

TEXAS

the publication of the
Texas Jewelers Association

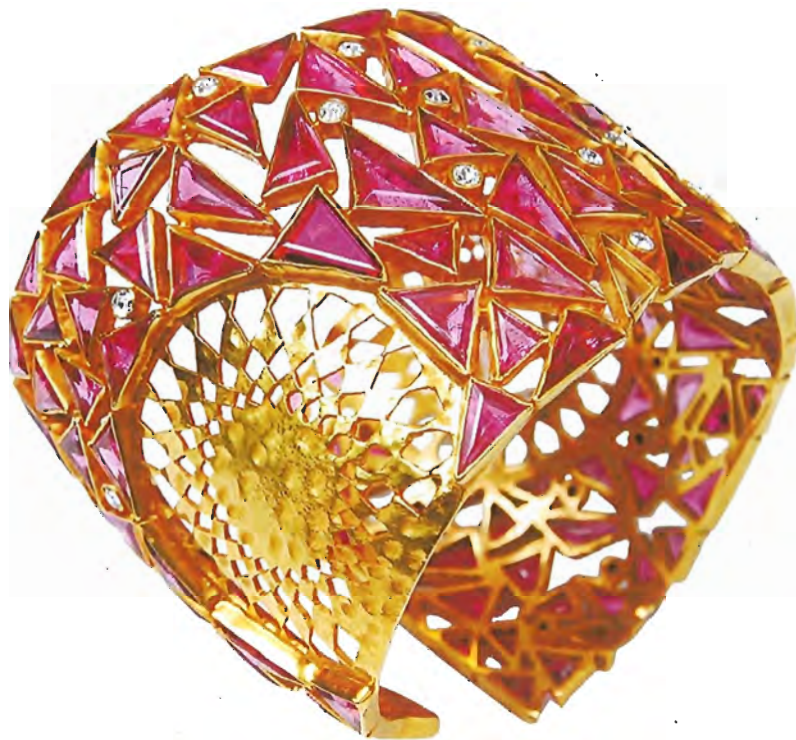
Spring 2011

Jeweler

MEMBER PROFILE

Ziad Noshie

What's All
the Talk
About LED?



Treasure Hunting Tucson Style

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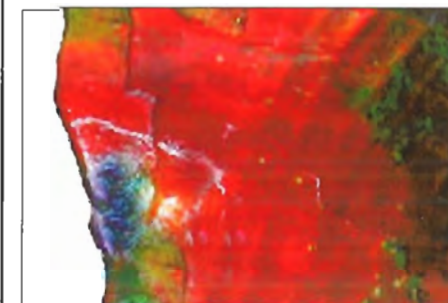
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ON THE COVER: "Sun Dial" Cuff 18K Gold with Raspberry Tourmaline and Diamonds by Amrapali. Retail: \$9,300. Photo Courtesy: D'Orazio & Associates, Beverly Hills.

Eric Wright



"Holidays" Around the Corner

It is important that jewelers take a proactive approach to any holiday, especially one that embodies a pure expression of love of family. With this in mind, we are always looking for that little bit of extra edge that gets the customer in the store and helps make the sale. Two such "holidays" are just around the corner: Mother's Day and Father's Day. And, let's not forget Graduation Day.

How to gear up for these type of special sale days are what we are always including in the annual conference. The knowledge gained is the one thing that makes you stand out from the jeweler down the street. To this end, your executive board and board members are constantly looking for new speakers, new ideas and opportunities

for the association. We welcome any and all suggestions as to what you, the membership, would like to have at a conference. The question is, "What would make you stop and show up to learn."

This is what the board discussed at a meeting in late March. The board welcomes any input from you – just email us or Joe McCullough at association headquarters. Look to your email or information in the next *Texas Jeweler* magazine about up and coming events.

I know that times are still not what they used to be or should be. This is why being a part of TJA is so important. We all have made sales because of or sold something to our fellow jewelers. I get one or two calls a week from one of you looking for

a particular vendor, item or service. I am always happy to be a reference source. What helps you, helps all of us in the industry. Please let me know if we can help. TJA wants you to succeed and continue to be a viable member. I am sad when our major suppliers tell me about jewelry store closings or going out of business.

Remember, as a professional jewelers organization, united in a common cause, we can present a solid united front in matters pertaining to the Texas jeweler. The door is always open via email so if you need anything let us know.

Eric Wright
President TJA



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Are You Treating Yourself Professionally?

As a funeral director, you know professionalism makes all the difference. You know the importance of listening, surrounding details, and following through with exceptional service in a caring manner.

Taking care of your own business insurance needs deserves the same professional attention. Not all insurance programs are created equal, so it's vital to make certain you are working with an insurance advisor who listens, cares and provides service for your business.

Call your local Federated representative or your association office to find out more about a Federated insurance program for you.

