

TEXAS

the publication of the
Texas Jewelers Association

Summer 2008

Jeweler

**TJA 70th Annual
& Conference
Exposition
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Cover Spotlight photo courtesy of Stuller Inc. The Paspaley South Sea cultured pearl-12mm, and Genuine Citrine-6mm, Peridot-6mm, and Amethyst-8mmx6mm (Shown with CH116, sold separately) can be customized with stunning cabochon gems like Pink Tourmaline, Carnelian and Rhodolite Garnet. Visit the gemstone pages on Stuller.com for more information or call (800) 877-7777.

Doug Jackson



Greetings to One and All

Texas' best jewelers. A truly grrreat bunch of people who are bright, fun, great looking, personable, and just plain "good folks". I promise you will learn some things that will more than pay for your expenses if you will apply what is learned.

The TJA has lined up some great educational speakers, as well as those who are inspirational. You really need to be there to be a part of this great association,

and while you're here, why not be an active part and volunteer to serve on the board of directors. It is rewarding and quite an educational process and will be appreciated by the association. Ya know, you might enjoy it, too!

Again, thank you for allowing me to serve. See you in San Antonio.

Your Humble President
Doug Jackson

Since this is my final message, I would like to take a moment to say THANK YOU for allowing me to be your president for the past 2 1/2 years, it has been a distinct honor and will always be a very special part of my memories.

The most important thing I have to say is to encourage you to make time in your schedule to attend the annual conference in San Antonio this Sept. 12-14. Not only will you have a great time in this famous city, but will be able to mix and mingle with some of

Don't let the TJA Convention Deadlines Sneak Up on You!

Hotel Deadline August 29

Jewelry Design Contest Deadline September 5

Registration Deadline September 5

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TEXAS

Jeweler

Association 2008

70th Annual Conference and Exposition

September 12-14, 2008

San Antonio • Menger Hotel



Come join the
Texas Jewelers Association
70th Annual Conference and
Exhibition at the historic
Menger Hotel

Important Dates!!!

Hotel Deadline

August 29, 2008

Jewelry Design Contest Deadline

September 5, 2008

Registration Deadline

September 5, 2008

The *Menger Hotel* in *San Antonio*



It is a bit of paradise nestled on the San Antonio Riverwalk, next to the famed Alamo and attached to the River Center Mall. Feel the warm friendly atmosphere of downtown San Antonio. Relax in the calming rhythms of the culture. Close your eyes and follow the call of the riverboat captains who float over the endless river trails of San Antonio. And, when you return to earth, come experience one of the coolest party atmospheres on the Riverwalk at the Lone Star Café Saturday night at the TJA Dinner party overlooking the tourists on the river. Nearby, you'll find a playground of shopping opportunities, golfing, tours, trolley rides and tourist attractions.

Be sure to bring the kids or grandkids. And when it is time to feed the body, retire to the full-service Menger Hotel restaurant or any of the great restaurants, which are all within walking distance along the river. So, whether you're looking for a relaxing family vacation, a romantic getaway, or a fantastic TJA group meeting, come to San Antonio and experience our networking opportunities and enjoy all of San Antonio's charms.

- In addition to its significance as a historical landmark, the Menger offers unparalleled amenities including: The famous Colonial Room Restaurant, the Menger Bar, downtown San Antonio's largest heated swimming pool, a full service spa, fitness room, and jacuzzi, just to name a few.
- Free High Speed Internet access in all the guestrooms and wireless access in the lobby area.
- Airport Shuttle Service is provided by **SATrans** and picks up every 30 minutes. Tickets may be purchased at the airport terminal.



MENGER HOTEL ROOM RESERVATIONS

Deadline: August 29, 2008, *but rooms fill fast... don't wait!*

210-223-4361
204 Alamo Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Room Rate: \$118 Single/\$125 Double (+ tax)

*Reference "TJA" as you make your reservation. After 8/29/08, no guarantees regarding room rate or availability are implied. Valet parking is \$25 and self-parking is \$5-\$18 just around the corner from the hotel.

TJA 2008 Conference Tentative Schedule

Tentative schedule is subject to change. The TJA Conference Onsite Program will contain final TJA conference schedule and hotel room assignments.

Friday, September 12, 2008

6 -7 p.m. Hotel/Bar Only- Dinner on your own or with the TJA networking group
9 p.m. Informal Social gathering – See Hotel lobby room posting

Saturday, September 13, 2008

11am – 6pm Registration
8-10 a.m. TJA Board Meeting
10 a.m.—noon Exhibitor Set Up
Noon – 5pm Exhibits Open
1– 2 p.m. **Maximizing your Holiday Season Sales** - Brad Huisken
2:15 -3:15 p.m. **Bullet Proofing Appraisals** - Bill Hoefler
3:30 -4:30 p.m. **Round Table Discussions**
4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Visit Exhibitors
6:30 p.m. **TJA Group Dinner on the River – Lone Star Café (Band and more!)**

■ TJA Share Fair Session

The Highly Anticipated Peer to Peer Round Tables

PARTICIPANT NOTE: The TJA round tables “rotate table participants” and change every 30-45 minutes for maximum exposure to multiple topics.

■ Share Fair - Round Table Topics:

- **Business Mark-ups:** Ronnie Miller - Meyerland Jewelers/Facilitator
- **Employment:** Hiring, Firing and Other Issues: Jewelers Mutual
- **Marketing:** Facilitator: Brad Huisken
- **Internet \$\$:** Facilitator: Trace Shelton
- **Retirement/ Business Transitions:** Federated Insurance
- **Appraising Jeweler:** Bill Hoefler

Sunday, September 14, 2008

7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Breakfast
7:30 - 9:30 a.m. Exhibits Open – Visit the Exhibits (Closed for lunch)
9:30 - 10:15 a.m. **Bulletproofing Your Business** - Bill Hoefler
10:15 - 11:00 a.m. **Maximizing Your Holiday Season Sales** - Brad Huisken
11:00 - 11:45 a.m. **Turning The Tables on Internet Competition** - Trace Shelton
Noon TJA Lincheon Banquet/ Business Session

- Jewellery Contest Winner awards
- Federated Insurance Presentation

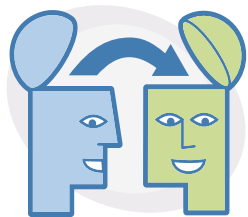




2008 JEWELRY DESIGN CONTEST

Deadline September 5, 2008

Every year some fantastic creations are sent for judging to TJA and every year the attendees get to vote on "Best of Show". The atmosphere, the judging, the anticipation is unique and always exciting for those viewing and for the annual contestants. If you have a show piece that qualifies, simply use the entry form or download it from the TJA website at www.Texasjewelers.org. The overall winner is automatically entered into the JA national event. Texas has walked away with this national honor on several occasions. Be sure to make the entry deadline of September 5, 2008.



FOR CONFERENCE QUESTIONS

TJA Conference Manager

Tava Patterson

1306-A West Anderson Lane
Austin, TX 78757

Phone: (512) 454-8626

Fax : (512) 454-3036

email: tpatterson@assnmgmt.com
or jmccullough@assnmgmt.com

TRANSPORTATION



DRIVING

Most TJA conference participants at this years TJA 2008 Annual Conference and Exhibition will find that a 3-4 hour drive will get them to San Antonio from most major metro areas in Texas on one tank of gas. Austin/108 miles, Corpus 145, Dallas/282, Houston/199, San Angelo 218 so it not a long drive for most but it is surely worth the extra effort to get to a nationaldestination like San Antonio.



FLYING

If you wish to fly, you will be arriving in San Antonio it is only 15 minutes to downtown. American, Continental, Delta, Express Jet, Southwest serve SA with regular flights. Check online for details.

**VERY
IMPORTANT
INFORMATION**

REGISTRATION CANCELLATION POLICY

Payment must accompany the registration form, or the onsite registration fee will be charged. All cancellation requests must be received in writing at the TJA office by 9/5/08. Cancellations received in writing prior to 9/5/08, will be refunded minus a \$25 processing fee. All refunds will be processed after conference. If this conference is cancelled for any reason, the liability of TJA to the registrant is limited to the return of the registration fee only.

