

INTRODUCING MR. PUNCH



On February 6, 1915, there was born a new member of the large and lusty family of advertising personalities. This person was Mr. Punch, who made his appearance in *The Saturday Evening Post* on the date named.

Mr. Punch takes his name from a handy household tool. He is official representative of a line of more than 1500 wood-working tools, metal-working tools and tools of precision made by the Goodell-Pratt Company.

He also represents far more than that.

He stands for the final solution of a difficult advertising problem which was several times given up as hopeless by advertising men—but never by the head of the Goodell-Pratt Company, whose faith and energy finally prevailed.

That faith is already being justified.

The story is of peculiar interest to Philadelphians because the products and problems are similar to those that exist here—because they are set in the New England environment which closely resembles that of Philadelphia—and because many Philadelphia manufacturers may have to travel the same course before they can finally become national advertisers.

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The Goodell-Pratt Company is a Yankee concern at Greenfield, Massachusetts, long established, with a tremendous business and with the highest trade reputation. Some years ago, the president, Mr. W. M. Pratt, began to wonder whether he could not make use of the power of national advertising.

He got into touch with representatives of *The Curtis Publishing Company*. They told him that, according to all previous experience, it would be very difficult to advertise a tool line with 1500 different numbers. There did not seem to be a single and popular appeal on which to base salesmanship direct to the consumer.

But Mr. Pratt said: "At least it will do no harm for you to go through our plant. I believe that whether we advertise or not you can give us valuable ideas about our selling."

Curtis representatives visited the factory about a year ago and had many interviews, both with the firm and with the trade. They found a very unusual condition.

The company was all ready to embark upon national advertising.

It had a complete line, which it sold direct to the trade through its own salesmen.

It was putting its own name on its entire line, with one very minor exception.

It was selling to 9600 hardware stores and other dealers.

It was averaging to ship 90 per cent. of its orders the same day they were received.

Product, costs, manufacturing efficiency, shipping facilities, ability to expand, sales policies—every condition which would influence the possible success of an advertising campaign was right. In practically every business it is found that one or the other of these things has to be adjusted before advertising can be begun. But it was as if this business had for years been preparing for advertising.

Our representatives submitted an extensive brief, in which this recommendation was made:

Be careful to shape your plan so that in the end it is sure to mean four important things to your business:

FIRST—The plan must prove itself to be economically sound and consistent with the company's policy.

SECOND—It must decrease your selling cost.

THIRD—It must actually sell goods.

FOURTH—It must build a consumer good will.

In order to obtain a plan to accomplish these purposes, an advertising agency was called in. The agency checked back all the work done and the suggestions made by the Curtis representatives, and approved them.

It was then determined that in order to interest the consumer in this vast line of 1500 tools there must be a "leader," an article for which a very large number of consumers would have frequent use, which could be advertised strikingly and which would serve to introduce the Goodell-Pratt line as a whole.

An ingenious and convenient hand drill, selling at \$1.50, was finally decided upon, and given the name of Mr. Punch. His picture, as he is personified, appears at the head of this page.

At this point it developed that the manufacturers were banking too heavily on the results of the very first year's advertising. They were planning a heavy increase in output to take care of immediate demand. They were looking at advertising solely as an immediate sales force rather than as a business builder. For this reason we advised that the whole idea of advertising be dropped, because an expectation of immediate success was the wrong way to begin. Advertising started on such a basis usually doesn't last.

We made the following statement: "We earnestly recommend that you never turn on the power of publicity unless you do it with a determination never to turn it off again."

The manufacturers themselves soon saw the wisdom of this, and the advertising was finally launched as a permanent feature of the business.

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The results of the first few weeks are perhaps best summed up in the following statement made to us on March 19th by the president of the Goodell-Pratt Company:

"This campaign was planned with a view of creating a consumer demand, and we were particularly desirous that this should come to us through regular hardware trade channels. We made no attempt to create incentives for direct communications between the consumer and our factory; we only casually alluded to the fact that we should be glad to furnish interesting matter in case they were unable to obtain it from their regular hardware merchant, preferring to have the interest manifest itself wholly through the merchant.

"Have we succeeded?"

"Well, we can only say to you that if you had stated to us before this campaign was started that we should be able to see the volume of interest manifested that has shown itself in these first six weeks, we should have questioned your understanding of our problems.

"We have accomplished more in six weeks than we expected to be able to accomplish within six months."

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We believe that there are several Philadelphia manufacturers, in various lines, whose problems are no more difficult than this looked to be two years ago.

Have they the faith, the energy, the "commercial desire"?

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

The Ladies' Home Journal

The Saturday Evening Post

The Country Gentleman