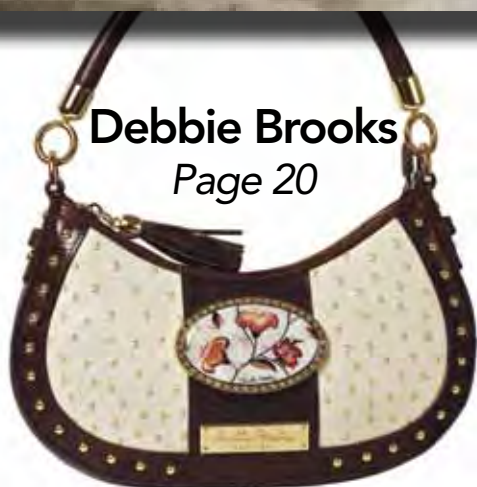


THE RETAIL JEWELER

The Jewelry Business Magazine • Volume 2, Issue 3 • April/May 2011

*Jewelry-
the Gift Every
Mother Loves.*



Debbie Brooks
Page 20



Alisa Unger
Page 21

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

It All Comes Down to People!	6
Cheers to a Long, Prosperous & Wonderful Life: Part One Planning for Long Term Care - 101	8
Do you need more customers or more sales?	10
Know Your State's Labor Laws, Abide by Them, And Treat Your People Well – or Pay The Consequences!	12
Please Not Another Trade Show!	18
The Style Page	20
New and Noteworthy	25
Craig's Fine Jewelry Basics	26
Business is Going to the Dogs	36
Advertiser's Index	38

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IT ALL COMES DOWN TO PEOPLE!

By Brad Huisken

Whether you manage a jewelry store or sell jewelry, the use of knowledge means everything. I know that as an Owner or Manager if you can create an environment of personal growth and development, your store will be successful. Surround yourself with people that constantly want to improve and the company will grow. As the Owner or Manager your job responsibility is to provide the staff with everything they will need in order to be successful.

In order to fulfill your responsibilities as an owner or as a sales manager you must:

Provide the leadership, knowledge, training, incentives, and consequences in order to recruit, hire, develop, and maintain successful salespeople.

I could write a book just on that sentence, but look at each word and think about how that applies to you and your business. Great leaders, for example, lead by example, are great communicators, have a vision for the future, are organized, and disciplined. Having the knowledge takes a constant effort, no one will ever know everything that there is to know. Training must be consistent and on going. I have often said that sales training doesn't work, if it is an event, it has to be an ongoing process. Incentives must be given to sales staff if you want to make some changes. In order to instill change in any organization I believe that you have to make the change a policy. Train your people on how to fulfill the policy and address what in it for them when they make the change. In other words:



In order to instill change in an organization three things must happen!



Policy



Training



Incentives

The same is true with consequences. If the person doesn't fulfill the policy, have been trained on the policy, have shown that they can adhere to the policy, and yet they still don't or won't adhere to the policy, then a change needs to be made.



A successful sales staff is: Completely trained, working toward objectives, held accountable for performance, and rewarded based on results.

As a business owner or sales manager, you are in the business of hiring and training people for the rest of your professional life. I don't think people will ever be completely trained, simply because the world and the industry is changing at a very rapid pace. A business owner has to work toward objectives, which are goals and statistics, the people have to be held accountable to producing at least a minimum level of performance and rewarded based on exceeding the expectations.

It is only through the consistent application of solid business principles that a business will grow and reach it's maximum potential. Great sales managers, owners, and coaches, have to be where the action is, on the floor. You cannot effectively implement any business principles from an office. You have to be on the floor listening in on sales presentations, catching people doing things both right and wrong, offering positive praise and solid coaching when appropriate and needed. When it comes the standards these are things that will leave a lasting first and last impression that the customer has of your business. How the phone is answered, how customers are greeted and acknowledged, how the customer is thanked and invited back, attempting to close the sale and attempting to add-on to the sale should all be non-negotiable within a great organization wouldn't you think?

These are all things that will be detailed in this column during the months ahead. Good Luck and Happy Selling!



Brad Huisken

Brad Huisken is an author, trainer, consultant and speaker. He's written twobooks: I'm a Salesman not a PHD and his latest book is Munchies for Salespeople, Tips You Can sink Your Teeth Into. Brad has also written two training programs: PMSA Relationship Selling Program and PSMC Professional Sales Management Course. For more information contact him at 800-248-7703, infor@iastraining.com, fax 303936-9581, or visit his website at www.iastraining.com

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Cheers to a Long, Prosperous & Wonderful Life: Part One

Planning for Long Term Care - 101

By John Politi

Responsible Financial Planning, both for your business and personal circumstances, requires a commitment to developing a realistic “financial roadmap.” We start by establishing our goals, gathering data and evaluating our financial situation. This allows us to develop a plan that is hopefully sensible in action and thought. Implementation of your plan is the next step after which, it will be monitored on a regular basis. I’m a big fan of always keeping Plan B and Plan C at the ready - especially since I plan on living well past my “sell by date.” But things happen that are entirely out of our control. Every single one of us will most likely need the resources to pay for our health care costs in retirement. This is over and beyond the needs we have calculated to maintain our ever-comfy and well-wished for standard of living. Fidelity Investments recently reported that the average 65-year old couple would



need about \$240,000 to cover the cost of medical care in retirement. Ouch! Now take into consideration that this estimate doesn’t even cover the expense of long-term health care. The most recent financial crisis has caused seismic shifts in the retirement landscape, and the future for retiring Baby Boomers and Generation Xers is at best far less optimistic than for current retirees. Have I gotten your attention yet?

The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College developed what is referred to as, “The National Retirement Risk Index (NRRRI). Nearly 45 percent of households are “at risk” of not having enough savings to maintain their sought after standard of living in retirement. Even more frightening is that this increases to 64 percent when health care expenses and long-term health insurance are factored into the index. Alice H. Munnell, Director of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College stated, “Because the costs of long-term care insurance and other health expenditures are rising and the income system is contracting, these latest findings raise major concerns about the retirement security of baby boomers and succeeding generations.” What’s a poor boy to do? First, realize that managing the cost of long-term care has become an integral and essential part of responsible financial and retirement planning. Discussions with your Estate/Elder Care Attorney and/or Financial Planner will bring to your attention to a long list of financial products available to be customized as part of a strategy to help you to meet your financial goals.

Doing nothing is not an option, unless you want to be included in the 85 percent of American households approaching retirement age that have not accumulated enough in total financial assets to cover the costs associated with extended long-term care.

When discussing long-term care with your spouse and professional advisors you’ll need to ask some questions:

- Who will provide care?
- What care will be provided?
- Where will the care be provided?
- How will the care be paid for?
- When will the care be provided?



This will jump-start the conversation and lead to more specific, pointed and personal questions and concerns. Realize that long-term care is a variety of services that includes medical and non-medical care to those that have a chronic illness or disability. It is intended to help meet health or personal needs. Most long-term care is to assist people with support services such as activities for daily living like dressing, bathing, and using the bathroom. This care can be provided at home, in the community, in assisted living or in nursing homes. And finally, long-term care may be necessary at any age.

In Part Two of Planning for Long Term Care - 101, we’ll take a look at managing the risks of long-term health care and also long-term care insurance. Until then, why not schedule a meeting with your Estate/Eldercare Attorney and Financial Advisor. Always be proactive when planning for long-term care.

Author’s Note: Please consult with your Certified Financial Planner, Estate/Tax/Eldercare Attorney and/or Certified Public Accountant when discussing your financial needs and developing the appropriate personal/business financial plan.



John Politi

John honed his professional career as a business owner, CEO and Director with some of the industry’s most prestigious organizations. John’s experience spans precious metal manufacturing, quality assurance testing as well as diamond certification. During his tenure as a Board Director for the JBT, John gained greater insight and sensitivity for the “small business owner.” John is currently a member of the Financial Planning Association, Financial Management Association, NYSSA and 24 KT Club of New York. johnpoliti@verizon.net

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Do you need MORE CUSTOMERS or MORE SALES?

By David Brown



All businesses measure their sales. Many businesses spend money on marketing to their clients; and most think the best way to measure the effectiveness of their marketing is to measure their sales and on the face of it this makes sense; if money is spent marketing then it would be reasonable to expect it to show up as sales in the till. This is the end result that is required, but if it doesn't happen it needn't mean the marketing didn't work. Marketing can get people into the store- but it won't make the sales happen if the inventory and staff are not as good as the marketing.



So how do you know? By measuring the foot traffic not the sales. The best measurement of any marketing campaign is to determine whether it brought in more foot traffic. This can be measured with an effective and affordable door counter. Determine firstly whether the marketing is generating foot traffic, before measuring the results through the till.

