

TEXAS

the publication of the
Texas Jewelers Association

Spring 2009

Jeweler

**Over
the Moon for
MOONSTONE**

Trekking to
TUCSON

Fashion
is the
ANSWER



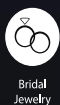
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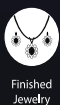
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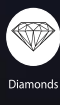
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18 E. Concho Ave., San Angelo, 76903

325-653-0112

mrksalot2000@yahoo.com

President Elect

Eric Wright

Village Goldsmith Jewelers

5333 Forest Lane, Dallas, TX 75244

972-934-0449

eric.wright@att.net

Vice President

David Harleston

Lathrop's Gem Shop

6702 Ferris St., Bellaire TX 77401

713-665-0614

dharleston@ev1.net

Secretary/Treasurer

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Harrison Jewelers

3409 Executive Center Drive, #100

Austin, Texas 78731

512-345-9396

jeweler@prodigy.net

Past President

Doug Jackson

Jewel Mart - D Jackson Co.

3625 Lamar Ave., Paris, Texas 75462

903-785-7100

jewelmart@cox-internet.com

TEXAS JEWELERS ASSOCIATION

Joe McCullough

TJA Executive Director

1306-A West Anderson Lane

Austin, TX 78757

512-454-8626

Fax 512-454-3036

Toll Free: 877-305-3935

jmccullough@assnmgmt.com

www.texasjewelers.org

Publisher

Sail House Publishing

3510 Crowncrest Dr., Austin, TX 78759

512-346-0892

309-420-6280 fax

kim@sailhousepublishing.com

Advertising Representative

Joanne Pantaze

(512) 272-9393

(512) 278-1531 fax

jpantaze@pvco.net

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Spring
2009

FEATURES

Over the Moon for Moonstone 7

Lately, moonstone has been on the fingers, necks, and wrists of Hollywood A-listers everywhere, becoming the must-have in every fashionable woman's wardrobe.

TJA 70th Annual Conference and Exposition 10

The Texas Jewelers Association will host its annual event from October 9-11, 2009 in San Antonio at the historic Menger Hotel.

Jewelers of America Initiates Luxury Tax Offensive 16

Association urges members, industry stakeholders, to contact New York and Illinois state legislators.

Trekking to Tucson 17

TJA President Mark Priest tells you what's trendy from this year at the Tucson shows.

14 Tips for Small Businesses to Thrive in a Down Economy . 18

R U RUDE? 20

Telephone Doctor Nancy Friedman lists her personal top 10 rudes on the phone.

Fashion is the Answer 21

Trace Shelton surmises that affordable, fashionable lines could help you through this economic crunch.

DEPARTMENTS

President's Message 4

Board of Directors Listing 4

Advertising Index 22

Cover Spotlight photo courtesy of Erica Courtney at www.ericacourtney.com.



Find A Niche to Weather the Storm

An example...Two years ago we bought a batch of irradiated brown pearl strands. We've now sold over 200 of these "chocolate" pearls. They've been so successful that all of those wonderful ladies now want earrings, bracelets and rings. Using our POS software we simply pulled up a list of those who had bought chocolate pearl strands. We printed a post card (IN COLOR!!!) and did our own little version of this niche marketing concept. Guess what we found. It works, it works, it works.

We all agree that inventory is our most expensive expense. I realized after the holiday season that some of the colored stone jewelry didn't sell as well as others. After inventory I doubly realized that some of those colored gem pieces have been in stock for quite awhile. We simply took the color out of the pieces that hadn't sold and

set them with a color that does (in my case this was taking out the garnet and setting citrine). Of the 5 pieces OVER 2 YEARS OLD, one has already sold. We had the stones on hand so there was virtually no cost. I'm really just moving those old pieces from one color department that is dead into another that isn't.

At a time when you just flat have to go after the business, finding simple and low cost ideas that result in sales is just good business.

Does this stir a little thought? Is there a marketing niche that you can call your own? The only way you'll know for sure is to try. Just don't do nothing!

Doing nothing is what the competition hopes you're doing. And if you really are doing nothing, don't let them know!

Wishing you all a good spring season!