Texas Jewelers Association

2008 Jewelry Design Competition

Entry Form

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2008

Eligibility

Anyone who is a TJA member, or is employed by a TJA member, or a student, currently enrolled at a college or university, who is interested in designing and/or creating a one-of-a-kind piece of jewelry.

Rules of Entry

- Category 1,2 and 3 are for the bench jeweler to show their expertise in jewelry design. The person entering these categories must be the only one to touch the piece from conception to final polish.
- Pieces cannot have been mass produced or previously sold.
- Pieces must have been produced between March 2007 and September 2008
- Pieces may have been entered in other competitions, but cannot have won any awards.
- Pieces should not be identified or hallmarked until after the judging.

Details of Entry

Entrants may enter one piece in each of the four categories. Each piece must be submitted with a \$25.00 nonrefundable entry fee. Only finished pieces will be accepted.

Category 1 Material may not exceed \$1,000.00. Pieces must be made of silver, gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

Category 2 Material from \$1,000.00-\$3,000.00 Pieces must be made of gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

Category 3 Materials over \$3,000.00. Pieces must be made of gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

Category 4 Open Design. This category is for pieces of any value, silver gold or platinum, with or without stones. These pieces may have been designed and created by more than one person.

Deadline — Arrive by Friday, September 5, 2008

Application, entry fee, and finished piece must arrive by Friday, September 5, 2008

Judging

The entries will be judged by qualified people in the jewelry industry. When the pieces are being judged, they will be identified by number only. The judges will select the winning pieces on the basis of creative use of materials, craftsmanship, wearability, originality, and fashion merit.

Awards

Awards will be awarded to the winning piece in each category listed above and to the "best overall," which may be from any category. Display of entries and presentation of awards will be during the Annual Conference. Entrants are encouraged to attend. The winning piece judged "best overall" will be entered in the Jewelers of America national contest in February 2009.

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your entry in the 16th Annual TJA Jewelry Design Competition. We appreciate your interest and support of the organization. Please fill out and submit the following form with your entry fee. Finished entries must be received by September 5th, 2008.

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Categories Entered *(only one piece per category)*

☐ Category 1: _____ (\$25 entry fee)

☐ Category 2: _____ (\$25 entry fee)

☐ Category 3: _____ (\$25 entry fee)

☐ Category 4: _____ (\$25 entry fee)

Describe the jewelry pieces entered, including material value (cost). Attach an additional page if necessary.

Send Entries to:

TJA Design Contest

Lathrops Gem Shop

Attn: David Harleston

6702 Ferris St.

Bellaire, Tx 77401-3919

713-665-0614

All finished entries must be sent by registered mail, insured, with a return receipt. Photographs and press releases will be given to each winner for designer's personal use. Entries remain the property of the person entering them. All nonwinning entries will be returned by registered mail as soon as possible. TJA reserves the right to keep the winning entries for a period of two months for photographing and promotional use. TJA assumes no liability for loss or damage to any piece.

TJA Convention and Exhibition

BILL HOEFLER, GG, FGA



Jeweler Bill Hoeftler is a nationally known appraiser, author and lecturer. Prior to becoming an independent appraiser, he owned a jewelry store, Master Jewelers. Bill has been a professional gemstone and jewelry appraiser and consultant for over 20 years, and a recognized expert witness in his field for many of them. He holds the graduate gemologist degree from the Gemological Institute of America, as well as the coveted FGA credential from the Gemological Association of Great Britain. In addition to completing the ISA core course in appraisal studies, Bill completed the paralegal program at West Valley College in California. He holds certificates from Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts in goldsmithing, advanced goldsmithing, mokume gane, and granulation. Recently Bill joined Arthur Groom and company, a recognized leader in emerald enhancement development, as their senior marketing strategist and dealer relations executive. In this position, he plays a major role in promoting the acceptance of emerald enhancement in the retail and public sectors and regularly lectures on emeralds before groups around the country. In addition to creating and teaching the Expert Witness course for ISA, Bill is the creator and editor of the wellknown Appraiser Under Oath Web site, and has developed seminars on Harnessing the Power of Insurance Appraising, and Estate and Tax Liability.

BRAD HUISKEN



Mr. Brad Huiskens has been in sales since 1971. Since that time he has been directly involved in all aspects of sales and sales management. His experience and knowledge have enabled him to author the highly acclaimed book "I'm a Salesman! Not a Ph.D." and his new book "Munchies For Salespeople! Selling Tips You Can Sink Your Teeth Into." In addition he has developed the PMSA Relationship Selling Program, the Train The Sales Trainer Course, the Professional Sales Management Course, The Mystery Shoppers Kit, The Weekly Sales Meeting Training Series, The Salesperson's & Sales Manager's Aptitude Test for new hires and The Salesperson's & Sales Manager's Proficiency Exam for existing professionals the Employee Handbook and Policy & Procedures Manual and his new Weekly Jewelry Sales Training Series.

For more than twenty years he has been doing sales and management seminars all over North America, India and Australia. His company IAS Training, which he started in 1996, delivers public and private seminars and in-house consulting on both sales and sales management. In addition his company sells books, and audio and video programs on these subjects. Brad uses practical methods, realistic strategies and usable techniques to help increase sales through providing exceptional customer service. His seminars are fun, motivational and educational.

In the jewelry industry Brad writes a monthly article for *JCK Magazine*, has had articles published on *JNET* and has had several of his articles featured in the Stuller newsletter, *The Midwest Jewelry News* and *The Southern Jewelry News*. In addition he has spoken at the JCK Show in Orlando and is a regular frequent speaker at the Las Vegas JCK Show, JCK AIM 2008 in Mumbai, India, the JA Show in New York and for numerous state JA organizations. Brad's specialty is in-house training and consulting. He works with both large and small companies installing sales management systems and training salespeople on sales, customer service and communication. The success of these projects is a direct result of the implementation of these systems and the unique follow-up given by IAS Training.

TRACE SHELTON



Trace Shelton is editor-in-chief of *INDESIGN Magazine*, the monthly business publication for retailers of fine jewelry design. Prior to the launch of *INDESIGN*, Trace was a senior editor with *INSTORE Magazine*, contributing to virtually every section of the magazine during his tenure, winning two Tabbie awards for lead stories in the magazine, and working with top experts from both

Speakers & Topics

in and out of the industry on a regular basis. He was a business consultant for six years before he started with *INSTORE*, and worked with more than 60 jewelry retailers during that time, primarily on marketing campaigns.

Over the past decade, brick-and-mortar jewelry stores have seen ever-increasing amounts of sales slipping through their fingers and into the hands of Internet e-tailers. No overhead means lower prices--and, even when that isn't necessarily true, consumers believe it to be true and that perception is killing sales. So, what can you do about it?

In this program, Trace Shelton will share insights and real-world examples gleaned from his work on behalf of *INSTORE* and *INDESIGN* Magazines.

Prepare to learn:

- sales techniques for meeting Internet-based objections
- what your web presence should look like (and why you absolutely must have one)
- the biggest no-no's of building your website
- when e-commerce makes sense, and when it doesn't
- how to keep costs reasonable
- how to market your website



Summer 2008

Saturday, September 13, 2008

Bulletproofing Appraisals – Bill Hoefer

Bill Hoefer understands that “appraising” holds a different meaning for everyone. For some it is a profession; for some, it is a necessary evil; and for others, it is merely gift wrapping for a sale. Whether appraising a customer’s jewelry or a diamond one has sold; retailers should know that appraising has rules and legal responsibilities. Bill is an aficionado who researches proper valuation methods. For more than 20 years, he has helped individuals and stores learn to appraise to both complement their stores and correctly render valuations that holdup in court. He will share his secrets so that everyone can have confidence in this aspect of their business.