Most businesses assume they need to spend money attracting more customers –but this can be a flawed approach. The first question that should be asked before any marketing campaign is “How many customers are leaving the store empty handed now?” It is easy to assume that more customers are required but if a store is only selling to 1 out of every 10 customers that come in now then why would it need to get more? The more immediate question is what has happened to the other 9 who didn't buy and what can be done to turn them into customers? Spending more money on marketing when 90% of people who walk in the door leave dissatisfied will not solve the problem.

A new customer can cost six times as much as an existing one, so it would seem logical to first focus on the clients who are coming into the store.

So let's look at some numbers. Assume Maggie has a store that currently has 1 in every 8 persons who walk in buying (Maggie knows this because she has a door counter). Maggie has 56000 people walk through her door every year. Of these 56000, only 7000 purchase; leaving 49000 who walk out empty handed. By focusing on her conversions Maggie is able to persuade one more out of every 10 customers who are currently walking out empty handed to purchase from her. How many extra customers does she get?

One extra customer out of every 10 who are currently walking out means Maggie has been able to attract an additional 4900 customers to purchase from her during the year (10% of 49000). This means her quantity of sales has increased by 70% just by turning these browsers into buyers – and no additional marketing or customers has been required. If Maggie has an average sale of \$100 she will generate \$490,000 in additional sales during the year, and be satisfying many more people who will be prepared to shop with her again later. So what does Maggie need to do to turn these browsers into buyers?

Look at her inventory

1. Does it look appealing? If an item looks tired and unclean in a messy window display then it's a little hard to imagine it looking good when it is worn.
2. Is the item clearly and neatly ticketed? If there is no price ticket then the customer won't ask. Maggie's inventory needs to be capable of selling itself on those occasions when her staff are too busy to.
3. Is it good product or last years old dogs that haven't been moved on yet? If it hasn't sold in three to six months then why would it suddenly sell now? Maggie needs to identify good selling inventory and form strong relationships with her key suppliers that will let her keep her inventory turning over.

Look at her staff

1. Does she have the right people doing the right jobs? If the best salesperson is out the back fitting batteries while the junior is manning the ring counter then that conversion rate isn't going to look to good.
2. Does the staff have good product knowledge? Jewelry is a business of trust and trust only comes from experienced and expert staff putting the customers mind at ease. Confidence also helps sales and staff will not feel confident if they are concerned about their lack of product knowledge and fear they may be caught out by a customer who may know more than them.
3. Does the staff receive sales training? Staff need to hone their technique in opening the sale, closing the sale, and handling objections in between. Leaving the sales process to chance is only reducing the chances of those browsers being turned into shoppers
4. Is everyone pulling their weight? It's a tough decision but some people simply don't perform well and have a detrimental effect on the whole team because of their attitude or inability to perform their task to the required level. They need to be moved on.

Working on these tips above will make a difference to Maggie's business. There is plenty that can be done without spending a small fortune. Marketing is a key part of any business but before more customers are encouraged in store it is important that things are being done right for the customers that are already coming in. Business is about profit and there is no more profitable sale than the one to the customer standing in the store right now.



David Brown

David Brown is President of the Edge Retail Academy, an organization devoted to the ongoing measurement and growth of jewelry store performance and profitability. For further information about the Academy's management mentoring and industry benchmarking reports contact Carol Druan at carol@edgeretailacademy.com or Phone toll free (877) 5698657

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Know Your State's Labor Laws, Abide by Them, And Treat Your People Well – or Pay The Consequences!

By Suzanne DeVries

As most of you know, 98% of our work is done on behalf of the jewelry companies that are our clients. However, we receive calls from employees almost daily asking us labor law-related questions. Although we usually refer them back to their respective employers and state labor organizations, I must admit that of late, we have heard and confirmed some outrageous offenses that any labor board and the EEOC would have a field day with! According to Purpose Employee Solutions, employees win employment lawsuits 56% of the time, and the average verdict costs employers \$200,000.

What is even more mind blowing is that some of the jewelry offenders either do not know or worse, do not care that the averages are against them.



Jewelers are totally uninformed on their state's labor laws, until they get audited and/or have a claim filed against them

We also find that many jewelers are totally uninformed on their state's labor laws, until they get audited and/or have a claim filed against them. Labor boards are not in the least bit forgiving about your unawareness of the laws. Their position is that if you have employees, you should be compliant, and ignorance of your state's labor laws is no excuse. While these laws vary from state to state, there are some consistencies that almost every state adheres to.

You can avoid many misunderstandings with employees by having a thorough employee manual that clearly defines your procedures and policies. It is imperative that you have this available to employees at all times, and have copies that you give them and they sign for upon their hiring.

Some of the complaints we receive from employees on an almost weekly basis include competing with owners for sales,

not being paid on time, unpaid commissions and adversarial relationships with co-workers. The most disturbing are verbal, mental or even physical abuse from owners and managers, and fighting among owners. In most cases, Diamond Staffing Solutions can counsel these disgruntled employees with recommendations and solutions. In some cases, however, such as verified abusive owners, we have no choice but to offer employees less attractive recommendations. Generally, these cases come as no surprise; word on the street usually passes quickly about employers who indulge in such behavior. Make no mistake: these are serious allegations and can cost you thousands in litigation.



You can avoid many misunderstandings with employees by having a thorough employee manual

There is one thing that states' labor laws are consistent on, and that is paying your salaried and hourly employees on time. States have different laws on whether this is weekly or biweekly; make sure you know what your state's laws are. If they are weekly, you will require special permission to pay every other week should you so desire.



Pay your salaried and hourly employees on time

If you do not have a commission policy in place, write one. The NUMBER ONE demotivating factor for employees working on

>> Continued to Pg 14

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Paul Dodds



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>> Continued from Pg 12

commission is to not pay them what they earned by selling your jewelry. If your sales are falling and you have not paid your employees as agreed for a job well done, you have NO ONE to blame but yourself. Commissions for hourly and salaried employees should be paid the month following the commission period, i.e. January's commissions should be paid the first pay period of February, etc. Your policy should include how returned merchandise will be deducted from the employee's future commissions. As with all policies and procedures, this should be explained in detail during the interview process, and again on their first day of employment when you have them sign for the employee manual.

We also get frequent calls about adversarial employee relationships. What we find disconcerting is how these situations often are mishandled, or not handled at all, by management and owners. If you have more than one employee working together, be assured that at some point there will be misunderstandings. Sometimes, small misunderstandings can become much bigger than necessary if they are not handled immediately and swiftly. In most cases, it takes nothing more than mediation between the employees to resolve the situation. If you are of the mind set that these situations will "work themselves out," think again. Be proactive, because if you let these situations go on, other employees can get involved by taking sides, expressing their opinions, etc. This can suck the energy out of your sales floor and cause a toxic work environment, so nip it in the bud immediately.



One of the most difficult staffing challenges we have is hiring people who will work well together

The vast majority of complaints we receive are misunderstandings about commissions and/or clients and "whom they belong to." This one is always a little mind boggling to us; clients are the property of the store, not the salesperson. We once again recommend that you have a very clear policy in place that explicitly defines sales, commissions, split sales, turn-overs and situations such as what happens when a regular client comes in on the salesperson's day off and asks for them, or does not ask for them. Otherwise, once the salesperson finds out, suddenly there is a war because their perception is that the other salesperson "stole" their sale.

More importantly, there must be clear consequences for sales that are legitimately deemed stolen from another salesperson, and what will ensue if the two of them cannot work it out. Sometimes, the easiest way to resolve this is to tell both salespeople that if they cannot come to an understanding, the sale will go to the house. That usually will motivate them to work something out.

If you find you are always counseling the same employee(s) on these types of issues, perhaps it's time to make some tough decisions. Unfortunately, these often may be your best sales performers or "divas." One of the most difficult staffing challenges we have is hiring people who will work well together. This should be as important (or more important) than if the person comes armed with BIG sales success and a huge client book. If you are spending ¾ of your day babysitting a store of divas, it's very counterproductive.



If you are out of control and have a problem with your anger, leave it at home

Perhaps the most disturbing calls we receive are from employees who are being mistreated by managers and principals. Of late, we have heard of several such situations that we find appalling. Some of these verified claims are things I have never even heard of in 35 years in the business! Although some of these infractions may not be "illegal," they push the limits of legality, and I would imagine the EEOC and a good labor lawyer would have a field day with these abusers. Things you cannot do include calling your employee names like stupid, ignorant, etc., or saying things to them like "Your brain is not large enough to process the information." You also cannot get in their face and scream at them, and you absolutely cannot hit them, scratch them or put your finger in their face.

You should NEVER have ANY physical contact with employees that could harm them! You also cannot throw things at them. If you do throw things and hit them, this is assault, and they have every legal right to sue you, and you can be arrested – even on your own property. News flash: there is not a single judge on the planet that will take your side.

>> Continued to Pg 16

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*-Brenda Wilkerson, Owner, Bridgeport Gold & Silver,
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>> Continued from Pg 14

We understand the pressures and stresses of running a business. However, if you are out of control and have a problem with your anger, leave it at home, leave the premises, or better yet, get help! In these situations, Diamond Staffing Solutions cannot help you. We can only advise employees to call the labor board and the authorities if they have physically been harmed by your rage. This kind of behavior will also make it very difficult to attract good talent; it does not take long for it to hit the street, especially if you are in a small town.