We've all heard the phrase "niche marketing". How many of us use that technique for driving some extra dollars into our businesses? My best answer would be "sometimes." It's different now. Those extra dollars aren't just coming through the door on their own. The goal is to have one program going each month targeted at customers who bought specific product.

2009 – 2010 Board of Directors

Peter Barr

Corpus Christi
361-992-2277
peter@peterbarrjewelers.com

Elliott Herzlich • Elliott's Jewelers

Tyler, TX • 903-939-0603
elliottsjewelry@msn.com
www.elliottsjewelers.com

Richard Hirsh

Dallas, TX • 214-739-4848
shellh@aol.com

Brad Koen

Joe Koen & Son
Austin, TX • 512-478-2595
brad@joekoenjewelers.com

Steve Kriechbaum

Steve Kriechbaum Designer Goldsmith
Austin, TX • 512-346-9423
skriechbaum@austin.rr.com
www.skriechbaum.com

Jeannie Roberts Roe

Del Rio, TX • 830-775-0600
robertsjewelers@stx.rr.com

Curt Vinson • Troy Vinson Jewelers

Granbury, TX • 817-573-7881
aprfools@hcnews.com
bvc4189@sbcglobal.net

Stephen Wyrick

Stephen Wyrick Jeweler
San Antonio, TX • 210-340-8020
sfwyrick@swbell.net
www.stephenwyrickjewelers.com

VENDOR ASSOCIATES:

Garvin Garcia

Roseco
Dallas, TX • 972-991-9731 ext: 206
Roseco1@msn.com

Jay Volk

J. Patrick Diamonds, Inc.
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2781 Townline Road ■ Alden, New York 14004 ■ USA



Over the Moon for MOONSTONE

BY LORRAINE DEPASQUE, AGTA CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Lately, doesn't it seem like moonstone is on the fingers, necks, and wrists of Hollywood A-listers everywhere? Well, it doesn't just seem that way—it is. Like Tory Burch sandals or the Louis V. bag, a moonstone-something has become the must-have in every fashionable woman's wardrobe.

It's an interesting trend because not since the mid-1920s has moonstone been so wildly popular. Back then, legendary master goldsmiths like Tiffany and Lalique paid homage to the translucent gem, making dramatic (now historic) pieces centered around it. So why moonstone and why again now?

The answer is “why not!,” says Los Angeles-based jewelry-designer-to-the-stars, Erica Courtney, who sells to jewelers all over the world and who also has her own shop on Beverly Boulevard, where many celebrities (from Julia Roberts to Sheryl Crow) stop in to shop. “First of all, moonstone is glamour without being overstated. It's the kind of gem that you can wear day or evening because it's exciting but still not over the top.” Also, very important, she adds, “It's a stone that you can pair with a lot of different colors. The celebrity stylists that I work with really like it because they're not always sure what the celebrity they're dressing will choose to actually wear on an awards night or for a movie premiere—and they know that moonstone jewelry will go with a lot of colors.” Within this past year, Courtney's moonstone jewelry accessorized stars not only on the red carpets and at premieres but also in fashion trendsetting magazines like *InStyle* and on TV shows

like *“Desperate Housewives.”*

The fact that moonstone, a member of what is known as “the feldspar family” and one of June's birthstones, is generally cabochoned—meaning, cut with a curved surface on top and a flat back on bottom—also helps. “This cut, too, makes it easy to wear. And even if it's a big stone—like we

often use—it's still affordable.” (By example, Courtney's typical cocktail rings run anywhere from \$18,000 to \$125,000, and one of her moonstone cocktail rings—with a big uber moonstone, of course—is typically around \$20,000.) “The bigger it is, the more you can see its natural adularescence, which always makes it a conversation piece.”



*Moonstone ring by
Paula Crevoshay.*



*Moonstone earrings
by Erica Courtney.*

Ah, the alluring adularescence of moonstone: that elusive shimmering gleam of light moving around in the heart of the moonstone. Perhaps that is what captivates us and is also the reason few gemstones have accumulated so much legend and lore throughout the centuries. According to Hindu legend, for example, moonstone was formed from moonbeams. The early Romans, too, regarded it to be “made of moonlight” and possess healing powers. Many ancient cultures believed we could be hypnotized simply by staring at the moonstone as the light turns slightly back and forth. (There is, of course, some scientific basis for this—after all, hypnotists have used the method of concentration on a moving shining light for several hundred years!)