Maximizing Your Holiday Season Sales - Brad Huisken (Plus Round Table Discussion)

This seminar is a fun and motivational look at what businesses need to do in order to maximize their holiday season selling opportunities. The Holiday Season is the time when more customers are coming through your doors than at any other time of the year. Salespeople have to be trained to be selling machines in order to capitalize on the multitude of selling opportunities that are available. You will learn what the real goal of a sales presentation is (hint: it is not to make a sale) and the different types of customers every business has and what you need to do with each customer type. Through the course of the program, Brad Huisken will detail and discuss numerous aspects of the selling process that salespeople must incorporate into their sales presentations.

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Bulletproofing Your Business – Bill Hoefer

There are no Jewelry Retailer self defense classes available. Just what is it that the average retailer needs to know about the law that can bypass a costly lawsuit? You cannot earn a black belt in this session but you may avoid being sued. Learn the legal logic for taking in repairs. Find out what to say about diamond certificates to avoid legal action. Bill Hoefer will present a series of self defense measures designed to avoid litigation, losing money and most of all making your day-to-day operations safer.

Maximizing Sales In Tough Times – Brad Huisken

Brad Huisken will lead participants through a fun and motivational seminar on Selling in Tough Times – Strategies to Maximize Sales. In today’s retail environment, Mr. Huisken believes that when people come into a retail jewelry store, they are not necessarily looking for jewelry. Mr. Huisken believes the customer is looking for a place and a person from whom to buy the jewelry. With the competition increasing from the mass merchandisers, other retailers, the Internet and the perception the media has given the public, retailers today have to learn how to sell themselves and the store. In addition Mr. Huisken will detail topics such as, how salespeople can help “brand” the store, telephone campaigns, three responsibilities of a salesperson, handling objections, selling yourself & the store, customer follow-up, analyzing lost sales and much more.

Turning the Tables on Internet Competition – Trace Shelton

Trace Shelton will share insights on how to compete with internet competitors.

Texas Jeweler – 11

Texas Jewelers Association 2008 Annual Conference & Exhibits

San Antonio, Texas

REGISTRATION FORM

September 12-14, 2008

Registration form also available at www.texasjewelers.org. If you need another registration form for a colleague, feel free to photocopy this form. To receive the early bird discounted fee, pre-registrations must be postmarked, faxed, or received online by September 5, 2008. Plan to register on-site at a higher fee after 9/5/08. Do not mail forms to TJA office after 9/5/08. A Full Enrollment Registration fee admits you to all functions. Your Full Enrollment Conference Badge is your admission to exhibits, all sessions, and conference meals & functions. A receipt will be included in your packet at registration check-in. Refunds will be processed after the conference if a written request is sent before 9/5/08. There will be a \$25 processing charge on refunds.

Special Assistance

- ☐ I will require special assistance
☐ I have special dietary needs.

Specify: _____

Complete this entire form. Type or print clearly for each registrant.

First Name / Registrant _____ Last Name _____

Badge Name _____

Spouse or Staff Name(s) Registrant _____

Place of Employment/Company Name: _____

Mailing Address _____ City/ST/Zip _____

E-mail address (required for confirmation) _____ Phone: _____ - _____

NOTE: If you are a retail store owner, spouse, or store manager, you pay either the TJA Member or Nonmember "Full Registration Fee." If you have employees, they can choose from and add to selections below.

Registration Fees

Postmarked by After Total 9/5/08 will not receive refunds.

Full Registration — Full Attendance

(includes all meals, seminars, and social functions)

☐ **TJA Member or Staff: Full registration**

(includes all meals, seminars, and social functions.)

☐ **TJA Member or Staff:**

(includes only seminars, and Exhibit Hall only meals extra)

☐ **Nonmember Store Owner: Full registration**

(includes all meals, seminars, and social functions.)

☐ **Nonmembers/Staff:**

(includes only seminars, and Exhibit Hall only meals extra.)

Qty.

_____ @ \$200 \$ _____

_____ @ \$75 \$ _____

_____ @ \$225 \$ _____

_____ @ \$100 \$ _____

Total

One-Day Attendance only

Saturday Only *(includes seminars, Exhibit Hall, and reception)*

Sunday Only *(includes seminars, Exhibit Hall, breakfast & luncheon)*

_____ @ \$85 \$ _____

_____ @ \$150 \$ _____

Additional Meal Tickets

(must be purchased by September 5, 2008)

Saturday Reception.....\$25 each _____ Quantity \$ _____

Sunday Breakfast & Luncheon.....\$35 each _____ Quantity \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Credit Card Payments:

Select One: ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Cardholder's Name _____

Cardholder's Phone _____

Billing Address _____

City/ST/Zip _____

I authorize TJA to charge my credit card \$ _____

Signature of Cardholder: _____ Date _____

I authorize TJA to charge my credit card and understand the bill statement will read Texas Jewelers Association.

☐ **Check Payments**

For office use: _____

Date received: _____

Amount: \$ _____ Check # _____

Mail this completed form with registration payment to:

**TJA
1306-A West Anderson Lane
Austin, TX 78757**

If paying by credit card you may fax to 512/454-3036 for fastest registration; or register online at (www.texasjewelers.org). A receipt will be enclosed in your registration packet.

For Questions: 512-454-8626



Susan Sadler, owner/designer
of Susan Sadler Fine Jewelry Design
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Coverage you can count on.

"Jewelers Mutual has been there for me through thick and thin. There is no other insurance company for me."

People you can count on.

"I lost everything in a robbery in 1996 and know the importance of insurance. Jewelers Mutual was there for me then and is there for me now."

— Susan Sadler
Susan Sadler Fine Jewelry Design
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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YourInsuranceExpert@jminsure.com



Digital *Photography*

101



Tips from a JEWELRY PHOTOGRAPHER

BY ANDY SOLOMAN

WE'LL START AT THE VERY BEGINNING

with a short discussion on a camera's lens. While "normal" lenses are good for most situations, they do not have the ability to work at short distances. The best they can get is a tiny image from relatively far away. A MACRO lens, however, is formulated to work in close and is very sharp. With proper attachments, they can get in as close as to 1:1 on the film plane.

Relationship of Lens Opening and Depth of Focus

In photography THREE elements work together to make an image come together: lens opening, shutter speed and film speed. Like a tripod, these three determine how the finished result will turn out.

Larger lens openings make for less depth of focus, smaller openings create more depth. BUT larger openings can use faster shutter speeds while smaller ones use slower speeds.

For jewelry, a camera should be on a tripod.

Since the jewelry is not moving, shutter speed is irrelevant. Depth of focus is paramount so the smaller the lens opening the greater depth of focus and sharper the image.

To insure even better image quality you want to eliminate as much camera shake as possible, so you must make sure that when you press the shutter release you are careful not to move the camera. The best idea is to use the self-timer to minimize the risk of movement.

In addition, for those using digital SLRs, if your camera offers the option of Mirror Lock-Up, using it will reduce vibration even further!

ISO Speeds

This is a numerical indication of sensitivity to light. Slow speed means higher and cleaner quality, less noise but slower shutter speed. High speed means lower and coarser quality, more noise and faster shutter speed, but might cause irregular colors to occur.

White Balance

Although most shooting can use the AUTO setting for optimum White Balance where the Color Temperature is 3000-7000 Kelvin, there are times when natural-looking colors cannot be obtained to suit the respective light source. When the color temperature is high, there is more blue, and when the color temperature is low, there is more red. To the human eye; however, a white object looks white regardless of the lighting. Shooting in a light tent uses lighting of varying temperatures—often a mix of florescent and incandescent creating colors off from normal. On the camera you can set the white balance manually to make the image look more natural by selecting what should be white and permitting the camera to make the resulting adjustments. In shooting product—especially jewelry where accurate color of gemstones is very important—color integrity must be carefully controlled.



If you are using a light box, once you make your adjustments, you can save them as Custom Settings for you to use whenever you need, while using AUTO or other settings as you want.