Lastly, we have more calls for advice than you would think about owners who are temperamental and fight a lot. All of you know that this makes a very uncomfortable situation for employees. It makes them tense and your store environment tense and is therefore counterproductive.



It is also
VERY important
not to get your
employees
involved by trying
to "round up"
your allies.

In this situation, employees do not know what to do and sometimes feel compelled to take sides. This causes needless worry for them, and yes you will lose very good people because they do not like the added stress. If you are fighting a lot with your family members in your store, come up with some alternative way of communicating – behind closed doors, or when you go home at night, or leave the store. It is up to you to set the standard, and you are doing a poor job of it if you are constantly fighting in front of your staff with family members and/or other principals. It is also VERY important not to get your employees involved by trying to "round up" your allies. We hear and see this LOT!

When owners fight in public, no one wins especially you and your employees. I promise you it is only making a bad situation much worse. If this fighting becomes problematic, find a professional who can come in and advise and mediate. If it is constant, it will ultimately hurt your business, and could very well lead to your demise.

In closing, we felt it important that you know some of the main complaints we hear from some of your employees almost daily. These are all very serious issues that can hurt your reputation and the viability of your business. They also will make it very

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difficult for you to attract top talent. If you are an offender – and you know if you are – fixing it IMMEDIATELY is the best advice we can give you. In other words, pay your people their salaries and commissions on time. Make sure you have a very good employee manual in place. Nip those employee problems in the bud. And DO NOT under any circumstance abuse your employees verbally, mentally or physically. If you are constantly fighting with your family members or business partners, get counseling, work things out, or make some tough decisions. Otherwise, it WILL hurt your business in the long run.



DO NOT under
any circumstance
abuse your
employees
verbally, mentally
or physically

The most important asset you have is your people, so value them, embrace them, and do the best you can by them. They help your business grow and thrive. If an employee is unhappy, it is like having poison ivy in your store; it can spread to your other associates and ultimately hurt your business. If you hate managing people and working on “people issues” every day, hire a good manager and stay on the back side of the business, or work the community, or do whatever you do best. Your business will be much more profitable and productive for it.



Suzanne DeVries

Suzanne DeVries is president and founder of Diamond Staffing Solutions Inc., one of the jewelry industry's leading placement firms. Diamond Staffing Solutions is an official AGS sustaining member.

E-mail: suzanne@diamondstaffing.com.

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PLEASE NOT ANOTHER TRADE SHOW!

by FRANK FARNSWORTH

Ever felt that way? After 38 years on the “other side of the counter”, I must say I have. I remember the first time I walked into the JA Show at Javits center circa 1980: I was totally overwhelmed. I can’t imagine the feeling a jeweler new to the Las Vegas Show today must have. There are so many choices of products, services and vendors that working a trade show can be overwhelming!



As an exhibitor over the years I have experienced everything from roofs falling to samples not arriving! More importantly, I have experienced a wonderful community of people who continue to brave airport agony, staff and family challenges at home to attend trade shows.

Why?

Our answers are as varied as the independent business people that we are. Most often the main reason is relationships. I like to think of our industry as the “telephone” game we played as kids with two cans tied together and the string to “talk” over.



The cans represent us, the people, and the string is the jewelry. It is the jewelry that links us together, that keeps us thinking, creating and talking. However, the strength is not in the “string,” per se. Rather, it is in the people, the relationships. The jewelry changes; the market changes; the relationships are the glue that holds us together. As you go to your next trade show, consider how you can strengthen personal relationships with your colleagues and vendors.

Here is what you should consider as you plan for your next trade show.

► **SET GOALS:** Don’t try to do it all. Most buyers attend two or more trade shows every year so; pick a few important goals for the show. Write them down and share them with staff and other attendees. Some of your goals might include:

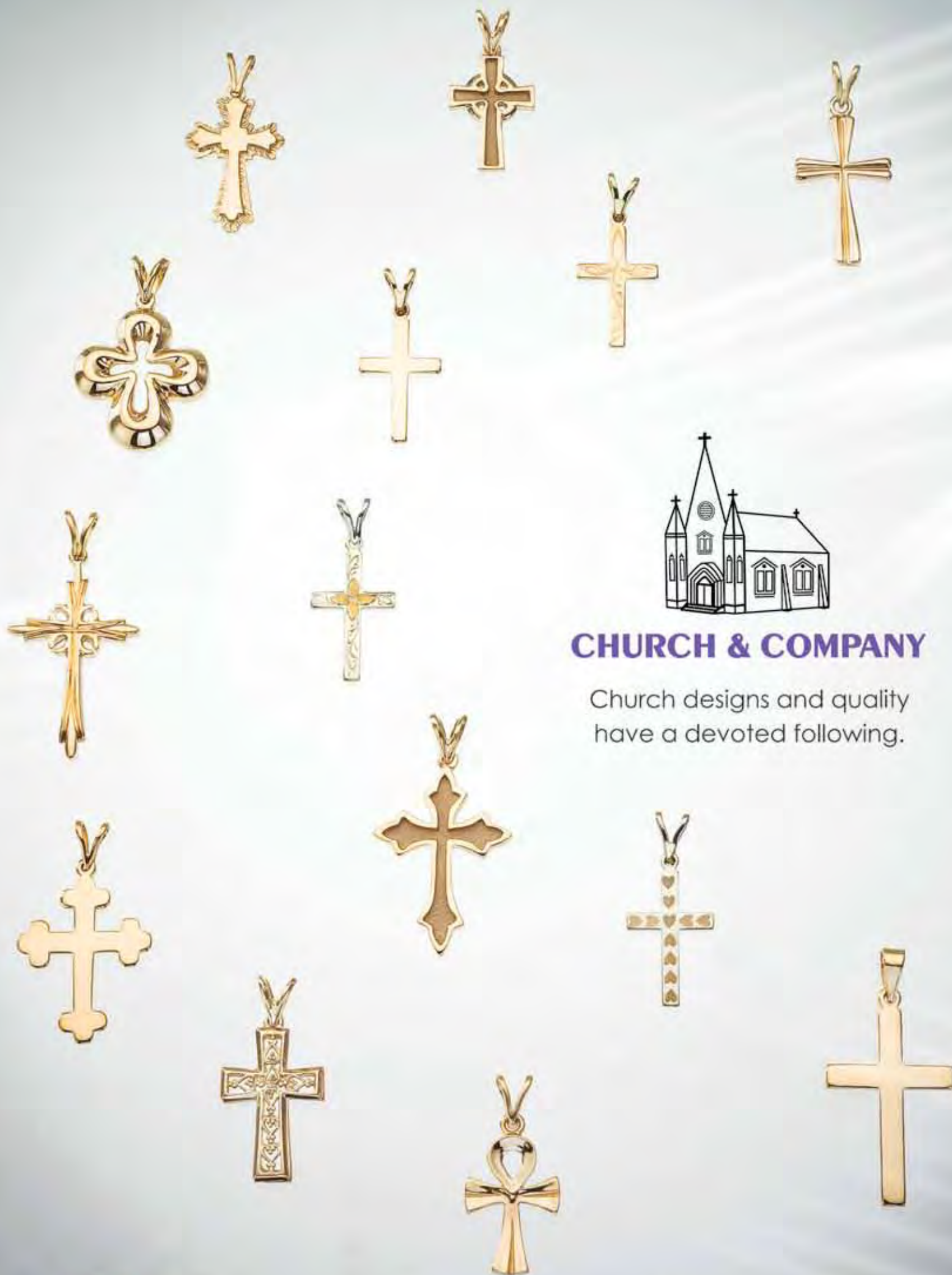


► **GET EDUCATED:** Trade shows today are about much more than buying inventory. They are about educating yourself and your staff. Life-long education is a key to success. Learning about marketing, products, services and what is happening in our industry is vital to becoming and remaining successful. Make education part of your trade show experience.



► **INCLUDE YOUR STAFF:** Reward your best staff members by taking them to a trade show. This makes them part of the buying, gives them a better view of the complexities of merchandising and most importantly makes them active members of your team. Have staff members call their best clients and “pre sell” items from their upcoming trade show visit. Are there special items in which the client is interested? A call from the show floor to a client may be a very special experience.

>> Continued to Pg 22



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Oscar Heyman

The firm's motto "only the finest" is evident in this stunning platinum necklace featuring 6 opals 32.54cts., 87 Emerald Beads 81.22cts. and 415 Diamonds 5.78cts. MSRP \$370,000.

Oscar Heyman
212-593-0400



Eugene Biro

Bridal set in 14K gold with 7/8ctw GH/VS2 (1/3ctw center). MSRP \$3,999.