For 30 years, award-winning jewelry designer, Paula Crevoshay, has often used moonstone in her high-end creations. The Albuquerque, New Mexico, goldsmith who travels the world for inspiration, says, “Moonstone is in and of itself an inspiration! The adularescence of moonstone is a magnet. I’ve always used these gems because of their phenomenal optical effects.” Crevoshay notes another very important aspect of moonstone: “It makes a wonderful carving stone, and I have done several pieces over the years that are quite special.”

If you’re someone who craves the unusual, try to look for carved moonstones. One thing is certain: It will be an original that no one else will have. A little over a hundred

years ago, carved moonstone faces, cameos, cupids, and doves set in gold or platinum jewelry were favorites of the upper classes in both the U.S. and Europe, especially in brooches. With Michelle Obama fast becoming a contemporary style icon and someone who clearly loves fine jewelry, a moonstone brooch is something you might want to consider. Paparazzi often show the new First Lady wearing a large brooch pinned onto a dress or wrap, and some fashion insiders predict she can single-handedly bring back the brooch!

Speaking of fashion, as this year continues to unfold, the colors of blue, white, and silver moonstone are more perfect than ever. Here’s what Pat Tunskey, creative director and internationally recognized fashion,



*Moonstone earrings
by Erica Courtney.*

color, and trend forecaster for The Doneger Group, New York City, has to say: “First of all, softer shades of white and winter whites are very important, for early and late ’09.” Next, we all know how all-important black is to fashion, of course, but, according to Tunsky, “Gray has become just as strong as black, from charcoal to softer shades of gray.” She especially recommends wearing your lavender, blue teals, greeny teals, and many brights paired with grays. (And your silver moonstones, of course.)

Finally, regarding the color blue and blue moonstone . . . for spring, Palace Blue is the number one fashion color, says Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute. Called by some “the international color guru,” Eiseman, too,

underscores the importance of gray going forward, noting Slate Gray as number seven in the season’s top ten fashion colors, calling it “a nuanced neutral.”

Whether your moonstone is blue, white, or silver, you will be in fashion when selling it this year. And chances are, you won’t have a hard time finding it—not if the 2009 Spectrum Awards™ are any indication of how some of the America’s best jewelry designers are looking at it. The Spectrum Awards, as you know, is the annual competition held by the American Gem Trade Association to honor excellence in jewelry design and lapidary arts. “When we looked at the number of entries using moonstone this year over 2008, we saw that they more than doubled,” says AGTA

Marketing Manager Adam Graham. “It’s easy to wear and it really looks beautiful against the skin. And designers, who naturally have such a strong aesthetic, know this.”

If you, like designers, celebrities, and a fast-growing group of consumers, have made up your mind on a moonstone purchase this year, just make a mental note that, while these beautiful, mesmerizing gems aren’t exactly soft, they have a far-from-rugged hardness of 6-6-1/2 (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the hardest). Be fashion-forward and have fun in your moonstone jewelry.

Reprinted from the American Gem Trade Association website, www.addmorecolortoyourlife.com.

TEXAS Jeweler

Association 2009

70th Annual Conference and Exposition

October 9-11, 2009 • San Antonio • Menger Hotel

It's San Antonio this coming October!
Come join the Texas Jewelers Association
70th Annual Conference and Exhibition at the
historic Menger Hotel

2009 JEWELRY DESIGN CONTEST

Every year some fantastic creations are sent in 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, the entry form will be available on the **TJA website at www.TexasJewelers.org**. The overall winner is automatically entered into the JA national event. Texas has walked away with this JA national honor on several occasions. Be sure to make the **entry deadline of September 18, 2009**.

Mark Your Calendar Now!

Important Dates!!!

Hotel Room Deadline
September 15, 2009

Jewelry Design Contest Deadline
September 18, 2009

Registration Deadline
September 30, 2009

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. Come early to get it all done.

