

Window display . . .

a grass-roots public relations tool

by Frank Pinchak

FOR MANY YEARS the progressive pharmacist has used window display as a means of promoting his profession. Through continual use of display, he has given his particular pharmacy an "image" which moves the local public to recognize this pharmacy as one which specializes in prescription compounding. This created image operates in that persons passing this pharmacy see the window displays during the time they are in good health and automatically think of this pharmacy for their health needs when illness strikes.

A good working definition of public relations calls for a continued series of good impressions over a considerable span of time, utilizing any or all means of communication. It is my opinion that ethical window display offers today's pharmacist the most effective and rewarding means of public relations activity; in addition to building prescription volume it will also improve professional standing and prestige for the individual and his fellow pharmacists as well.

Every trade and professional journal

preaches that pharmacy needs a good public relations job and, although industry and the professional organizations are doing their share, all admit that the policies and ideas created on the higher echelons will be ineffective unless pharmacists on the grass-roots level participate in getting across these ideas. Actually, this is a compliment because no matter how or where drugs and medicines are researched or manufactured, the public still thinks of the corner pharmacist when the word "pharmacy" needs defining.

The changing pattern of the practice of retail pharmacy leaves little time for the busy practitioner to engage in public relations activities; moreover, PR is an intricate technic and if we are to operate in those problem areas which need explaining and clearing up of any misconceptions the public may have about us, it is vital that we prevent our pharmacists' making PR mistakes.

Window display fits right into a need such as this. First of all the busy pharmacist can go about his work while the "message" is brought to the public who leisurely view it through the front win-

dow. Second, the message is "controlled" and comes across exactly as intended. (Compare this with the medium of newspaper communication whereby a given pharmacy PR project must be interpreted through the eyes of a reporter and editor who may read other meanings into your basic ideas.)

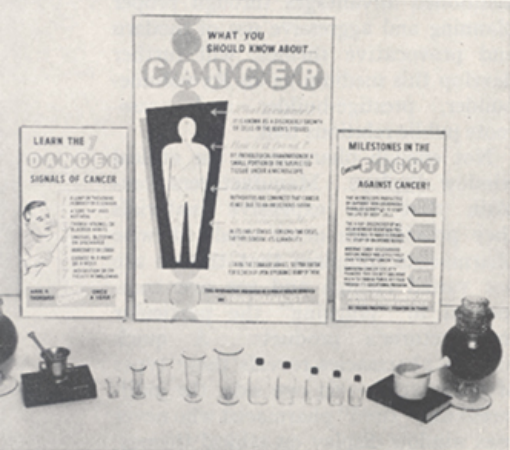
It is the purpose of this article to present a new idea in window display which, by capitalizing on these aforementioned advantages through proper planning and aggressive use of modern and provocative themes, will further develop this medium as an Rx-volume-builder, prestige-builder and grass-roots public relations tool.

Not enough pharmacists use ethical window displays. Manufacturers complain that the expensive materials they provide are never used; likewise pharmacists complain that themes are not varied enough and are over-commercial in "plugging" the particular manufacturer's products. A quick look at pharmacies reveals these types of pharmacists—on one side, the indifferent and "tired" pharmacist who never uses window display on ethical themes;

In 1954, Frank Pinchak developed the "Professional Advancement Plan" described as "a co-operative public relations program by pharmacists in 33 states." Featured in the plan is a series of window display units designed expressly for the retail pharmacy. Since the inception of the program, Frank Pinchak has offered more than 34 different window displays, each of which consists of a center panel and two small side panels. Topics have included public health information on cancer, diabetes, mental illness, polio, and Asiatic flu (see cuts). Pharmaceuticals individually explained in the display series include tranquilizers, vitamins, insulin and Salk polio vaccine. Historical subjects



have included drugs of the Bible and the evolution of the apothecary show globe and a number of displays have dealt with a variety of professional subjects. Explanations of accuracy in pharmacy, the U.S.P., pharmacy laws, pharmaceutical education, and the future of pharmacy were subjects of separate displays. One example emphasizes pharmacy's role in providing the physician with various forms of medicines "compounded to meet the individual needs of the patient." The current display shown here, explains the use of capsules as a pharmaceutical dosage form. This display is available from the Professional Advancement Plan, 1134 Main Street, Paterson, New Jersey, at a cost of six dollars postpaid.