Eugene Biro
800-223-3535
www.eugenebiro.com

Wave Collection

Sterling silver bracelet with white sapphires. MSRP \$900

Thistle & Bee
212-594-0418
www.thistleandbee.net



Stuller

Sterling silver and genuine onyx and citrine ring. MSRP \$174.

Stuller
800-877-7777
www.stuller.com



Debbie Brooks

Italian leather with ostrich emboss, lined in suede. Sold only through jewelers. MSRP \$368

Debbie Brooks
888-DEB-BROOKS



Katie Decker

Tahitian and diamond 18K pendant. MSRP \$4,950

Fragments
212-226-8878



Artistry, Ltd.

Blend of multi-brown diamonds with citrine, smoky quartz, champagne quartz, and lemon quartz gems. In 14K yellow gold. 1.5ct tw diamonds-MSRP \$1,550. Matching omega back earrings, MSRP \$2,150.

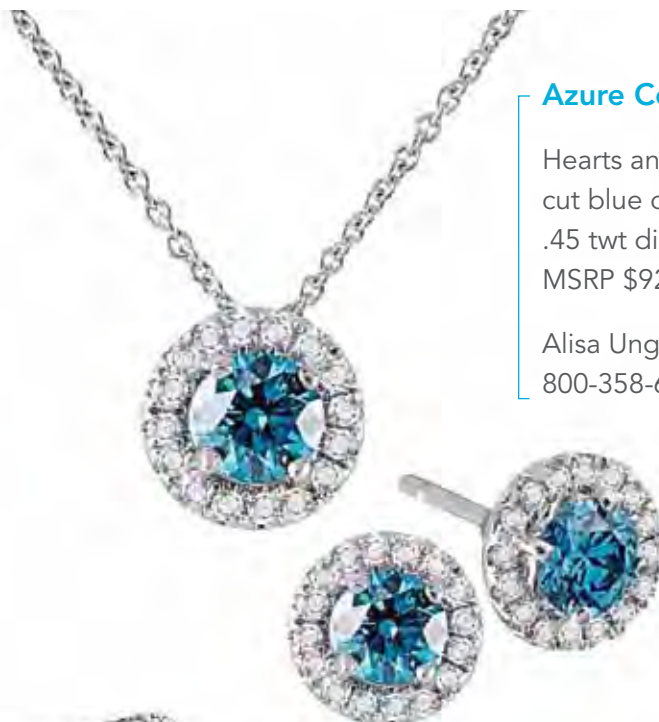
Artistry, Ltd.
In stock.
Same day shipping.
888-674-3250



Azure Collection

Hearts and Arrows ideal cut blue diamond .35, .45 twt diamonds in 14K. MSRP \$920

Alisa Unger Designs
800-358-6223



Traversa

Multi-row Traversa® basketweave ring in silver contains .05ct t.w. bezel set diamonds. Coordinating bangle bracelets and earrings are also available. Made in Italy. MSRP \$450.

Alisa
888-253-6600
www.alisadesigns.com



Timeless Designs

14K gold ring, .17ctw diamonds, .48 ctw rubies. MSRP \$2,190 (center stone not included)

Timeless Designs
800-657-9270



Church & Company

Blue zircon and diamonds in 14K white gold. MSRP \$1,400.

Church & Company
800-631-1263



Pe Jay Creations

18K white gold ring with 27 diamonds, .30ct., 28 black diamonds, .31ct MSRP \$1,955.

Pe Jay Creations
201-863-0006



Edward Mirell

Patented Black Titanium with 14K yellow gold rivets. MSRP \$399 and \$315

Edward Mirell
800-422-0200



► **GET CONTROL OF YOUR INVENTORY:** Run your inventory reports with images if possible. Some vendors will help you by sending "Purchase History" reports before the show. Mark items that need to be re-ordered and those that need to be stock balanced. Review with your staff what new product mix they would like to see and what items they would like to see "go away".



► **LEARN WHAT'S NEW:** Catch up on reading the trade magazines. Be informed as to what is new and what is available in the market. Review pre show material to arrive at a list of products and people you wish to see.



► **MAP IT OUT:** Make a list of those vendors you want to see and coordinate that list to the floor plan of the show.

Here are some tips to help with the goals you have set:

► **REVIEW INVENTORY NEEDS:** Inventory falls into two main categories:

1). Fast sellers that you have to replace: These items should be reordered as sold. This will save you precious time at trade shows.



2). Items that are special. I call them "the frosting on the cake". We all know that item: it was not on our buying list, but we fell in love with it. Usually we sell it the moment we return to the store. Should you re-order it? If the vendor is supportive and has a great stock balancing program, the answer is an easy "YES!" However, if the quality, color or vendors are not up to snuff then it is better to look for a new love.

"When we arrived that morning, the store was still warm from the blow torches they used to cut into the safes. They literally got everything."

Anita

ANITA THIGPEN
DIAMONDS R FOREVER, KENNESAW, GA

Thieves had meticulously planned every aspect of their overnight burglary. Fortunately for Anita, she had also planned carefully, protecting her business with the one insurer who knows the jewelry industry better than any other.

Watch Anita tell her alarming story and learn more about Jewelers Mutual coverage at countonjm.com

Coverage you can count on.
People you can count on.

Jewelers Mutual
INSURANCE COMPANY

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RETAILERS | MANUFACTURERS | WHOLESALEERS | CUSTOM DESIGNERS | REPAIR BUSINESS | APPRAISERS | PERSONAL JEWELRY

► **AMONG THE GREATEST PROBLEMS IN OUR BUSINESS IS OUR GREATEST STRENGTH:**

We can sell anything! Every jeweler I know has stories about items they bought off the street and resold at substantial profit. So what should we stock? Some categories are easier than others as they have a proven track record. Usually, however, the items that are the most proven are "commoditized" (e.g., loose diamonds, gold chains, basic bridal). Therefore they have lower margins. Most of your sales are "suggested sales": a client comes into the store asking for ideas, and you lead them to an item that "fits". Consequently it is imperative that you only have in your cases items for which you and your staff are passionate. Rather than buying to "fill a category", buy because your expert eye sees value, and you have a passion for that item. This way you can communicate your passion to your staff and clients.

► **BUY CLOSEOUTS LAST:** Closeouts by name are someone else's mistake. The items are often returns from large chains or overstocks that did not sell. We all know the adage "Buy low, sell high" is great but personally I would much rather pick from a vendors BEST items than their closeouts. You sell luxury items and the quality and fresh design will outlast any price savings. So save the "Closeout" budget for the end of the show and you might be surprised at all the fresh new stock that will be far more appealing to you, your staff, and your clients.

► **DEALING WITH YOUR VENDORS:** (Ok, I am one, so you may want to take that into consideration as you read.) As a vendor I live my life on a playing field. The goals on either end of the field read: "WE SOLD ALL OF YOUR PRODUCT!" and "WE HAVE EVERY PIECE LEFT!" As vendors, we are here to serve you. Our main measure is how well our products have sold. So please let us help you sell! The best question to ask a vendor is "What can you do to help us sell more of your products?" A good vendor partner will be loaded with ideas.

► **KNOW THE WHOLE STORY:** There are three questions on EVERY sale:

"What is it?"

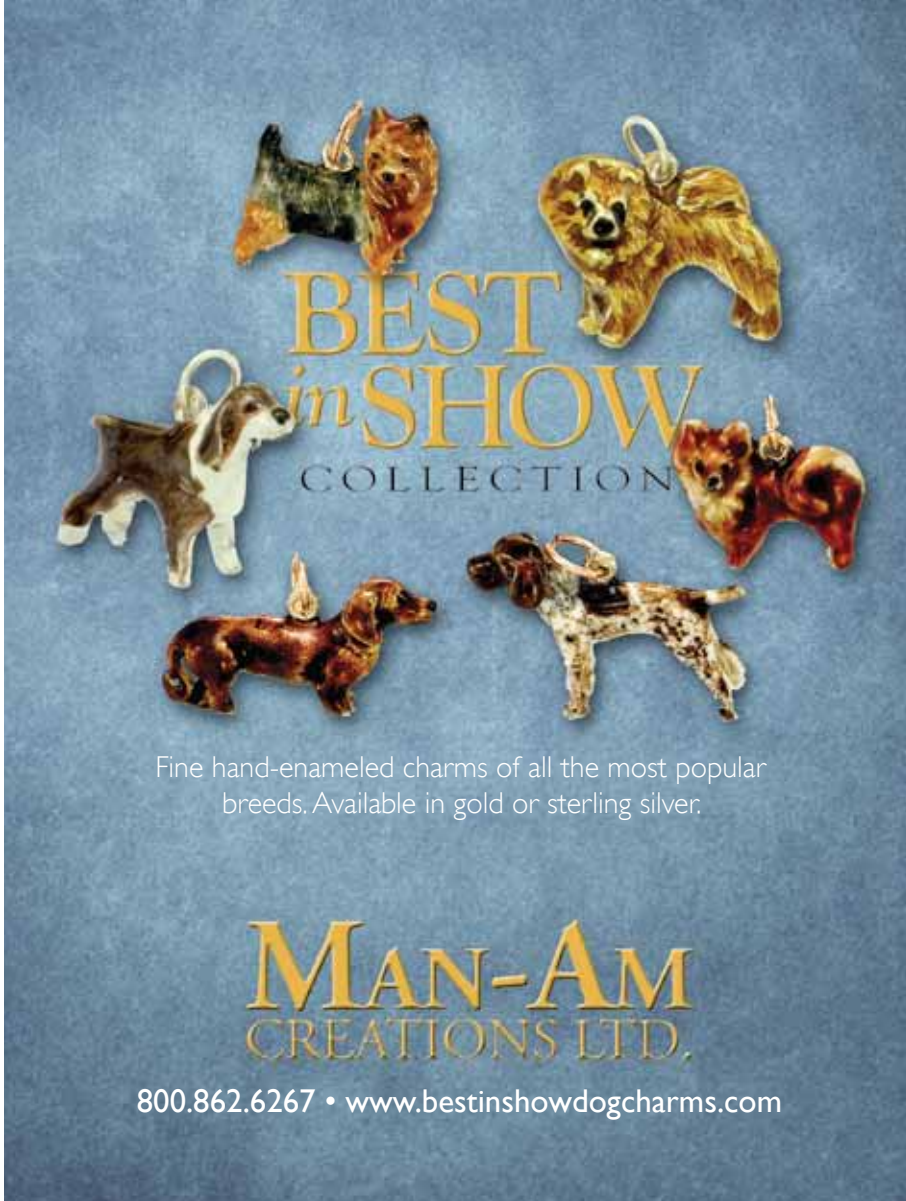
"How much is it?"