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 that 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: September 15, 2009, *but rooms fill fast... don't wait!*

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

*Reference "TJA" as you make your reservation. After 9/15/09, 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 Convention and Exhibition



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

DRIVING: Most TJA conference participants at this year's TJA 2009 Annual Conference and Exhibition will find that a 3-4 hour drive (one tank of gas!) will get them to San Antonio from most major metro areas in Texas. Some travel distances include: Austin/108 miles, Corpus Christi/145, Dallas/282, Houston/199, and San Angelo/218. It is not a long drive for most, and is surely worth the extra effort to get to a national destination like San Antonio.



FLYING

If you wish to fly, the San Antonio airport is only 15 minutes from downtown. Airlines that service San Antonio include: American, Continental, Delta, Express Jet, and Southwest. 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 9/30/09. Cancellations received in writing prior to 9/30/09, 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.

**Convention
Registration Information is
available at www.TexasJewelers.org.
Select "Conference" on the
home page to direct you
to the form.**

TJA 2009 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, October 9, 2009

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, October 10, 2009

11a.m. - 6 p.m. Registration
8-10 a.m. TJA Board Meeting
10 a.m.-noon Exhibitor Set Up
noon - 5 p.m. Exhibits Open
1-2 p.m. **Maximizing your Holiday Season Sales - Brad Huiskens**
2:15-3:15 p.m. **Bullet Proofing Appraisals - Bill Hoefer**
3:30-4:30 p.m. **Round Table Discussions**

TJA Share Fair Session

The Highly Anticipated Peer to Peer Round Table Discussions

PARTICIPANT NOTE: The TJA round tables “rotate table participants” every 30-45 minutes for maximum multiple topic participation.

Share Fair - Round Table Topics:

- Business Mark-ups
- Employment: Hiring, Firing and Other Issues:
- Marketing: Facilitator: **Brad Huiskens**
- Internet \$\$: Facilitator: **Trace Shelton**
- Retirement/ Business Transitions: **Federated Insurance**
- Appraising Jewelry: **Bill Hoefer**

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Visit Exhibitors
6:30 p.m. TJA Group Dinner Party on the Riverwalk– Lone Star Café

Sunday, October 11, 2009

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 Hoefer**
10:15 - 11:00 a.m. **Maximizing Your Holiday Season Sales, Brad Huiskens**
11:00 - 11:45 a.m. **Turning the Tables on Internet Competition, Trace Shelton**



Speakers

BILL HOEFER, GG, FGA



Jeweler Bill Hoefer 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 well known *Appraiser Under Oath* Web site, and has developed seminars on *Harnessing the Power of Insurance Appraising*, and *Estate and Tax Liability*.

BRAD HUISKEN



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 20 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.

Topics for Your Trade



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 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?

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Bulletproofing Appraisals – Bill Hoefer

Bill Hoefer understands that “appraising” holds a different meaning for everyone. For some it is a profession; for others, it is a necessary evil; and some think 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 Huiskens

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 Huiskens will detail and discuss numerous aspects of the selling process that salespeople must incorporate into their sales presentations.

Sunday, October 11, 2009

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, lose money and most of all make your day-to-day operations safer.

Maximizing Sales In Tough Times – Brad Huiskens

Brad Huiskens will lead participants through a fun and motivational seminar on Selling in Tough Times – Strategies to Maximize Sales. In today's retail environment, Huiskens believes that when people come into a retail jewelry store, they are not necessarily looking for jewelry. Huiskens 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 Huiskens 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

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

Jewelers of America Initiates Luxury Tax Offensive

**Association urges members, industry stakeholders,
to contact New York and Illinois state legislators**

Jewelers of America, the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry retail marketplace, has initiated a letter writing and fundraising campaign to oppose the introduction of several state luxury tax proposals on jewelry and watches. New York State's luxury tax measure is part of the state's larger budget bill (S00060), whereas the State of Illinois bill (HB0451) is a specific piece of legislation drafted solely to create a luxury tax. Both bills would add a 5% luxury tax to all jewelry and watch purchases over \$20,000.