Lighting Types and Styles

Most light boxes use a mixture of incandescent and florescent lighting, which produces shadowless light preserving all the jewelry detail. That is good, but the drawback is that the image produced lacks sparkle and interest.

You can handle that matter in at least two ways. [1] Use a fiber optic light that you can position to make specular highlights of varying intensity or [2] Use digital processing software such as Photoshop to create the effect.



**Andy
Soloman**

Author Andy Soloman will be available at the Texas Jewelers Annual Convention at one of the round table events. Check out the convention schedule for more information.

Photoshop Enhancements, Adjustments

Using Photoshop opens many options for adjusting your digital images: sharpness, color, hue, saturation, contrast—so many operations that would be impossible to do in a darkroom! It is the seminal program for digital post-production editing.

You can make mirror-images that make items look as if they are reflected on their surface and you can make spotlight areas in which jewelry can be placed. There is no limit to what the program can provide you.

If you are already using Photoshop, I recommend you join the National Association of Photoshop Professionals [NAPP] not only for their excellent magazine but also their web site, which offers on-line videos and tutorials. I have downloaded and printed over 100 tutorials that have been of tremendous help.

The other, and most important, component they offer is their HELP service where you get response not in days, as is the case in so many applications, but often within hours. It is fantastic!

Item setups

The most widely-used manner of shooting jewelry is through either a light box or a tent. Both provide an even and shadowless environment for balanced lighting. Adjustments in lighting in some models are incandescent, fluorescent and filtered lighting—each with specific color temperatures and effect. For each you need to white balance for proper color capture.

In contrast to a light box, tenting provides the ability to place lighting just

where you want for more shadow type and control. Spots, barn doors and other items permit greater control.

As I mentioned before, fiber optic lighting devices are available to produce controlled specular highlights.

To balance jewelry, use modeling wax. It will hold rings upright and make them look proper.

RAW vs JPEG Formats

A camera raw file contains unprocessed, uncompressed grayscale picture data from a digital camera's image sensor, along with information about how the image was captured. Photoshop Camera Raw software interprets the camera raw file, using information about the camera and the image's metadata to construct and process a color image.

Think of a camera raw file as your photo negative. You can reprocess the file at any time, achieving the results that you want by making adjustments for white balance, tonal range, contrast, color saturation and sharpening. When you adjust a camera raw image, the original camera raw data is preserved. Adjustments are stored as metadata in an accompanying sidecar file, in a database, or in the file itself (in the case of DNG format).

When you shoot JPEG files with your camera, the camera automatically processes the JPEG to enhance and compress the image. You generally have little control over how this processing occurs. Shooting camera raw images with your camera gives you greater control than shooting JPEG images, because camera raw does not lock you into processing done by your camera.

To shoot camera raw images, you need to set your camera to save files in its own camera raw file format.

JPEG format

Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) format is commonly used to display photographs and other continuous-tone images in hypertext markup language (HTML) documents over the World Wide Web and other online services. JPEG format supports CMYK, RGB and Grayscale color modes, and does not support alpha channels. Unlike GIF format, JPEG retains all color information in an RGB image but compresses

file size by selectively discarding data.

A JPEG image is automatically decompressed when opened. A higher level of compression results in lower image quality, and a lower level of compression results in better image quality. In most cases, the Maximum quality option produces a result indistinguishable from the original

About the Author

Andy Soloman worked for over 30 years at Houston Jewelry & Distributing Company, his family's business that has been an established fixture in Houston for over 50 years. As a catalog showroom of over 88,000 square feet, it flourished with many specialty departments including cameras, sporting goods, luggage, sundry drugs, fine giftware and more including jewelry and watch repair, custom jewelry design and manufacturing. Its specialty was fine jewelry and its reputation for excellent merchandise and customer service firmly established.

His experience there for over 30 years included working in every aspect: warehousing, departmental sales, management, diamond buyer, jewelry and watch buyer and more. When they closed the business in response to the diminished national popularity of catalog showrooms, he was Vice President of the

expanded family business which included three Sterling Jewelry & Distributing showrooms located in Dallas.

Subsequently he and his son, Rex, continued the family tradition by opening Houston Jewelry & Fine Gifts. The store features fine jewelry and watches, loose diamonds, fine gifts, jewelry and watch repair. Furthermore, it contains the Andrew Solomon Fine Art Photography Gallery

which displays for sale a changing selection of my traditional color fine art photography.

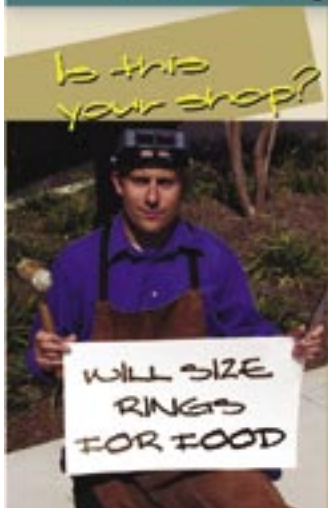
According to Soloman, "Creating high-quality digital images of our fine jewelry for flyers, signage, newsprint, video and magazine publication is one function which not only presents a creative and technical challenge for me but also the need to make different backgrounds, lighting and setups."

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New Version 5.0 of Geller's Blue book includes updated pages mailed to you during the year as metals fluctuate, so your shop profits continue.

Geller new 5.0 Version is now in a 3 ring binder for updates, includes:

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- Take-in counter mat
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- Includes millimeter gauge and calculator
- Includes findings stock numbers for many popular findings houses.
- All for \$399. Special update price for previous 4.0 users only.



I just wanted to let you know that your price book has changed our business completely. My staff uses it like a bible on take-ins. It certainly keeps the pricing fair from one job to another.
Kevin Hilderbrand: Hilderbrand Jewelers-Perryville, MD.

David,
Your pricing book is one of the biggest reasons my business increased its gross by 40%.
Bob Staley: Bob Staley Jewelers-Cartersville, GA

The BIG Survey

InStore magazine published the results of their annual survey in their April 2008 issue. “The Big Survey” tallied results from more than 750 independent jewelers from across the nation. *InStore* has been kind enough to allow the Texas Jewelry Association to reproduce highlights of their survey. Some of the more interesting results follow! For the full results, visit www.instoremag.com. Enjoy!

services & inventory

Do you have an in-store repair shop?

Yes	84%
No	16%

Do you do custom design work?

Yes	91%
No	9%

Do you do appraisals?

Yes	86%
No	14%

Break down your annual sales by percentage in the following categories:

Diamond jewelry	19%
(EXCLUDING BRIDAL)	
Bridal jewelry	15%
Repairs	15%
Loose diamonds	12%
Colored gemstone jewelry	11%
Karat gold	8%
Designer lines	6%
Timepieces	5%
Other	4%
Pearl jewelry	3%
Estate/antique	2%
Gift cards	0%

Over the past year, which of the following gemstone categories has been your best performer (based on a combination of sales, growth and margins)?

Diamonds	70%
Colored gemstones	25%
Pearls	4%
Synthetics	1%

Same question, but this time for metals:

White gold	68%
Yellow gold	13%
Silver	7%
Platinum	6%
Palladium	3%
Titanium	1%
Stainless Steel	1%

Same question once more, this time by the jewelry category.

Fashion (women's)	52%
Bridal	35%
Anniversary	11%
Timepieces	2%
Others	0%





Please estimate the percentage of your wedding-band sales (in terms of total sales value) in the following categories:

White gold	52%
Yellow gold	26%
Platinum	11%
Titanium	4%
Tungsten	4%
Palladium	3%

Not including sapphires, what is your best-selling colored stone in terms of total sales value?

Ruby	24%
Amethyst	18%
Other (see below)	16%
Emerald	9%
Tanzanite	8%
Tourmaline	7%
Garnet	6%
Aquamarine	5%
Peridot	4%
Citrine	2%

Comments: Sapphire was so dominant last year that we left it out this time. (And some of you still tried to sneak it in!) In the absence of the great blue one, ruby and amethyst were the big winners. "Others" mentioned included opal, tsavorite, alexandrite, spinel, jade and quartz. But the biggest "other" vote was for blue topaz as well as other topaz varieties — smoky and mystic.