"Why is it that much?"

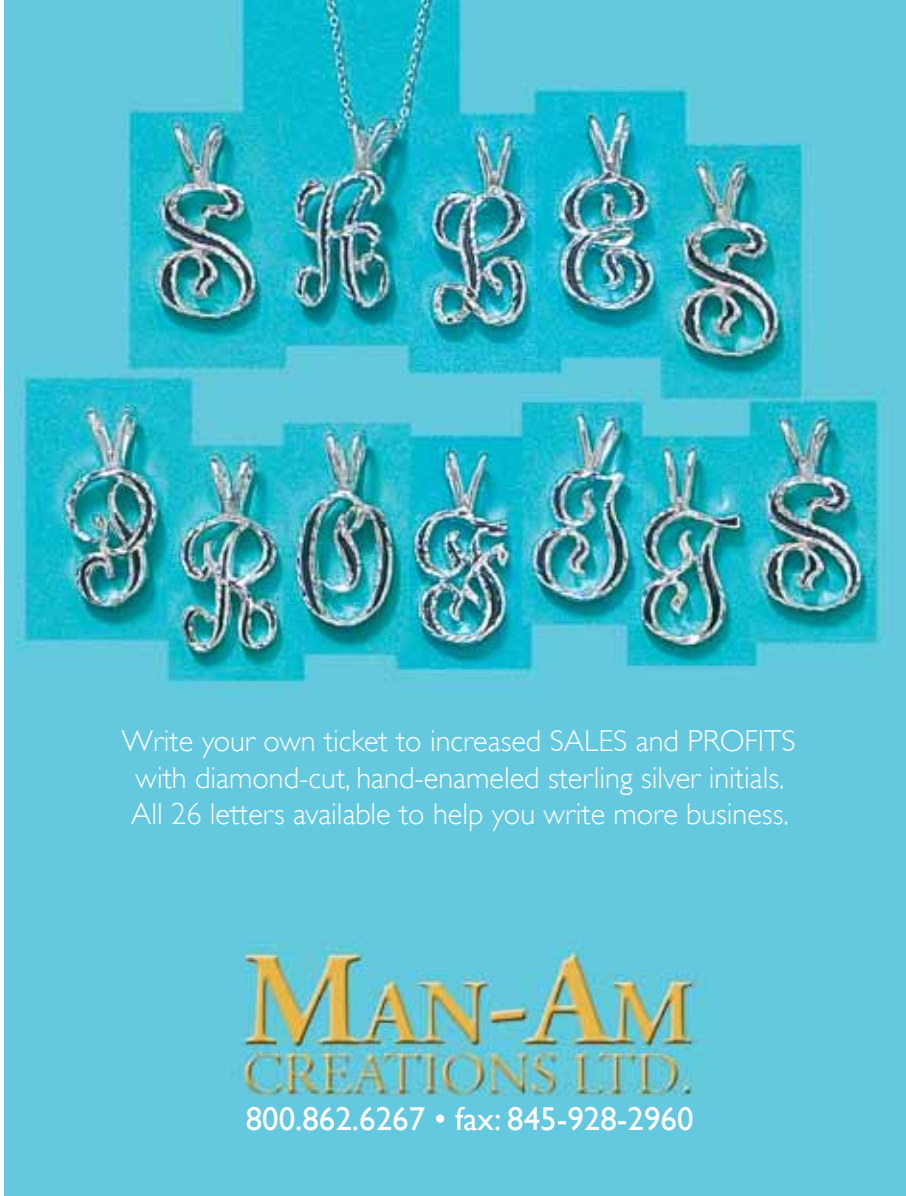
Your vendor needs to be able to give you an easy, straightforward answer so that you will be able to tell the story of your product. This will help you sell our products far easier.

Be honest with your vendors. If you are upset with our services or products, PLEASE tell us. We cannot fix what

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>> Continued to Pg 24
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The advertisement features a collection of seven hand-enameled dog charms in gold and sterling silver, arranged around the text "BEST in SHOW COLLECTION". The breeds shown include a Shetland Sheepdog, a Pomeranian, a Beagle, a Cocker Spaniel, a Dachshund, a Weimaraner, and a Boxer. Below the charms, the text reads: "Fine hand-enameled charms of all the most popular breeds. Available in gold or sterling silver." At the bottom, the company name "MAN-AM CREATIONS LTD." is displayed in a stylized font, followed by the phone number "800.862.6267" and the website "www.bestinshowdogcharms.com".



The advertisement displays two rows of diamond-cut, hand-enameled sterling silver initials. The top row shows the letters S, F, L, E, S, and the bottom row shows P, R, O, F, I, T. Below the initials, the text reads: "Write your own ticket to increased SALES and PROFITS with diamond-cut, hand-enameled sterling silver initials. All 26 letters available to help you write more business." At the bottom, the company name "MAN-AM CREATIONS LTD." is displayed in a stylized font, followed by the phone number "800.862.6267" and the fax number "845-928-2960".

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>> Continued from Pg 18

we don't know. Think of your vendor as a business partner. If a vendor does not hold up their side of the "partnership" let them know, and if you do not see improvement change vendors.

► **WE'RE PARTNERS, AFTER ALL:** If we have given good service and have met your needs, then please treat us like partners. With fewer sales people on the road, you are working with more principals and staff members at trade shows. This has pluses and minuses. On the one hand, owners and staff probably have better product knowledge and are not as likely to be on a straight commission where the sale may be considered more important than the relationship. On the other hand, a sales representative who has knowledge of your store and the local market can be very helpful. Most jewelers today have plenty of vendors but not strong enough vendor relationships. Partnering is the most important marketing tool, as jewelers who partner with their vendors have so much more to offer their clients.



► **TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT:** After you have met with the vendors in your plan, take the time to walk the show floor. Look for new display, product and marketing ideas for your store. Make a new friend or two. No vendor is "forever," and new relationships can bring new ideas and profit to your store. Don't ever be afraid to ask vendors about their products. Most of us love the opportunity to talk about our passion!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE NEXT TRADE SHOW!



Frank Farnsworth

Parle Jewelry Designs
frankf@parlegems.com



NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

MJSA Vision Awards Winners

MJSA, the association for jewelry makers and designers, announced the winners of its annual Vision Awards, which honor excellence in jewelry design as well as technical skill. The winners were presented with their awards at a ceremony during MJSA Expo New York at the Hilton New York on March 14, and the winning entries were on display for thousands of buyers and exhibitors during the show.

The winners of the 2011 MJSA Vision Awards are:

First Place, Design Excellence, and First Place, Laser Distinction;

Gregoré Morin of Gregoré Joailliers, Santa Barbara, California.

Second Place, Design Excellence; Second Place, Laser Distinction; and Second Place, Gold Distinction;
Julie Buckareff of JJ Buckar, Toronto.

First Place, Visionary Technical Solution;
Adam Neeley of Adam Neeley Fine Art Jewelry Inc., Laguna Beach, California,

Second Place, Visionary Technical Solution;
Edward Rosenberg and Mirella Connor of Edward Mirell, Deerfield Beach, Florida

First Place, Gold Distinction;
Barbara Heinrich of Barbara Heinrich Studio, Pittsford, New York.