"Studies of the last national luxury tax, which was repealed in 1993, proved that it raised virtually no revenue because it was so complex to administer," says Jewelers of America President and CEO Matthew A. Runci, who was part of an industry coalition that defeated the measure. "In addition, reduced sales caused by the luxury tax precipitated layoffs in affected industries, which increased unemployment costs."

Runci also noted that studies of past luxury taxes indicate many consumers mistakenly believe all jewelry and watches are subject to the luxury tax, which further dampens demand for these products, and ends up harming even businesses that sell less expensive jewelry and watches.

"At a time when the jewelry and watch industries are facing severe challenges due to the worldwide economic slowdown, the last thing we need is a discriminatory tax that penalizes businesses and workers only in certain industries," Runci says.

Jewelers of America recently joined forces with the American Watch Association to oppose the luxury tax in New York State. The associations have hired a lobbyist in



the state capital of Albany to advocate on the industry's behalf. The groups have each written to their members, enclosing sample letter-petitions and the addresses of New York State legislators. The associations have urged members to collect signatures from all of their employees to add to the letter-petitions, to underline the effect that a luxury tax could have on workers in the jewelry and watch industries.

Jewelers of America has additionally galvanized its member stores in Illinois

with a similar letter-petition campaign directed against the luxury tax legislation introduced there.

The Stop Luxury Taxes Fund

To fund lobbying efforts, Jewelers of America has also started a Stop Luxury Taxes fund, and has asked leading retailers, jewelry and gem suppliers, watch companies and associations to contribute. The fund will be used to engage local advocates in state capitals where luxury bills are introduced. These advocates will monitor legislation and speak out on behalf of the jewelry and watch industries. Contributors will be kept apprised of efforts made, monies spent, and progress on all legislation.

In a letter to potential contributors, Runci wrote, "In this period of acute fiscal distress for many state governments, there is every reason to believe that other states may entertain similar luxury tax measures [as New York and Illinois], thus we must act urgently and purposefully to oppose such measures."

Get Involved

To obtain the sample New York or Illinois luxury tax letter-petitions and key legislators' contact information in either state, industry members are urged to contact Jewelers of America's public affairs department: Peggy Jo Donahue, director, pjdonahue@jewelers.org, (646) 658-5802; or Susan Thea Posnock, manager, sposnock@jewelers.org, (646) 658-5806.

To contribute to the Stop Luxury Taxes fund, please email Jewelers of America via Sharie Fogarty, assistant to the president and CEO, sfogarty@jewelers.org.

Trekking to Tucson



Despite the ailing economy, jewelers from around the world completed their annual pilgrimage to Tucson in early February, attending a variety of events held especially for the industry.

The American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) said that the GemFair saw a 19% drop in attending buyers; 7,640 this year versus 9,402 in 2008. "Purchases were being made on the show floor, but at reduced levels compared to previous years. Several retailers reported having higher stock levels in their inventory and were primarily looking for special order and key stock pieces."

And while crowds probably did not exceed expectations, many jewelers came away with new ideas on approaching the years ahead.

The attendees included TJA President Mark Priest. Following are some of the things he picked up while at the show.

What was your favorite event in Tucson this year?

Any typical year in Tucson has so many events going on that you have to pick and

choose what you like. This was not a typical year. As always, the educational seminars were second to none. Since attendance was off a good 50% the choice of events was down substantially, as well.

What trends did you notice?

Most of the trends in the colored stone business are fashion driven. Purples, lavenders, peach colors seem good.

There was a large quantity of peach colored morganite (beryl) from Africa. These are not the typical pink hues seen from Brazil. Because these gems have a hint of earth tone I think they'll do well. Finding 20-30 carat stones was no problem.

There is a flood of glass filled ruby in all levels of the market. All retailers should be conscious of buying ruby that they think is priced too good to be true. The jury is still out on just exactly what is being done to this material. Fairly silky 3-5 carat stones with a presentable red were being offered at dirt cheap prices of \$20-\$60 per carat.

There is a big controversy regarding Paraiba tourmaline. It seems parcels of

deep diffusion treated goods have shown up in the market. This just further confuses the market on a stone that has already lost a lot of buyer confidence.