What is the best-performing brand-name jewelry you carry?

1. Hearts On Fire (61 votes)	
2. Pandora (47)	
3. Simon Golub (37)	
4. Simon G. (18)	
5. Rolex (15)	
6. Hot Diamonds (11)	
7. Seiko/Pulsar (10)	
8. Tacori (10)	
9. Stuller (9)	
10. Gabriel & Co. (8)	
11. Allison-Kaufman (7)	
11. Elle (7)	
11. Leslie's (7)	
14. A. Jaffe (6)	
14. Roberto Coin (6)	
16. Chamilia (5)	
16. David Yurman (5)	
16. Hidalgo (5)	
16. Scott Kay (5)	
20. Alex Sepkus (4)	
20. Bellarri (4)	
20. Breuning (4)	
20. John Hardy (4)	
20. Lazare Kaplan (4)	
20. Martin Flyer (4)	
20. Rego (4)	

The holiday season (from Black Friday to New Year's Eve) accounts for what proportion of your sales?

16-25%	45%
26-35%	36%
36-50%	10%
0-15%	8%
More than 50%	2%

What is your busiest month for selling diamond engagement rings?

December	39%
April	11%
May	10%
November	8%
February	6%
October	6%
June	5%
March	4%
September	4%
January	2%
July	2%
August	2%

How much did your top salesperson sell last year?

Less than \$150,000	37%
\$250,000-\$499,000	23%
\$150,000-\$249,000	21%
\$500,000-\$750,000	9%
More than \$750,000	9%



How much does your top salesperson earn in total (including salary, commission and bonus)?

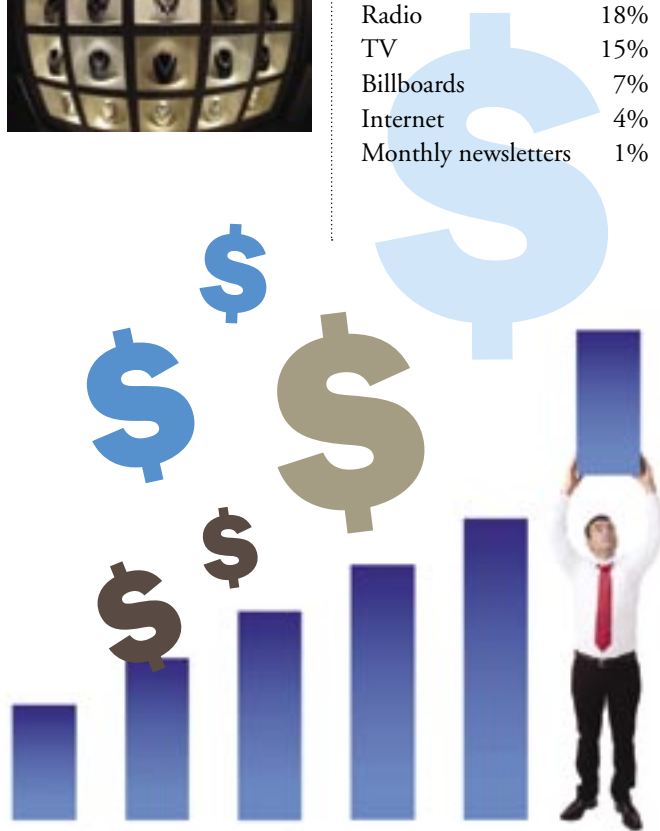
Less than \$30,000	28%
\$30,000-\$39,900	21%
\$40,000-\$49,900	20%
\$50,000-\$64,900	13%
\$65,000-\$80,000	10%
More than \$80,000	8%

Your store's average gross margin of profit on all goods is:

50%-64%	45%
35%-49%	35%
20%-34%	8%
65%-80%	7%
More than 80%	3%
Less than 20%	2%

Which of the following gets the largest portion of your advertising budget?

Print	33%
Directmail including catalogs	21%
Radio	18%
TV	15%
Billboards	7%
Internet	4%
Monthly newsletters	1%



Meet Garven Garcia

One of TJA's Newest Board Members

The Texas Jewelers Association would like to welcome its newest board members, Garven Garcia and Jay Volk. So that members can get to know their board representatives, we'll conduct an interview each issue of *Texas Jeweler* so you can get to know them.

In this issue, we introduce Garven Garcia with Roseco, Inc., a wholesale vendor that provides a variety of services (www.roseco.com). Garcia serves as the director of sales and marketing for the Dallas-based company.



How long have you been in the jewelry business? I've been in the jewelry business, off and on, for about 17 years now. I previously worked for a finished-goods wholesale company, then for a from-drawing-to-finished-goods manufacturer, and now with Roseco. This fall, I will have been with Roseco for 10 years. I've served as sales manager for each company.

What is your favorite thing about your job? What I like best about my job is getting to meet and do business with all the characters in this industry. Believe me, there are plenty of characters. I've been fortunate to do business with and make some good friends along the way. Like most professions, you have to like what you do to keep at it. For me, it's the people that keep me interested.

Least favorite thing about your job? Hmmmm. I would have to say it's the paperwork. I don't care much for sitting and filling out paperwork, but it has to be done.



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What's the best advice anyone in the industry ever gave you?

Weeelllll, it wasn't in the jewelry industry, but years ago I had a friend in the clothing business tell me, "Know your product, then treat people right. Your employer, your customer, your associates, if you know your product and you treat people right, everything else will fall into place for you." I do my best to live by those words in my career and I would offer that same advice to anyone who asked me.

What is one thing that would make business more profitable for retailers?

Know your customer, then give them what they want. So many retailers try to do everything, but so very few succeed. Know your niche, know your customer, then stick to that and give them what they want better than anyone else in the marketplace. Can you buy customer loyalty? Probably not, but you can sure sell it by the way you treat every customer you have.

Why is it important to serve on the Board of Directors?

I like to think that I bring a different perspective in the jewelry business

to the board. Vendor associates lend an alternative view on a great many business and marketing issues that face the board. I suppose you'd have to ask my fellow board members whether my contributions were noteworthy. In the end, it's important to participate in the endeavor and not simply be content to be a spectator, or worse still, be a critic and nothing more.

When I was a child, I wanted to be a....?

As a kid, I wanted to be a haberdasher. Sounds odd, I know. But, ever since I can remember, I've taken pride in my appearance. I always dreamed of having a full-service men's store. My store would feature clothing, but also have a barber shop and even a bar in the back. Of course there would be a place for a man to buy jewelry for his lady. You know, a one-stop place for men to get it all done. That's how I like to shop. One stop!

How do you spend your time away from work (hobbies, interest, etc.)?

My family is pretty athletic so we're always on the go. My wife of 20 years (as of April 30th),

Linda, is a jogger and into physical fitness, as is my daughter Olivia. My son Gil is a soccer, football, and basketball player in school. I'm into Tawkwondo for the last four years and test for my black belt in June. One day I'd like to be an instructor. I've played indoor soccer, and rec league softball but martial arts is my hobby now.

Still, the whole family loves boating and all of us water-ski like crazy, all summer long. Call me, I'll let you in on the best lakes anywhere.

Before my interview is over, let me thank *Texas Jeweler* magazine for your interest in my story. I am proud to serve on the board and hope that we continue to make the Texas Jeweler's Association the envy of the nation in our industry.

**COMING NEXT
ISSUE**

Meet Jay Volk



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How NOT to Answer a Phone Call

BY NANCY FRIEDMAN, TELEPHONE DOCTOR



THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, MANY OF our Telephone Doctor® clients have taken the time to jot us a note letting us know about their good and bad experiences, both in person and on the phone. Judging from the amazing number of entries we received for our book *Customer Service Nightmares*, I suspect this is their way of venting and releasing frustration. We're always happy to receive your notes and emails. Keep 'em coming, please.