First Place, Custom Design Distinction;
Cynthia Zava of Cynthia Renée Inc., Carrboro, North Carolina,

Second Place, Custom Design Distinction;
Doreen K. Sanborn, DKS Designs Inc., Fairfax, Virginia.

First Place, Future of the Industry Award for Students;
Young-eun Han, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York City.

Second Place, Future of the Industry Award for Students;
Natalia Davidich, Kharkiv State Academy of Design & Arts, Ukraine.

MJSA recognizes Vision Award winners through both publicity and advertising in industry publications. Prizes included gift certificates of up to \$500 (courtesy of Rio Grande), cash awards, book libraries, and, for student winners, scholarships of up to \$1,000.

>> Continued to Pg 28



Craig's Fine Jewelry Basics

Their Christmas Promotion Brought 1300 Visitors Through The Doors.

In 1950, Craig's Fine Jewelry opened for business on Main Street in Ridgefield, Connecticut. In the ensuing sixty-one years this family owned business has survived and prospered. What is especially noteworthy about Craig's is its focus on their people, the kind of personal service they offer and their connection to the community. The focus on their personnel is reflected in their website which in turn is validated by customer reviews. Customer comments refer to a "family like atmosphere" where the welcome is both genuine and warm.

Thinking back over those sixty-one years so many changes have occurred: Booms and recessions, wars in Korea, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Iraq, as well as the current uprisings in Egypt, Libya, and other places in North Africa. Fax machines, computers, the Internet, HD television, cell phones and all of the other technology innovations that have occurred since, not to mention trips to the moon and Mars and lest we forget, Facebook and Twitter.

Through all these incredible changes that affect us personally and our business lives it is somehow wonderfully reassuring to see a business like Craig's Fine Jewelry doing so well by a concentrated focus on providing a warm friendly atmosphere for their clients, teamed with creative promotional events that draw traffic into this main street store. It is a statement, too, about the basic fundamental raison d'être for jewelry.

Craig's distinguishes their store from competition with their focus on their store personnel, the designer lines they offer, and the services they provide. In addition, Craig's very effectively promotes the store through event promotions. Starting in 2009, Craig's launched Craig's Passport Series, an event that brings other community businesses including wine shops and restaurants as well as Craig's designer lines into the promotion on a series of Thursday evening events. At the conclusion of the 2009 effort, the grand prizewinner won a stay at the fabulous Phoenician Resort in Scottsdale Arizona. You can only imagine the power of the public relations efforts that developed from this promotion.

Following up on the successful 2009 promotion, Craig's launched The Taste of Craig's in 2010. These events again were held on Thursday evenings and paired fine wines from the Benzinger Winery and Craig's designer lines. Craig's invited local merchants to participate with sweets and hors d'oeuvres. Other local merchants were invited to participate as well. For example, a local spa provided hand massages for some of the events and also provided gift certificates for manicures and pedicures. Consumers had to visit Craig's for at least four events to qualify for the grand prize drawing, which was the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa in Sonoma County California. In 2010, there were eight separate events and each had specific themes. A few examples of the themes were Ladies Night, where Craig's





Over 1,300 people visited Craig's last December 3rd, the first night of the Holiday Stroll



Handbags were provided with Honora bracelets, nail polish, and a gift certificate for a manicure, Fall in Love with Craig's, and a Tiki Party. In both 2009 and 2010, their Christmas event was teamed with Ridgefield's Holiday Stroll on a Friday night. Over 1,300 people visited Craig's last December 3rd, the first night of the Holiday Stroll.

Lest you think Craig's has no competition, think again. Addressi Jewelers is a strong Main Street competitor in Ridgefield not to mention the jewelry merchants of New York City, which is only a short trip away.

Bill Craig followed in the footsteps of his parents Elsie and Norman Craig, and his grandmother Helen Craig. Bill is a graduate of GIA and is passionate about gemstones. He says, "I have always loved vibrant gemstones." Under Bill's leadership Craig's Fine Jewelry has retained the character of a main street jeweler featuring a knowledgeable well-trained and friendly staff. He says with a smile, "Craig's family is essential to our continuing success even though their last names may be different than Craig." He is also a firm believer in giving back to the community and support of local fund-raisers, donating to auctions and charities. He says, "It is important to work with the local government and businesses to support and promote a vibrant and healthy community."

With all the changes and challenges of the past sixty years, Craig's Fine Jewelry has survived and indeed prospered because they have focused on the important differentiators over the years...capable people behind the counters, fine products in the showcases, excellent service to back up their sales efforts, and a sense of community participation. It always comes back to doing the basics well!

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NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

EDWARD MIRELL BRINGS HOPE TO JAPAN

In March Contemporary metals fine jeweler Edward Mirell released its Kibou dog tag, which raises funds for the victims of March's earthquakes and tsunami and nuclear fallout in Japan. The Kibou dog tag, made of gray titanium or patented Black Ti and laser etched with the Japanese symbols for "hope", known as "kibou" in English, is Edward Mirell's first foray into fund-raising relief efforts through design. Proceeds will benefit the American Red Cross.

Ed Rosenberg, Edward Mirell's co-owner and lead designer said, "This project has special significance to Edward Mirell because of our numerous partnerships in Japan. As members of the International Titanium Association, we were so relieved when we received word from our friends in Japan that they were safe. But our relief turned to urgency as we realized we had to do something to help. The Kibou dog tag is our small contribution to this overwhelming crisis. We just wish we could do more."

Details of this initiative include:

- The Kibou dog tag is made of gray titanium or patented Black Ti and is laser etched with the Japanese symbols for "hope".
- The gray Kibou dog tag retails for \$29.95.
- The patented Black Ti Kibou dog tag retails for \$59.95
- Seventy-five percent of net profits from the Kibou dog tags will be donated to the American Red Cross.
- Sales of the Kibou dog tag began on March 21st and are available at www.edwardmirelljewelry.com



Renowned Italian Jewelry, Vicenzaoro Italian Club at JCK

The major U.S. buying appointment for Italian Jewelry is at the VICENZAORO Italian Club presented exclusively at JCK Las Vegas. Vicenzaoro Italian Club at JCK will present the latest in Italian designs incorporated into four trends that were revealed at Vicenzaoro First. These are Nature; The New Gold, "Silver"; Diamonds are Forever and Colored Stones. All of these trends are presented in personalized and unique pieces for the US market.

This year, Vicenzaoro Italian Club at JCK will feature the following companies among top brands: Crivelli, Annamaria Cammilli, Bonato Milano 1960, Ferraris Gioielli, Paolo Piovan Gioielli, Charade by MLK, Talento, G.Verdi, Adami e Martucci, Hasbani, Casato, Di.Go, RCM, Busatti, Gabriella Rivalta, Oromalia, Rajola, Sanalidro, Karizia, Brosway, Roberto Giannotti, Misis, Giloro, Labor & Co, Micheletto, Roberto Casarin.

"We are eager to showcase this year's Vicenzaoro Italian Club at JCK in the new location at Mandalay Bay," said President Roberto Ditri. "The Vicenzaoro Italian Club provides US buyers with real opportunities to forge solid business contacts. With current economic optimism moving consumers to purchase again, forging solid business partnerships at Vicenzaoro Italian Club at JCK with Italian manufacturers, designers and suppliers affords US buyers with an exciting opportunity to bring the very best "Made in Italy" jewelry to their most discerning customers. We are in full partnership with the JCK Event team to make this year's Vicenzaoro Italian Club one of the best ever."

Italian design, workmanship and style will be further represented at JCK Las Vegas this year as the following brands will be on the show floor. These companies include: Visconti; Staurino; Mattioli; Fope Jewelry Inc. & Piero Milano; Luca Carati S.R.L.; Garavelli Aldo S.R.L. and Ambrosi SRL.

To register to attend, visit www.jcklasvegasshow.com or call (203) 840-5684 or (800) 257-3626

Pawn Star Rick Harrison to Speak at GIA Symposium

History reality star to share pawn shop perspective at May 29-30 event

GIA (Gemological Institute of America) has announced that Rick Harrison of History's series "Pawn Stars," will be a speaker at Symposium 2011: Advancing the Science and Business of Gems. Pawn Stars, an American reality television show,



NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

chronicles the daily activities at the Gold & Silver Pawn Shop located on the famed Las Vegas strip, a third-generation family business operated by Harrison, and his father and son.

GIA Symposium 2011 is scheduled for May 29-30 at the Institute's world headquarters in Carlsbad, will bring international industry business leaders and research scientists together to share findings and insights that impact the global gem and jewelry industry.

Harrison will participate on the "Everything Old is New Again – The Appeal of Auctions, Estate & Vintage Markets" panel. Other panel and lecture topics will include consumer behavior, luxury marketing, design trends, social media, advances in gemstone treatments and technology, new gem localities and the social, political and ethical issues of the production and distribution of gems and jewelry.