Tanzanite and tourmaline seem to be consistently available in most all qualities. We picked up a lip smacking round raspberry red rubellite for less than I thought it would be.

Did you bring anything home with you? What?

We stocked up on pearls (chocolate colors just to note one). There is so much product in the market and qualities are just fine if not better and better all the time. Otherwise we were conservative... choosing larger more showy lesser expensive stones.

Notice any new work that especially caught your eye?

We made a dash through the designer section of AGTA. Although some of the concepts and ideas are fresh I have no intention on adding a high end line in these times.

What are jewelers from around the country saying? How does this compare with what you've experienced here in Texas?

A group of Texas jewelers got together one night. Texas overall (some areas excluded) is definitely healthier than the rest of the country. The operative word in regard to business is cautious.

Other comments?

I have missed the Tucson shows once over the last 20 years. Admittedly most of us were there looking for extra good values. Those dealers who refused to budge on their high prices just didn't do much business.

But Tucson never disappoints—just seeing what people did up out of the ground. Examples would be a 15 foot tall amethyst geode or a full size polar bear carved out of white jade.

14 Tips for Small Businesses to Thrive in a Down Economy

BY FRANCIE DALTON



If your thoughts are primarily fear based, if you're envisioning the worst for yourself and your business, if your conversations are focused predominately on bad news, then you're seriously impeding your own success.

Instead of giving succor to all the negative blathering, buckle down and determine to take three actions every single day to improve revenue! Here are some suggestions.

1. Don't you DARE Pick up that Phone Unless it's to Generate Business!

Be ruthlessly disciplined about generating business as JOB ONE. Any activity that doesn't secure new business should be delegated, or done during non-business hours. Prioritize everything else around this fundamental principle. During business hours, dedicate yourself exclusively to building your business.

2. Virtually Stalk your Prospects:

Describe your ideal client. What types of organizations do they belong to? Join them. What kinds of publications do they read? Read them. What types of events do

they attend? Attend them. Differentiate yourself with detective work about your targeted prospects. Research them; tap your network to learn more. This information helps warm up cold contacts, sets you apart from the most others who won't go to this much effort.

3. Work Backward to Move Forward:

If you're tracking important ratios, you know how many qualified prospect meetings it takes to generate one client, and the average sale per client. With only these two pieces of information, you can control how much you sell each month. Determine desired sales volume, then conduct two to three times the number of qualified prospect meetings required to achieve it.

4. Invite Scrutiny: Whose business acumen do you admire? Who's already successful in your field? Whose clientele does your product or service compliment? Invite these folks to be your Advisory Board. Meet quarterly to gain their advice on your business challenges. Advisory boards impose

a level of scrutiny and accountability that both challenge and comfort. Ensure you get unbiased, unemotional, tough truths by not including friends and loved ones on the board.

5. Your Pipeline is your Lifeline:

NEVER stop prospecting. In good times or bad, keep your pipeline full! Even when you're flush with business, don't get cocky. Realize that if you wait to prospect until you need new clients; it'll be too late to achieve immediate results.

6. You Lag Before you Bag: The lag time between your first meeting with a qualified prospect and the closing the sale is an essential ratio for managing your productivity. The sales you bag today likely began at least 3 months ago!

7. Play the Numbers: Whether you enjoy it or not is irrelevant; networking is an imperative. Learn how to do it well. If you want to survive the lean times, you have to network regularly, and focus on helping others. Understand that networking is a numbers game. Play to win!

8. Don't Pander; Ponder! Showcasing your wisdom without taking time to probe causal factors can be insulting. Instead, honor the complexity of client issues. Be inquisitive about their goals, frustrations, hopes, and struggles. Then construct a matrix of options, and augment this with the advantages and disadvantages of each.

9. Prepare to Bend by Predicting the Trends: Be vigilant about monitoring relevant trends, since they're always in flux.

Even more importantly, anticipate and maintain an awareness regarding forces that could affect the trends you're monitoring. Doing so enables you to foresee and adapt to emerging trends before your competitors do.