The recent email below gave us some good ammunition for an article. While the industry, as you can see, is in the legal profession, believe me, it happens all the time in every industry. Read on:

Around 1:00 p.m. today I returned opposing counsel's telephone call from this morning. The first person that answered the phone took my name and asked me to hold while he checked to see if she was back from lunch. After a short hold he came back on the line and transferred my call. At that point opposing counsel's assistant answered the phone. She took my

name for the second time and put me back on hold. After holding a couple of minutes, opposing counsel's assistant came back on the line and asked if I could call back in twenty minutes! I am sure that her assistant is telling opposing counsel that I am a jerk because I answered, "No, I am calling her back now."

Let's say you're training a group. What usually happens is most of the group understands, learns and benefits from the information you've taught. Unfortunately, not everyone "gets it." What do we do about that small percentage of employees - often good, conscientious people - who may need personalized attention after training? Those are the ones who need coaching.

Unbelievable. Makes me wonder how they handle calls from their clients.

It's not important to know the "who" in this story. It's more important to learn the "why" it happened. And more importantly, how to fix it! That's what this article is about.

It's a well-known fact that first voice you hear when you call a company sets the tone, makes the first impression and welcomes the caller. It starts the rapport-building factor. Few will argue that point. While there are several "faux pas" in the above email note we received, which is the MAJOR one? Reread it and see if you don't agree with Telephone Doctor mentality, culture and philosophy. Our answer is at the end of this article.

In the meantime, it sounds as though the opposing counsel's office can use a dose of our Basic Telephone Skills program. Listed below are a few key points from our popular DVD program Basic Telephone Skills. Know anyone else who might benefit from this list?

We're going to give you the Telephone

Doctor® Four Step Model for effective coaching in a call center or business environment.

1. While we didn't get to find out HOW they answer the phone with their initial greeting, we hope they used the Telephone Doctor 3-part greeting. A buffer, the company name and then their name. Remember; "How can I help you" is NOT necessary in initial greetings. You are there to help. That is why you answered the phone.

2. Learn how to put a caller on hold. "Hold on," CLICK is not effective. Neither is "Hang on a second." Several years ago we ran a survey with USA Today to find out what frustrates the caller the most. YES, BEING PUT ON HOLD was the NUMBER ONE frustration of the American public. That was 12 years ago. Today, it's number 3 with, yup - you guessed it - the automated attendant being number one!

3. Monogram the call. If the caller lets you know his/her name; USE IT. Immediately.

4. Leave a good lasting impression. Seems as the opposing counsel's office didn't do that. Remember we'll tell more people about a bad experience that we will a good one. Not sure why. But it's true.

What's the biggest Faux Pas?

Asking a caller to call back! We never ask anyone to call back. That's like kicking a customer out of the door at the store. When someone calls us, it's our job to return the call, or have it returned on our behalf. Asking someone to call back is just RUDE. (Exception: there are times when the caller will say, "Let her know I called and I'll call back." That's fine if it's the caller's choice. But to ask a caller to please call back; Wow! BIG MISTAKE. That's a real NO NO!

Cover Spotlight Stuller Inc.

TJA Tell us about Stuller. From our manufacturing and administrative headquarters in Lafayette, Louisiana, Stuller provides "Just in Time" delivery of more than 200,000 different items to jewelry professionals around the world. We are a prime manufacturer and distributor of a vast array of jewelry related products and services, including bridal and finished jewelry, mountings and findings, diamonds and colored gemstones, fabricated precious metals, jewelers' tools and supplies, and packaging and display materials. Through our innovative manufacturing and distribution techniques, Stuller has become known for its unparalleled service and next day dependability.

Accepted in 2005 as a Diamond Trading Company (DTC) Sightholder™, we joined a select group of the world's leading diamantaires, purchasing directly from the world's largest supplier of rough diamonds by value. Now more than ever, you can be sure when you buy from us,

you receive consistent quality, service, selection, and value - directly from the mine to your store.

TJA Tell us about your professional partnerships. In addition to our continuing support of the Texas Jewelers Association, we pride ourselves on partnering with numerous national and state organizations. In fact, many have recognized us for our accomplishments. We recently received the MJSA Innovation Award for a state-of-the-art fusion of special sizing stock and a custom vise clamp known as the Preform Sizing System™. The MJSA Innovation Awards recognize technologies that are making a difference in the jewelry industry today, and will continue to do so in the future.

TJA Tell us about the person behind Stuller. Matt Stuller is founder, CEO and owner of North America's largest prime jewelry manufacturer and distributor. After one semester at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (then USL), Matt left school to launch his own business—which he literally started out of the trunk of his car—selling findings to jew-

elers across Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and eventually Texas. Over time, he built the business into an industry leading position, creating a system of service whereby jewelry-related products can be shipped overnight to anywhere in the United States.

Matt Stuller's determination, vision, and commitment to excellence have guided not only his businesses, but have been demonstrated on all boards on which he serves. He is a member of the Gemological Institute of America's Board of Directors, and serves that body as both the Chairman of the GIA's Endowment Campaign and as a member of its Endowment, Audit and Color Gemstones Committees.

Stuller is a board member of the New Orleans Branch of the Atlanta Federal Reserve System. He is also a member of the Board of Governors at Ascension Episcopal School; the World President's Organization; Sons of the American Revolution; 24Karat Club Southeast United States; and the United Way's Alexis de Tocqueville Society.

For more information, visit www.stuller.com.

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W W W . L A S E R S T A R . N E T

The Value of Building a Relationship

BY BRAD HUISKEN



The profession of sales encompasses much more than selling as many products to as many customers as possible. Of course, every salesperson wants to sell as much as possible, but how do we accomplish that goal? The answer lies in taking the time to build a relationship with the customer. While it sounds simple, this goal is difficult to achieve. A salesperson who is able to successfully build a strong selling relationship with their customer will ultimately have a more successful and rewarding career compared to the person who just wants to sell as many products as possible without getting to know any of their customers. We will talk about developing a strong selling relationship with customers and how that relationship will help us throughout the selling process.

As with anyone else that we have never met, there has to be an initial contact with our customers. We have all been told through the years how important first impressions are and that is especially true in sales. Many still believe in the common

stereotype of salespeople as being pushy, aggressive, and at times overbearing. Initial contact, if done right, can go a long way to eliminate that old and tired stereotype and instill a sense of comfort in the customer's mind. There are three objectives when making initial contact with a potential customer.

The first objective is to eliminate the fear. We have already touched on this a little and the idea is to put the customer at ease. The second objective is to create a person-to-person relationship. Customers are going to feel much more comfortable if they can talk to us as another person rather than as a salesperson looking for a commission. The third goal of making initial contact is to start building trust. No relationship will last for any length of time without trust and the seller/buyer relationship is no different.

The first and perhaps best way to begin establishing a relationship with a customer is accomplished through having non-business related conversations. Keep in

mind that the customer dictates the selling process and that every sales presentation will be unique and different. In some cases you will start with the demonstration, and others you may start with closing. For the purpose of this article I will give it to you in a logical order, yet many presentations won't follow the logical order. Every salesperson in every store focuses the majority of their attention on how to handle objections and close a sale, but not all of them can get to the point where objections will come up. If a customer is able to talk with a salesperson about subjects other than what they may be buying, then the more comfortable they become. As they become more comfortable, the salesperson has already started to eliminate the fear, create a person-to-person relationship, and build trust. There are three rules when entering a non-business conversation that you need to be aware of before you start.

The rules are:

1. You must ask a question.
2. Your questions must be non-business related.
3. Your questions have to be interesting enough to cause people to want to talk with you.

