enough extra on the price of each card to admit of giving stamped envelopes in each case. This fact, well-advertised, is bound to bring in business. The same idea extends to the picture post-card lines now selling at three for five, may be sold stamped at three for ten.