Customers bring commonplace and historic items into the Harrisons' shop for evaluation. Sometimes surprising answers to the questions "What's the story behind it?" and "What's it worth?" are revealed as items are examined. Interesting items featured on the show included a 15th-century samurai sword, a Super Bowl ring, a Picasso painting, and a 17th-century stay of execution. If the Harrisons are stumped by the value or origin of an item, they call in a professional from their network of specialists for advice.

The Gold & Silver Pawn Shop was awarded the "Pawnbroker of the Year" award by the National Pawnbroker's Association for bringing the industry greater recognition and a better image through the TV show.

"We are thrilled to have Mr. Harrison join our roster of speakers," said Kathryn Kimmel, GIA vice president and chief marketing officer, who is co-chair of Symposium. "His natural ability to spot and assess the value of items, along with 28 years of business experience, is sure to show our attendees an interesting perspective on how pawned jewelry and watches impact the global gem and jewelry business."

GIA Symposium 2011 will commemorate the 80th anniversary of GIA. The event celebrates the Institute's commitment to serve the public and trade through research, education, gemological laboratory services and instrument development.

Registration <<http://www.gia.edu/symposium/index.cfm?content=registration>> is open, but space is limited; the event is already at two-thirds capacity.

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NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Thistle & Bee Spring Catalog

Thistle & Bee has released their Spring 2011 catalog featuring over 50 styles of luxurious sterling silver designs. The format of the catalog, sans pricing, makes it ideal as an over the counter piece when working with your customers. Call Thistle & Bee at 212-594-0418 for a copy.



- Order History – Online orders and their receipts are saved in your account.
- Live Help – Chat with one of our friendly and knowledgeable service agents.
- Comprehensive Search Function – Browse products by category, brand, SKU number, name or A-Z index.
- Security – Credit card transactions are processed through Authorize.net so users can be assured their credit information is 100% secure.
- Sales & Specials – Visit often to see current sales and specials on select products.
- News & Events – Up-to-date company information such as latest press releases and tradeshow schedule and information.
- Quick-Order Feature – Fast and easy way to order repeat items.
- Customer Reviews – New method for customers to rate products.

To fully explore all of the great new features, please visit the website at www.gesswein.com. Don't forget to sign up for their mailing list to receive exclusive offers.

Gesswein Unveils New Website

Gesswein has launched its new website at www.gesswein.com. The website offers powerful new tools, including comprehensive product information and search function, simple tabs to view by category or by brand, online-only sales and specials, a quick-order feature, product videos and customer reviews.

"Our most important goal when designing and developing this website was to meet the more sophisticated and complex needs of our customers," said Scott Petrillo, VP of Sales, Gesswein. "We believe that the new technology behind the enhanced functionality and increased usability of this site will provide tremendous value to our trusted partners."

Exclusive features and functionality of the new website include:

- Comprehensive Product Information – Product details, features and benefits, specifications, video, MSDS, and customer reviews.
- Reorder List – Build a list of favorite items so reordering is fast and easy.



Kirchner's "First Impression®" Line Makes a Big Impression

At a time when consumers want personalized and custom jewelry that has more meaning in their lives, the Kirchner Corporation is introducing what may be the ultimate in personalized jewelry. "First Impressions® is an innovative line of fine jewelry aimed at the family market. Each piece of "First Impressions" jewelry is a unique keepsake, made from an individual's fingerprint.

"The consumer visits your jewelry store to have the fingerprint captured, and we deliver the finished product, in 14K gold or Sterling silver, in 5 to 10 days," said Dan Kirchner, president of Kirchner Corp. Customers can choose "First Impressions" pendants or charms in three sizes with several 'halo' variations, and can add diamond or birthstone bails. Retail price points range from \$150 to \$5,000.

First Impressions creator Jake Fuhrman says, "People today want things that are relevant to their lives – that matter! These little reminders of someone's 'touch' become just that. Each piece of "First Impressions" is as unique as that person – child, grandchild, parent, spouse or 'hero'. This is 'custom jewelry' taken to the most personal level imaginable."



NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

The marketing of the "First Impressions" is as unique as the product itself. Drawing on their long experience in the industry, Fuhrman and Kirchner worked together to create a program that allows jewelers to carry this line for a one-time investment (currently \$199). Kirchner points out, "In today's market, jewelers are trying to reduce inventory costs and overhead. We've heard them, and we're responding. With 'First Impressions', there's no inventory to carry. Each piece is crafted individually."

The initial investment provides the jeweler with kits to capture the fingerprints, in-store display with samples, catalog, and marketing materials. "First Impressions" is currently the only nationally distributed fingerprint jewelry line that is available in stores. Fuhrman notes that the customer must visit the store several times, allowing the jeweler to establish a stronger personal relationship with their customers.

Contact Kirchner Corporation at 800-328-5637 for more information on "First Impressions".



Love Universe Inspiring with Design

The Gitanjali Group, in partnership with the multidimensional house of art, music, fashion, film and media, Yellow Fever Creative, has announced the launch of Love Universe (loveuniverse.com)...a new brand of lifestyle jewelry born from a powerhouse of creativity, high-design and innovation.

Also unique for garnering collaborations with the world of creativity, Love Universe will present co-branded collections signed by contemporary artists, fashion designers, supermodels, and creative celebrities from the acting and music world. A "Love Incubator" will be the platform for innovators to give a voice to their creativity through jewelry and accessories.

Stackable expressions™

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Stackable Expressions™ is a simple and stylish assortment of rings to adorn your hands and express your own style, your family and your personality.

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The Stackable Expressions™ rings were designed to ensure that all fit together nicely and will have a **LUXURIOUS FEEL** when worn. There are endless combinations possible to cultivate thousands of unique and personal designs. Every ring in the assortment is available in whole sizes 5 through 10.

Make it simple and sleek with bands or extravagant with diamonds and center stones. Space out rings and messages. Accent them with small bands of color or add a border to surround center feature rings. Select birthstones of family members to create a family ring. Change the rings and the order of them to fit your mood, the day or an event, or your growing family.

POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS™
when you mix and match this full assortment
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A lifestyle jewelry collection marked with distinctive sensibility that brings together sterling silver, gold, diamonds and colored stones, all worked with new advanced technology, Love Universe will represent a look and feel for today's fashionable, creative woman looking to wear contemporary, high-quality, affordable luxury.

With price points ranging from \$300 to \$1,200 for unique collectible pieces, Love Universe will hit the market in June 2011, presenting exceptional artistic collaborations within reach. The debut of the first collection will be during JCK Las Vegas, at the Love Universe reception hosted by well-known celebrities.

R•Findings Introduces New Wedding-Band Friendly Rings

R•Findings now offers a new series of rings that will fit comfortably against most existing wedding bands. Jewelers will now be able to offer their customers an attractive option in a solitaire or 3-stone style to complement an existing wedding band. Both styles are available with round or square settings. Complete details on sizes, metals and pricing may be viewed on-line at www.rfindings.com/whatsnew.html.



For more information about the range of products R•Findings has to offer the professional jeweler, call 800-422-7624, or visit the company's web site at www.rfindings.com.

GIA Courses at University of Witwatersrand

GIA (Gemological Institute of America) has partnered with the Wits Commercial Enterprise, a private company owned by the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa, to offer diamond, colored gemstone and jewelry arts education. The aim of these courses is to further beneficiation efforts by offering education that will develop and improve the skill base of local people.

Classes scheduled for 2011: April 4-8, April 11-15, Oct. 3-7 and Oct. 10-14. They will be held at 92, Empire Wits 2050, Johannesburg.

GIA will offer its Accredited Jewelry Professional Program (AJP) on-site up to four times a year. Each class will be available for 15 to 20 students. The AJP course, targeted at the retail jewelry professional, teaches students to provide accurate information on the 4Cs, design, style and manufacturing features of jewelry items their customers are considering, which instills trust and confidence in the pieces they decide to purchase.

Students interested in enrolling in these classes should contact giaeducationafrica@gia.edu for more information. Or they can call 27-82-260-4212 or 27-11-334-2744. Students can also contact Melissa Moodley at Wits Commercial Enterprise by calling 27-11-717-4598 or e-mailing melissa.moodley@wits.ac.za. For more information about GIA visit www.gia.edu.

Belle Étoile Announces new Regional Sales Directors

Designer fashion jewelry brands Belle Étoile, recently selected two new Regional Sales Directors. Judi Drinker, a respected and dedicated industry veteran, has been named Belle Étoile's West Coast Director of Sales. The company also named Susy Garcia Johnson, a talented and seasoned brand ambassador, its new Northeast Director of Sales.