10. Don't Defer Getting Referrals:

If you're not comfortable asking your satisfied clients to provide referrals, do it anyway! Once you've delighted them, conduct a brief interview to learn what they valued most about working with you. Using this information, draft a brief testimonial for them to edit and print onto their letterhead.

11.Publicize or Perish: Both credibility and sales increase from publishing articles or books, and speaking on your area of expertise. It's not that hard! Every time you solve a problem for a client, produce an outline the process from start to finish. Then fill in the outline, and voila, you have an article or a speech. Multiple articles can comprise a book. Writing a book is less daunting if you write only one chapter at a time without thinking of it as a book.

12. Value for Free = Service for Fee: Consider providing an educational session to prospective clients at no charge, but structure the delivery so that they want more. For example, deliver the information you promised to deliver, but make reference to additional, high value information your clients receive.

13.Don't Attend Conventions without Clear Intentions: Recoup the opportunity cost of attending conventions. Get an attendee list in advance of the meeting, identify and research your targets before you even leave town. Then make it your mission at the meeting to establish contact and engage them. Remember: attendance is not an outcome. Make your attendance result in new business by preparing in advance.

14.Break it Down to Build it Up: Identify key result areas of your business, such as prospecting, delivery, marketing, speaking, new product development, etc. For each, write out measurable goals each quarter. Break these down into component parts, and

include them in your calendaring tool.

No matter how many of these tips you implement, your own outlook and attitude can diminish their effectiveness. Those who prevail in difficult times are the ones who steadfastly refuse to allow negativity to form a barrier to their success - who instead deliberately and diligently take constructive action, thereby refreshing and reinvigorating their minds and their spirits, enabling them to take more action, which

refreshes and reinvigorates.

About the Author:

Francie Dalton is president and founder of Dalton Alliances, Inc, a Maryland based consultancy specializing in the communication, management, and behavioral sciences. Her new book, "Versatility", published by ASAE, is available at www.daltonalliances.com along with more information about her offerings, reach her at 410-715-0484.

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R U RUDE?

BY NANCY FRIEDMAN, THE TELEPHONE DOCTOR



Seems as though everyone has something they consider rude. To some it's something someone says. To others, it's something someone did. Or maybe it's what wasn't said or what wasn't done. Happens all the time.

I'm listing my personal top 10 rudes. Email us your "RUDE." We'll tally the rudes up and publish them. Who knows, perhaps by listing our rudes, we may be able to abolish some of them.

Nancy's personal rude list:

1. Not returning a phone call or having it returned on your behalf. The ABSOLUTE king of rudes. Certainly we all get a lot of calls. (In most cases that's a good thing. Think of what would happen if your phone never rang.) But when someone asks for a return phone call and it's ignored, that is RUDE! OK, OK, there are folks I don't relish talking with too. But I have the call returned on my behalf and handled that way. If it's someone I don't want to hear from again and rather they stop calling, I can nicely tell them that.

Who can blame them for continuing to call when we haven't made our feelings known?

And if your voice mail message says, "Please leave a message and I'll return your call" and you don't, know what that makes you? A big fat fibber! If you're not planning on returning some calls, then leave the part off that says you will return the call. Or tell the truth: "I may or may not return your call!"

2. Gum chewing on the phone. Or having anything else in your mouth but your tongue at this time. (Oh yeah, chewing gum in a face-to-face sales situation as well.) Social gum chewing is bad enough. Chewing gum or chomping on candy while on a business call is RUDE.

3. Not sending thank you notes. When did we stop doing this? Seems as though most folks don't let people know a gift was received. A hand written thank you note is always appreciated. By the way, form thank you notes are RUDE as well. If you

are going to send a thank you note, jot it down on a note card – handwritten – and mail it. It will be most appreciated. Don't have good handwriting? That's ok; just keep it short. They'll see the words "thank you." (Email thank you's are LAZY, but at least acceptable.)

4. Not returning an email. How easy can that be? DUH? Just hit reply and make a comment. Again, I cannot understand ignoring an email. True, email, like voice mail, was not made for entire conversations, but were created to get a yes or no or confirm something one way or the other. At least our email doesn't shout out, "Please email me and I will return your email."

