

THE NEW MERCHANDISING.

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“OLD things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.” This was spoken two thousand years ago but it has had a new birth in this year of 1919, as it pertains to the mercantile world.

Modern merchandising is a scientific study. The sooner we realize this fact the sooner we will take our proper place in the business world.

The two most important subjects for the retail merchant's study are trade possibilities and buying.

We have heard much in the past of the man who “caused two blades of grass to grow where one grew before.” Practical merchandising teaches us that it is useless to grow that extra blade of grass unless we know where there will be a market for it.

Before we can hope to buy intelligently we must know our community's needs. We must survey its population, its industries and its wealth. We must analyze the potential needs of our customers to ascertain whether there will be an outlet for the merchandise we buy.

These facts can be tabulated so as to give in a moment the information we want—to tell us whether an individual is a property owner or a renter, his habits, his prejudices and his needs of the many things we have to sell.

How can this information be best obtained?

Personal visits to homes and gatherings and talks with customers in our stores are the most convenient and effective ways. We should direct our conversations to produce the information that will benefit us; rather than be so free to discuss subjects over which we have no control.

All of us like to discuss our own affairs. If we give the average man a chance he will gladly give us all the information we want about himself and his neighbors.

The farmer likes to talk good roads, crop prospects, his hopes and his aspirations, his plans for farm improvement—and those of his neighbors.

After we have made our survey and tabulated our facts we should use this information as a guide in our buying so as to be in position to render the greatest service possible to our community in quality of goods and in price.

We should study market conditions, quality and value of merchandise, what to buy, when to buy, new goods coming on the market. Our customers have a right to expect this of us and they will be found willing to pay us for the time we spend in their behalf.

We should know when we buy merchandise that we will be able to supply our customers without charging what may seem to them to be an exorbitant toll for the service we render. We should know what our mail order competitors will charge our customers for similar goods.

We should study our trade journals closely and especially our own NATIONAL HARDWARE BULLETIN.

The time has come when it is as necessary for the retail merchant to have a business library as it is for the lawyer or the doctor to have his books. And these books should be placed in the hands of our employes.

The National office at Argos is in position to place these helps in our hands at minimum cost, if we will but ask for them.

Let us, during this great readjustment of business, so order our house, mentally and literally, that when the situation clears we will emerge more firmly established than we ever were.

Let us make ourselves so necessary that we will be one of the principal factors in merchandise distribution.