"Belle Étoile is one of the hottest brands right now, and I'm looking forward to being a part of their growth," said Drinker. Johnson added, "This is the right product, at the right price point, at the right time." Jim Grohn, President of Belle Étoile, is excited to welcome these two professionals to the company. "Both of these talented individuals bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and integrity to our brand", said Grohn. Belle Étoile can be reached at 877.838.6728

GIA Taps Mann for Directorship

GIA (Gemological Institute of America) has named Mark B. Mann director of Global Jewelry Manufacturing Arts (JMA). Mann's appointment, effective Feb. 28, gives him responsibility to plan, develop, implement and evaluate the Institute's global JMA education programs. He will collaborate with GIA's domestic and international teaching faculty to improve and/or customize programs to suit local markets and serve new target audiences.

Mann has more than 35 years of experience working in jewelry retail, production manufacturing and jewelry manufacturing education environments. Prior to joining GIA, he was director of product engineering for Hearts On Fire, where he was responsible for ensuring jewelry quality and performance and developing a certified service center program. He was also formerly the director of professional certification and



NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

trade programs at Jewelers of America, where he facilitated the development of certification programs for jewelry manufacturing, sales and management at the retail level. During his tenure, he authored numerous trade and technical articles and was a frequent industry speaker.

"We warmly welcome Mark back 'home' to the Institute," said Bev Hori, GIA vice president of Education and chief learning officer. "His hands-on approach to design, engineering and manufacturing, combined with his teaching, writing and speaking abilities, make him an invaluable asset to provide excellent service to our students and constituents."

Mann earned his GIA Diamond Graduate diploma in the 1990s and is a recipient of the 2006 Technology Award from the Santa Fe Symposium®.

DCA Training Helps Zales Meet Goals

In a conference call on recent company performance, Zale Corporation Chief Executive Officer Theo Killion identified the Diamond Council of America's Diamond Courses and training as a factor in meeting company goals. Zale's revenues for the quarter ended January 31 grew 7.9%, compared to the same period in 2010.

"We said that we were going to return to our heritage as the diamond store by fixing the core assortment, investing in proven strategies, and returning to basics," said Killion, who became Zale's CEO one year ago.

In addition to merchandising, marketing and other moves, DCA training proved integral to meeting these objectives. "By investing in DCA training, we more than doubled the number of jewelry consultants who have the technical expertise needed to sell diamonds," Killion said. "During holiday, the DCA-trained consultants were more productive, with an almost double the average SPH – or sales per hour – of other consultants, and their sales reflected a higher penetration of diamonds."



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According to Terry Chandler, president of Diamond Council of America, "We are delighted but not surprised by the success of Zale's associates who received DCA training. Ours is the only course that is designed to increase sales in addition to product knowledge, and this is a great testament to the value it delivers."

The Diamond Council of America is a not-for-profit educational institution that develops and offers training aimed at helping retail professionals sell fine jewelry with expertise, integrity, and professionalism. For more information about DCA and its education program, call 615-385-5301.

Stuller Releases The Symbolic Jewelry Collection, Vol. 80

The new, 220-page book features more than 500 new styles and expanded collections such as Mother and Child® by Janel Russell, Inspirational Blessings™ by Deborah Birdoes and memorial jewelry collections including Comfort Wear™ and Memorial Tear®. The catalog isn't limited to just religious pieces, but also features a newly re-merchandised youth fashion category with popular collections such as Charming Animals™ and Waggles™. And for those die-hard football fans, an expanded stainless steel NFL collection is also included.

The Symbolic Jewelry Collection also features jewelry with a cause, benefiting organizations like the ASPCA, breast and ovarian cancer and veterans' causes.

"With a focus on popular jewelry trends, we are able to create collections that combine the newest fashions and the most accessible price points," says James Louviere, director of symbolic jewelry. "We have expanded almost every category of our catalog including new gemstone, pearl, and diamond crosses; new styles of family rings and pendants and a greatly expanded offering in sterling silver."

To view Stuller's entire selection of religious and symbolic jewelry go to stuller.com.



Gottlieb & Sons Launches New Website

Gottlieb & Sons a leading manufacturer of diamond bridal and fashion jewelry, is launching a new website in support of its retailer advertising campaign launched late last year.

The site features a variety of interactive and social media functions and is specifically designed to appeal to the interest of couples for personalization and customization.

"Couples today are interpreting bridal traditions in ways that are unique to their tastes and preferences," says Jerry Gottlieb, VP of Marketing for Gottlieb & Sons. "That very much extends to bands and engagement rings and we wanted a site that enabled young women and men to experience a very personalized ring shopping experience while taking advantage of the social media functions that are an integral part of their lives."

The new site features an innovative custom ring finder that allows users to quickly and easily focus in on styles from the broad Gottlieb & Sons collection that best matches their personalities and tastes. The Ring Finder utilizes a series of "faders" or slide tools that help the user pan from wedding-related preference variables such as Wedding Dress style, Music tastes, Wedding location and Honeymoon destination, to help them quickly identify ring styles that reflect their personality. As the user adjusts the faders, ring suggestions become visible, corresponding to the unique combination of variables selected by the user.

The site is being launched in support of an advertising campaign that Gottlieb & Sons is targeting for use by jewelers in local markets. Titled, "Every Romance Has A Story. Wear Yours.," the campaign is designed to appeal to Millennials - who are coming to comprise the bulk of those marrying today - and their desire to have engagement and wedding jewelry brands that fit into their lifestyle and not brands that they need to "aspire" to.

Visit www.gottlieb-sons.com to see all the features the site has to offer.

Superfit Inc. Moves to Center City Philadelphia

Superfit Inc., producers of a patented Superfit® custom ring mechanism that allows rings to fit perfectly at the base of a finger, moved into new headquarters in Center City Philadelphia. The company, which also makes the popular CliQ® jewelry line, expanded into a loft space in the Belmont Building, close to Philadelphia's newly expanded Convention



NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Center and the Reading Terminal Market. Superfit Inc. cited the need for a larger manufacturing space as well as proximity to all the amenities and services of one of the most strategic locations on the East Coast.

"We loved the idea of moving into downtown Philadelphia from our suburban headquarters in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania," says Gena Alulis, CEO. "We're now surrounded by businesses who, like us, are involved in creative endeavors and moving toward urban centers again. The energy of the city and its vibrant population make this an exciting expansion for our company."



From its new location, Superfit Inc. will continue to produce its well-known Superfit hinge and latch system, as well as expand its installation services to jewelers. "Our new studio will facilitate the increasing demand for the Digital Installation™ service," says Eric Alulis, vice president for product development. Superfit Inc.'s patent pending digital installation process allows the system to be seamlessly incorporated into a CAD file utilizing some of the most advanced CAD/CAM technologies available.

Superfit Inc.'s toll-free number 800-765-7111 remains the same in Philadelphia, and customers are urged to call, email (info@superfitinc.com), or visit www.superfitinc.com.

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You can reach Man-Am Creations at their new address and contact information.

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BUSINESS is going to the DOGS

Statistically almost half of the customers walking through your door have a dog. Many are real dog lovers. You know the type; when they talk to their dog, in baby talk, they refer to themselves as mommy and daddy. In fact you may be a dog lover so you can understand why the pet industry totaled \$47 billion last year.

A few innovative companies are making it possible for you to profit from Fido's popularity with dog themed jewelry items and even dog accessories sold in jewelry stores.

Pet theme jewelry and accessories aren't just limited to enthusiast sales, they are also ideal for cause marketing when tied in with an animal rescue organization in your community.

For unique new products to offer your customers consider 'putting on the dog'.

Graham International's Wendy Graham who refers to her daughter's Bull Dog as her "grandson" has expanded on her expertise in fine leather watchbands to introduce fine leather dog collars handcrafted by London-based Hennessey & Sons. The collars are available in a wide range of sizes and colors, and feature couture-quality leather and stainless steel tags that may be personalized by a jeweler.

Man-Am Creations produces an extensive line of enameled dog charms. The Best in Show collection features most popular breeds in remarkable detail. These highly collectable charms are available in sterling silver and 14K gold.

Rufus Graham



Graham International
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Photo Credit: Harrison McIntyre

The PupiPaw charm bracelet or necklace, from BabyFeet, is a wonderful gift for the dog lover. It is a collection of paw print charms in gold, sterling silver or a combination with an engravable back for a personalized message.

Thistle & Bee caters to the dog loving men with an assortment of enameled sterling silver cufflinks. Bulldog and Black Lab sterling silver with hand-painted enamel. Made in Italy.

LeStage's popular Convertible Collection bracelet has gone to the dogs with interchangeable this adorable puppy clasp or an engraveable dog bone clasp.

For younger dog fanciers Sugar n' Spice a children's jewelry collection from Artistry Ltd., includes cute 18K yellow gold with blue enamel dogs available as ear studs or a necklace. **TRJ**

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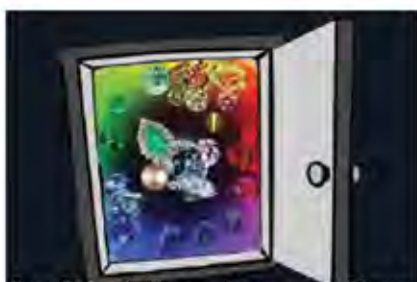
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