If you are able to successfully implement these rules and get into a non-business conversation, there are a number of topics that may be used. For example, the subject of sports is a great way to establish rapport with a customer. Let's use the rules above and lay out an example of how a non-business conversation may go. If a computer salesman notices that a potential customer is wearing a professional team logo T-shirt,

then he/she may say something like "Did you see that game on Sunday?" Chances are decent that either they will say yes or something along the lines of, "No, I missed that one." Either answer will get you into a non-business conversation. As you begin to talk about the sport and/or the team, you will probably learn other things about the customer that may be useful later in the sale. The customer may say something like, "I took my two sons to the game two weeks ago and we had a blast". That is information that can be used later when you begin talking about what type of computer the customer might be interested in buying. If they are teenagers, for example, you might show the customer features and benefits that would be useful for schoolwork. Not only have you gone a long way in establishing a positive relationship with the customer, you have also obtained a piece of information that will help you when it comes time to make your presentation. Not bad for a simple question about sports.

You should have more than a few initial contact questions that you are able to ask to get into non-business conversations. It is also a good idea to rehearse and memorize your questions so they are second nature. It is a good idea to have twenty to thirty questions prepared to use at anytime. Those questions should cover a wide variety of subjects allowing you to make initial contact with people of varying interests. The key lies in time and preparation. A little time spent on preparing your questions will result in more sales and long-standing relationships with your customers. At the very least, you will assure yourself of getting to the initial contact stage with each customer and while that will not guarantee a sale, it will increase the likelihood.

Some other topics that may be used to start a non-business conversation are current events, holidays, vacations, cars, pets, and children. There are subjects that are to be avoided, such as politics, religion, or any other subject that could be considered sensitive or controversial. The last thing you want to do is offend a customer, so staying with topics that are more neutral is the best way to go.

Now that we have begun to eliminate the

fear, create a person-to-person relationship, and have started to build trust, we are ready to embark on the process of satisfying our customers' needs. As we go, though, it is vital that we remember we are constantly building, nurturing, and maintaining the relationship that we worked so hard to develop. Just because we have entered into the seller/buyer part of our relationship does not mean that we quit getting to know our customer. One of the first things that must be accomplished is getting from a non-business conversation to a business conversation. There is an old saying that timing is everything and that certainly applies here.

So how do we make the smooth transition from a non-business conversation to a business conversation? There is no hard and fast rule but the time is right when both you and your customer feel comfortable and you feel that you have accomplished your goals with your previous conversation. It is vital, though, that you remain aware that you are still in the process of getting to know your customer. Just because you have entered into the business part of your relationship does not mean you stop that process. Your customer has entered into a business conversation with you because they felt comfortable with you during the non-business conversation. They can just as

easily back out of the business relationship if they sense, even for a minute, that you were insincere during the non-business conversation.

The easiest way to get into a business conversation is by using a simple question; such as, "So, what brings you into our store today?" If and whenever possible, use the company name when asking that question because it never hurts to get the company name out there as often as possible. If the customer chooses not to buy from you on that day and is going to shop around then you have planted your company name in his mind, making it more likely, that they will remember their conversations with you. Appointment situations provide an easier avenue to get from a non-business conversation into a business conversation. The customer has made an appointment or was invited in to look at a particular product; therefore, a "just looking" response is highly unlikely. Just remember that having business conversation does not preclude you from continuing to get to know your customer.

Let's say a young man has just come into your store looking to purchase an engagement ring for his girlfriend. The two of you have had a nice conversation about the local minor league baseball team and have started to develop a level of trust with

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The professional salesperson will set them self-apart by continuing the relationship with the customer after the sale.

one another. It turns out that you both have friends who play on that team and that you both attend almost all of the home games. A fair amount of time goes by and you ask, "So what brings you into Smith's Jewelers today." The customer tells you that he is getting ready to pop the question and is shopping an engagement ring. You have successfully figured out why the customer is in and can now proceed into selling and showing your line of engagement rings. As the sales process continues, you notice that your customer is wearing a class ring from the local university, the same university that you attended during your undergraduate days. You never want to divert too far away from selling your product but you also want to continue to build the relationship that you have worked so hard to develop. During a lull between showing rings, saying something along the lines of "did you go to the University of wherever?"

Assuming he says yes, you may enter into a brief conversation about years, professors, and memories in general. The neat thing here is you can bring it back to the selling part of the relationship by asking, "By the way, where did you meet your fiancée?" Whether the customer answers yes or no is not important, what is important is the idea that you were able to build your relationship with the customer even more and were able to tie it back together with the business side of the relationship.

The part of developing and maintaining good customer relations is often overlooked and may be the most important. Too many times after a sale is made, people assume the transaction is complete. However, the professional salesperson will set them self-apart by continuing the relationship with the customer after the sale. A sales career is not built on one-time sales to a million different people; it is built on building a

loyal customer base and repeat business. There are a number of avenues to follow up with customers and set you apart from everyone else. Many of the ideas that we are talking about are very simple and take just five to ten minutes. Isn't a small part of your day worth the repeat business that those minutes may bring in?

One of the most common and easiest ways to continue a relationship with a customer is to send a thank-you note for their purchase. Most people think of thank-you notes following weddings, birthday parties, graduations, or other such occasions. Thank you notes can be a powerful tool in maintaining your customer base after the sale is complete. If someone buys a car from a certain dealership and one month later, they receive a thank-you note for their business, then odds are they will come back when it is time to buy another new car. Simple gestures go a long way.

Follow-up calls are also a great tool to maintain your customer base and to ensure repeat business. It is probably unrealistic to make follow up calls in an industry where volume is high but there should be no excuse for not doing it for bigger purchases. The young man who bought an engagement ring from the jeweler in the above example is the perfect candidate for a follow up call. The relationship has been well established at this point and a follow up call can only strengthen that relationship. A follow up call can also take on the quality of a non-business conversation, which can also enhance the relationship. If you were to ask how is everything with the ring you purchased last week, then you will establish two goals. One, you find out if the customer is satisfied with the purchase which is your number one objective. Two, you have shown an interest in how everything went with the ring which hopefully will lead to a non-business conversation. Thank-you notes and follow up calls require nothing but effort, so set yourself apart by setting some time aside to make sure you are taking advantage of the work you have already done.

Two more methods to maintain good customer relationships after the sale are business cards and sending holiday cards. Most people underuse business cards and do not take advantage of what their business card



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can do for them. A number of people hang onto business cards and refer to them when they need a specific service. If your card is in their Rolodex when they need a necklace for their wife, then you may make a sale just by handing out a business card. Holiday cards are also a great way to continue to foster a customer relationship. Pick a couple of different holidays throughout the year and send a formal greeting card to at least the top 20% of your customer base. Send an Anniversary Card, maybe a Birthday Card and without a doubt a card at the holiday season. People like to display all the holiday cards that they receive and they remember who sent them. Even if it is a computer-generated card, the idea, like business cards, is to get you name out there. Many people have a "card box" and will keep holiday cards and if they remember, they got a card from "A" company and not "B" company, where do you think they will shop first? I will give you one guess.

A company newsletter is also an excellent way to stay in contact with your customers, assuming it grabs the interest of your customer base. It is vital that you have information that many people will be interested in such as, local news, store or industry information and favorite recipes. Once you have them interested, they will probably read the rest of the newsletter, which should feature your company and your products. A trade magazine or newsletter should go out to current customers and potential customers. A good newsletter can also contain games, such as, word searches and crossword puzzles. With the access that computers and photocopiers have provided to us, newsletters can be done inexpensively. All it takes is a little time and effort and you are a step ahead of your nearest competitor, who probably is not putting out a newsletter of their own. Maintaining customer relations after the sale may be more important than your relationship before and during the sale because it can lead to repeat sales. Make sure you are the salesperson who takes advantage of all the tools provided.

Any salesperson in any field can have a good day of sales on any given day but the professional salespeople will foster and maintain customer relationships that will

allow them to sell to the same customer repeatedly. Repeat sales separate the average salesperson from the professional; make sure you are taking all the steps necessary that will set you apart.