5. Taking a cell phone call at a social event or restaurant and not removing yourself to a private area. NO ONE, I repeat, NO ONE is interested in your private call. Letting your cell phone ring or taking a call in a business setting is not only RUDE, but probably will lose the business for you. I love my cell phone. Use it a lot. But when I get a call, I move away from the people I'm with so as not to disturb them.

6. Bumping into someone or stepping on someone's toes (physically not mentally) and not saying, "Excuse me." Happens all the time. Walking down the street, in a mall, at the airport. I'm amazed at the number of people who don't actually look where they're going. Good thing they're not driving. Bump into me? Please say "excuse me" or "I'm sorry." Thank you

7. Not covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough. And a while back, I learned that it's best to sneeze or cough into your inner elbow instead of using your hand to cover your mouth. Makes sense to me. I speak at conferences and people like

to come up after I speak and talk with me. They sneeze, cover their mouth with their hand and then nicely offer that hand to me. YIKES! Yes, I use a lot of hand sanitizer.

8. Loud voices in an airplane. To sit behind, in front of, or across from someone who is shouting to get over the sound of the airplane motor noise is maddening. It's RUDE to shout in those small areas. Same thing goes when you're in an elevator. I hear people shouting to the guy who's standing right next to him. It's rude to the others. FYI....same goes for talking on a cell phone in an elevator. RUDE!

9. Not asking for time to talk, when you call someone. Barging into their lives as though they've been sitting there waiting for you to call. I turn down 100% of the sales calls I get when they don't ask if they've caught me at a bad time. It's just a simple little courtesy – and plain old RUDE if you don't. Even on a non-sales call to one of your relatives or friends, it's a nice thing to do. Ask for time to talk. “Do you have a quick minute, Nancy?” That would work.

10. Making me wait when there is no one else waiting and there are two of you talking to each other. Sorry, but that happens a lot. That's not just bad customer service. It's downright RUDE.

Ok, those are just some of mine. Of course there are more, but we want to hear from you. There are a few I purposely held back because I didn't want to influence you.

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Fashion Is The Answer

BY TRACE SHELTON

Affordable, high-fashion jewelry is the breath of fresh air that your customers, and your business, are looking for – especially in these difficult economic times.

More women are purchasing for themselves more often – and when they do, they want something that puts their unique personalities on display. There's just one problem: the large majority of your potential customers believe that jewelry is too expensive, that it's frivolous, that it's selfish to buy for yourself.

Unintentionally, through years and years of conditioning, we've made people feel that they can only purchase jewelry on special occasions – that it can't be an everyday purchase.

Granted, some jewelry is intended for special moments. But when it comes to

self-purchase jewelry, we've got to work to make it a fashion accessory that's bought with as little thought as a handbag or shoes or a new dress.

Change will be required in your sales and marketing efforts, but you can start by carrying a larger selection of affordable fashion jewelry. Of course you will still have your top clients who want your more expensive items. But you have a lot of people in your market, including those top clients, who would buy more from you IF they could find fashionable jewelry for less.

In any economy, it would make sense to carry inexpensive designer jewelry, but especially in the rough times we're going through now. Every month at *INDESIGN* and *INSTORE*, we hear about how well Pandora charms are selling, and that people

just can't get enough of them. Guess what? Pandora is a low-cost, stylish way to show your individuality! Isn't it a no-brainer to apply this paradigm to a broader cross-section of your inventory than just charms?

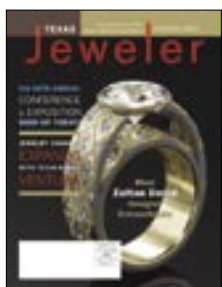
Today, what most women want is something that says who they are as individuals – at an affordable price. They don't think they can do that with jewelry on a regular basis. It's up to you to change that thinking.

To discuss affordable fashion jewelry and other timely topics, check out our new forums at www.instoremag.com.

Trace Shelton, of Buda, Texas, is the editor-in-chief of INDESIGN Magazine. He will be speaking at the 2009 Texas Jeweler Association's annual convention.

Ad Index

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JewelerProfit	www.jewelerprofit.com	21
Jewelers Mutual	www.JewelersMutual.com	21
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