Here are three of 34 different window display units developed by Frank Pinchak for the "Professional Advancement Plan." The top unit explains the compounding aspects of pharmacy; the center display explains America's number one health problem—mental illness; and the bottom unit lists the seven danger signals of cancer and the milestones in the fight against this killer disease. Each display makes its own appeal, and each aided in further establishing the pharmacy as the center for public health information in the community.

at the other extreme, the aggressive pharmacist who has his displays made up for his operation by a local artist and features monthly themes, and, somewhere in the middle, the average pharmacist who makes the most of the available materials on hand from manufacturers and other sources.

Odd as it may sound, many pharmacists are deterred from using any displays of their own because installing background materials is a stumbling block. They feel crepe-paper, staple

guns and props are monsters best handled by professional window-trimmers who know—and charge for—installation of the basic window.

While on the subject of expense, many pharmacists who hire local artists to prepare displays report it to be an expensive and involved procedure. A program such as this must first of all originate with a pharmacist having the creative ability to plan the display's basic theme, to write the copy in terms that the layman viewer will understand and to work with the artist in properly displaying the subject.

For those pharmacists desirous of initiating a sound ethical window display program, the following two plans, basic and advanced are offered.

basic program

1. Establish a prominent window specifically for ethical display use only. Eliminate trimming problem by lining entire sides and back of window with masonite peg-board. Roll on flat paint of neutral gray color. This leaves only the floor of window to be trimmed at each time of installation. The entire project can be done by the pharmacist himself. Peg-board background can be used to hang or shelve props such as glassware, plaques, certificates, etc. Small spot-lights can be easily installed also.

2. Stockpile institutional display materials from manufacturers, wholesalers, APhA, rentals from display houses; design and plan your own themes with a local artist; purchase ethical displays; have an artist duplicate themes suggested in *Drug Topics* series.

3. Stockpile props such as show globes, mortars and pestles, unique glassware, plaques, antiques, etc. Everyday glassware such as dropper bottles, ointment jars, capsule vials in assorted sizes make excellent and inexpensive props.

4. Change window display themes at least once a month. Needless to say, display windows should always be in a clean condition; window glass should sparkle.

advanced plan

Once the basic plan has been established the advanced plan should be followed:

1. Utilize educational and provocative themes for window display. Subjects such as "Facts of R Prices," "Mental Illness Facts," "Facts on Fluoridation of Water"; displays on timely classifications of medicines such as oral antidiabetic drugs or tranquilizers can be tastefully presented. Your detail men can supply you with facts for your artists; several pharmacists can share costs and circulate the finished display among themselves.



Frank Pinchak, a registered pharmacist, operates the Pinchak Pharmacy in Paterson, New Jersey, with his father who founded it in 1919. By taking special courses in psychology, writing, advertising and public relations at New York University, City College of New York, and the New School, he has acquired the know-how to direct many successful public relations campaigns for pharmacy. He is a member of the American Public Relations Association, Public Relations Society of America, Publicity Club of New York, APhA, NARD, Passaic County Pharmaceutical Association and president of the New Jersey State Pharmaceutical Association (1958-59).

2. Make photo-postcards of these displays; messages may be mimeographed on these cards and sent to lists of patrons or local physicians and dentists. These photo-postcards actually bring your display window into the homes and offices of your local publics. Photographs may be sent to house-organs of local lay-health groups (*Mental Health*, *Heart* or any group interested in the particular display.)

3. Lend these displays to schools for science classes and career days and to local health groups for use in booths at exhibits, at their meetings and during their annual drives for funds. Displays on drugs in the Bible can be donated to local churches. During National Pharmacy Week, displays can be used in local banks, theaters and schools.

4. Groups and organizations of pharmacists can initiate projects in the community interest whereby mass-produced displays are used in participating pharmacies and public buildings. Themes should be educational such as safe storage of medicines in the home, danger signals of cancer, dangers of driving while under treatment with medicines. Naturally these co-operative, organizational projects will tie in with newspaper, radio and television publicity. ■