Author, trainer, consultant, and speaker Brad Huiskens is President of IAS Training. Mr. Huiskens authored the books I'M a salesman! Not a PhD. and Munchies For Salespeople, Selling Tips That You Can Sink Your Teeth Into, He also developed the PMSA Relationship


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Jewelers for Children Canister Program

The Jewelers for Children in-store canister is a great way to involve your employees and your customers. Each year, retailers contribute more than \$ 150,000 from canister collections in their stores. That's a lot of change!

Some of the best ways we've heard to use the canister include:

- When you perform a small task for

a good customer, like cleaning a piece of jewelry or inspecting it, or when changing a watch battery, and don't charge them, ask them for a donation to JFC.

- Keep the change – When a customer pays cash for a product or services, ask them if they'd be interested in putting the change in the canister.

- Show your customers you're involved – run a special for a day, a week, or even a month, asking them to put a donation in the canister and agree to match what is donated, up to a limit.

- Ask you employees to drop their pocket change in on Fridays.

There are lots of ways you can use the in-

store canister to raise funds and it's a great way of showing your customers that you support the industry's charity.

Howard and Leslie Hurwitz of Howard's Jewelry, a two-store independent jeweler in Ohio know how easy it can be. In 2005, Howard and Leslie raised more than \$10,000 in their canisters.

If you don't have a canister in your store, contact JFC today. Reminder: If you do have a JFC canister in your store, please remember to periodically empty the money out and send it to JFC. There are more than 4,000 JFC canisters across the country and that's a lot of money sitting on your counter!

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2.3x2.3 to 2.7x2.7	.10	\$ 625	\$ 725
2.8x2.8 to 3.1x3.1	.15	\$ 750	\$ 850
3.2x3.2 to 3.4x3.4	.20	\$ 850	\$ 925
3.5x3.5 to 3.7x3.7	.25	\$ 950	\$ 975
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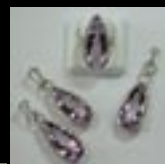
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Geolat Named Interim CEO at Jewelers Mutual

Darin L. Kath has resigned as president and chief executive officer of Jewelers Mutual Insurance Co.

Patti Geolat, who joined the board in 1994 and has served as the chair for the last eight years, was named interim president and CEO by the board, until a permanent replacement is chosen. "The company will move forward to accomplish its vision and strategic goals, while we seek a new company president and CEO," she said, following Kath's resignation.

"There's no pressure to react quickly and name someone," she said, because, "we have such a great management team that knows so much about the insurance business, we can take the time necessary." The board has full confidence, she added, in Jewelers Mutual's "talented staff, outstanding financial results, and exciting future. We will continue to provide superior products and service to policyholders and be the insurer of choice for the jewelry industry and owners of jewelry."



Darin L. Kath

Kath has left Jewelers Mutual to become president and CEO of Integrity Mutual Insurance Co., in Appleton, Wis., Kath's hometown, effective June 2, pending approval by Integrity's board. He will replace Richard Schinler, Integrity's president for 25 years.

Damiani Names Pavan New President, CEO

Damiani has named Antonio Pavan its president and CEO of Damiani USA with responsibility for North and South America.

Most recently, Pavan was chief operating officer of Skins, a publicly traded footwear company. Prior to that appointment, he held the position of Executive Vice President of Geox USA (footwear) and Alessi USA (luxury housewares)—at both companies he oversaw the American operations.

Pavan also worked in senior operating positions at several international consumer branded companies—including Cinzano, Lavazza and Bertolli.

Chinese Jewelry Industry Booming

According to market research company, Research and Markets, last year the Chinese jewelry industry recorded \$25.9 billion in sales, as compared to \$2.88 billion in 2006.

The jewelry sector is growing faster than expected and has become China's third largest industry, after real estate and cars.

Jewelry imports to China reached \$6.2 billion last year, a 35.6% increase, and exports came to \$8 billion, a 16.8% rise.

According to Research and Markets' findings, there were more than 10,000 jewelry companies in China by the end of last year, most of which are small independent businesses without their own brands.

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No Longer A Luxury

Two techniques to turn a luxury into a necessity in the buyer's mind

BY BOB JANET

Luxury - *an item that is desirable but not essential.*
 - *an activity that gives great pleasure.*

When you can get the prospect to think that they cannot live without purchasing your product or get them to think that they will be much better off purchasing the product / service from you instead of your competition you will close the sale.

Even if you are selling a product that is a necessity of life, you can use the technique of 'A luxury once sampled, becomes a necessity' simply by making your service the luxury the customer cannot live without.

The Two ways I have always been successful turning a luxury into a necessity:

1. Involving the prospect in the sale

There was a glass company in the 50s located somewhere in New York that invented their form of safety glass. This new non-shatter proof glass was perfect for homes and business especially for anyone interested in safety.

Although they had a great product and great customer service they were selling very little of their new product.

It was decided that the best avenue to sales success would be through motivating their sales force with a powerful incentive. They gathered all the sales staff together on a snowy December afternoon and announced: The sales person who sells the most safety glass in the next six months will be rewarded an all expense paid vacation for them and their

spouse to the Bahamas for ten days. Well of course all the sales people were excited. The company gave each of them a pane of the safety glass, a stack of brochures and sent them out to sell safety glass.

Six months later they all gathered and Jim had sold more safety glass than all the other sales people put together. The owner of the company asked, "Jim how did you sell so much safety glass, more than everyone else put together?" Jim replied, "I believe the reason it has been so hard to sell the new safety glass is because our customers see it as a luxury, something they and their customers have done without. And with the price being higher than regular glass I could not even get their attention to listen to my sales presentation.

So to get their attention, instead of just showing them the safety glass and showing them the brochures, I got them involved in the sale by placing the safety glass on their counter. I went back to the hammer section of their store, grabbed a hammer, handed it to them and told them to strike the glass as hard as they could.

When they raised the hammer and came down as hard as they could on the glass and the glass did not shatter they were amazed and said, "I can sell that glass!"

2. Try it out

The 'Try It Out' technique is a great way to turn 'A luxury once sampled, becomes

a necessity'.

The technique is much more than getting the product in the customer's hands at the store or sales presentation.

Although for some items just getting the prospect to use the item briefly will close the sale. When you get the customer to use / experience your product / service in the environment they will receive the most benefits from the product / service, it is much easier to close the sale.

When I went into the jewelry business I quickly realized that the more jewelry I could get the prospect to put on their bodies, the more jewelry we sold to them. So being aggressive, and knowing the more they tried out my jewelry in the environment they received the most benefits from it, I encouraged my customers to wear the jewelry to social events where others would pay them complements. Those pieces of jewelry were never returned and the price never questioned.

When radial tires came on the consumer market in the 70s, with a price tag of four times the price of any tire we had previously sold, we very rarely lost a sale once we got the prospect to try the tires on their automobile. No one wanted to give up the smooth ride and go back to the rock sold ride of nylon and glass belted tires.

Bob Janet can be contacted at www.bobjanet.com.

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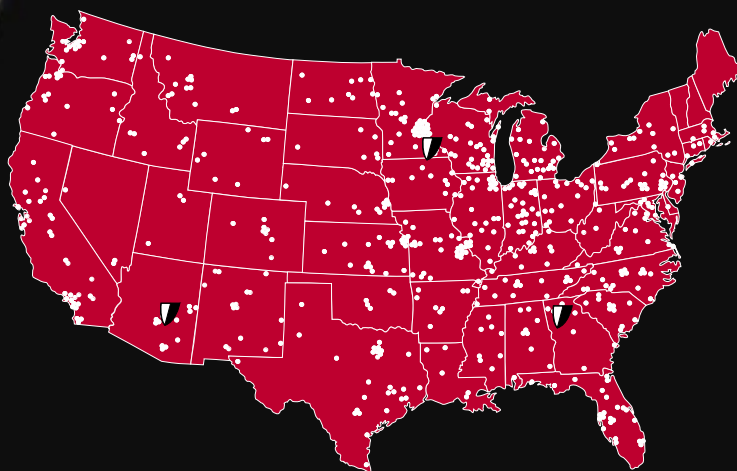
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