

Rainbow Stores Co-operate In Raising Standards

Plans Outlined by J. A. TRAVERSO Show Careful Study of Project

FOR some time the National Association of Retail Grocers has had as one of its objectives the raising of the standards of its members' stores. President Herbert H. Sack has been one of the leaders in this movement, and went to considerable trouble to prepare and have distributed "Self-rating Charts" whereby grocers could appraise their own stores. An honest appraisal would give each one a pretty fair idea of what improvements could and should be made in his own store.

Realizing the value of this national project, the Rainbow Stores in San Francisco have definitely tied in with the plan. To be assured that the standards set up for each store will be the most efficient for the store concerned, an extensive survey is being made.

The following letter from Jack Traverso of Rainbow Stores gives a complete picture of their plan of operation:

"You have requested our plans for the improvement and remodeling of our individual stores but, since our answer to this problem depends upon the result of a survey that we are making as fast as time permits, I have

delayed definite answer until such a time as we can see what is indicated for remedy by the facts.

"Most set-ups for rating stores that I have seen are dependent upon the opinion of the man who is answering the questionnaire, and when the final rating is averaged up, the standard is very arbitrary and equivocal. It is necessarily so when we try to take into consideration the overwhelming variables one finds in a true survey of independent operation.

Determine Common Characteristics

"The question for a group is: What characteristics do all the stores in this group have which are true in each and every one of them? These characteristics, to be found, must be a kind which can actually be measured by the effect that they have on the customers of the district under consideration. When the good effect is high with respect to a given characteristic (from the customer's actual behavior), a store may be said to possess that characteristic, and when enough of the stores are so qualified, the group may adopt that characteristic as a standard and may truthfully advertise to the public that such a characteristic of service, quality, policy, conven-

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FOR JUNE, to date: sales running well ahead of last June's record-breaking figures!

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RAINBOW STORES CO-OPERATE

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ience or other is of genuine 'Rainbow' benefit to customers.

"The grocer who learns that the attainment of such a standard, well within his reach, will produce good effects on trade becomes at first interested, then enthusiastic about being 'up-to-the-mark'. There is no arbitrary assumption or guess as to what is wrong with his business and no danger that he be persuaded to make a lot of changes which might, if the advice was a pure assumption, do him as much harm as good. In our surveys we have fully taken into consideration the individual problem of the owner, we have made careful study of his whole situation, and have always found him interested when we apply the appropriate remedies to his situation. But, while we can apply general principles to his store, it would be impossible to try to apply any arbitrary scheme of standards to him because we have assumed he is in a category or Class A, B, C, etc. The only high standard is the degree of effectiveness he has with regard to the market he can reach and not the way his store looks compared to a national average or any other theoretical standard.

Care Must Be Taken in Survey

"Naturally, the progress of making a survey of our type requires definite knowledge about each store, and the only way to get this is to send a man into the store who knows how to take its measure. The store owner himself obviously does not know how to do this even if he would, and the hope of getting more than about

20 per cent to do it voluntarily is optimistic, to say the least. The man who makes the survey must appreciate both the grocer and the customer viewpoint, as well as ours.

"This is the plan that we are working on and the results are interesting now, and, we believe, will continue to produce benefits to all concerned as the ball gets to rolling. Some evidence of the snow-ball effect of this movement is already beginning to appear, and we are working harder and harder to keep it rolling. I would judge that about 25 per cent of our stores are already under way with one part or another of the program and our promotional department is getting requests for help almost faster than it can be given."

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