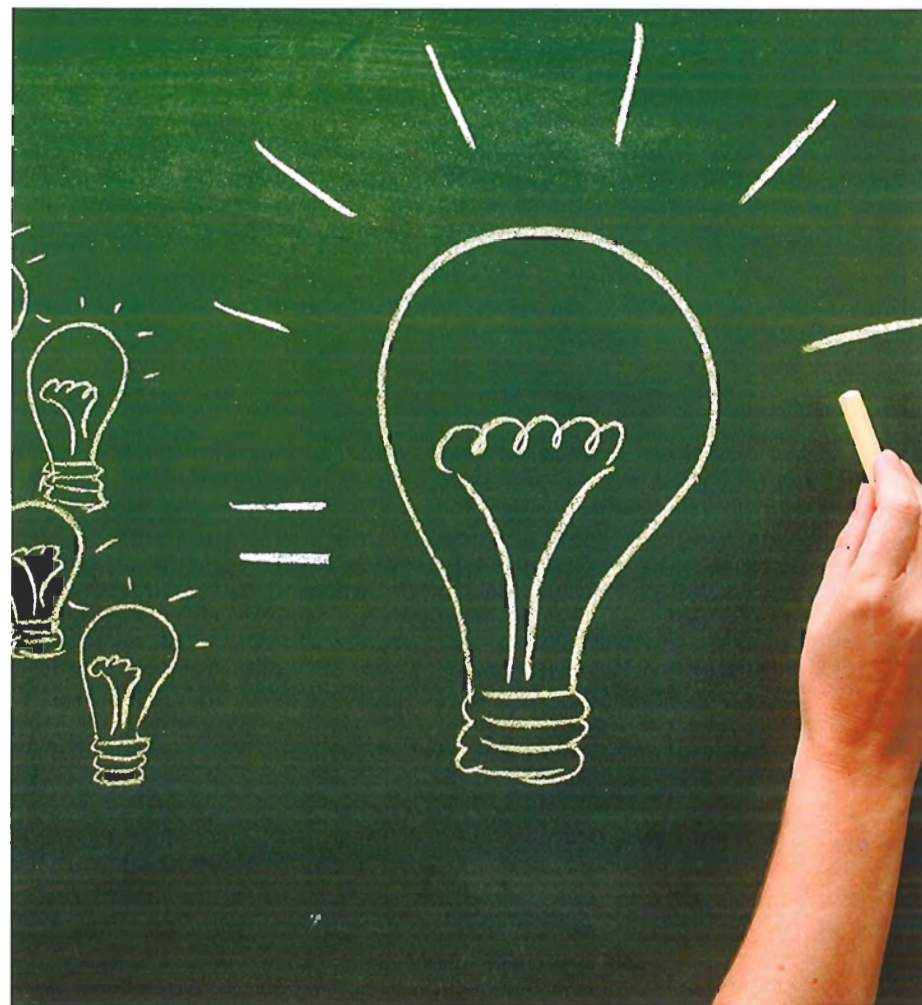
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Independents Need to Be Counted...and Recognized!



the younger generations because we're selling diamonds etc. without making an impression. Your store has a history that makes your store the wise choice. Don't fall into the trap of just selling—market your store qualities and sales will follow.

The Texas Jewelers Association would like to rebuild a 2011 stronger and more unified State association and create campaigns that highlight our members in our Texas Jeweler magazine. We want to get all members and potential members on our website TJA STATE-WIDE STORE WEBSITE LOCATOR where reputable/dependable jewelers can be found by the buying public. TJA is also going to make this happen this year by lowering our membership rates to ease the economic issues of our times from \$150 to \$100. We would encourage our current members to help TJA spread the news with their peers about building a State of Texas based jewelers who are "united in the principles of the past" and the long-term future of the jeweler profession. TJA would like to see every independent store in Texas with our TJA window decal stating your store is a MEMBER of a professional and trusted organization that is here for the long term and abides by a code of ethics. If this is the kind of organization you feel good about belonging to, spread the news. TJA is here to help you spread the news and tout your attributes as a professional jeweler in Texas. TJA provides our members a long list of benefits (found at www.texasjewelers.org) and are here to help and guide you just by picking up the phone and calling headquarters. Stay tuned for TJA updates of upcoming TJA events in your area.

Joe McCullough
TJA Executive Director

www.texasjewelers.org

This year the Texas Association of Jewelers is looking to build stronger bonds with our Texas members and will be reaching out to our non-members. TJA wants to help unify Texas Jewelers into a state of professional storefronts that are united in preserving the image of fine jewelry. Independent stores that represent a culture of quality, respectability and professionalism in which our whole jewelry profession has been built on since the early 1900s. Competition over the last decade—coming in the form of online out-of-state jewelry websites, store kiosks, and raincoat

watch sales—have flooded and blurred the public's perception of our image, set by our jewelry store forefathers.

The younger generations might believe that "saving dollars" trumps "quality of the merchandise", or they buy from big box stores thinking quicker is better. Online hunting and the "dependability" of the store front location needs to be spoken to on store websites. We need to help the younger generations learn about the "reputable" histories of brick and mortar jewelry stores. Many of the historical jewelry storefront qualities have been fading and lost on

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Treasure Hunting Tucson Style

BY DIANA JARRETT GG RMV



Stones that Rocked the Show

The recent hubbub over Prince William's engagement to Kate using Princess Diana's sapphire engagement ring spurred buyers to stock up on rich blue sapphire, particularly in the oval shapes. And it's a young crowd they were buying for. The richly saturated varieties of Sri Lankan sapphire provided the intense royal blue hue that customers are scrambling for at present.

But other gems saw active trading; namely the lovely rosy pink rubellite tourmaline. Not all rubellite is created equal; The Mozambique variety can be very saturated, yet not dark. Savvy veteran dealers likewise praised the quality of Nigerian rubellite for their exceptionally clean crystals that punctuate their lively coloration.

Designers and manufacturers declared that the stones with their distinctive clear rosy tint are feminine without being too little-girly. And it's just the ticket with Pantone, the color forecasters who predicted 2011 to be the year for Honeysuckle. No, honeysuckle is apparently *not* yellow; rather it's a "clear reddish-pink that inspires optimism and is festive in its appeal," declares Pantone.

Buyers were also stocking up on lesser known varieties of popular sellers this time around. Part of the logic behind this trend lies in the fact that such stones have been popularly priced, delivering lots of *pow* for the price. Opals were bagged, especially the Ethiopian variety, emerging early as a darling of the show. Knowledgeable buyers concerned about supply grabbed their allotment early in the show. Moonstone, claim some veteran Tucson attendees has soared in price this year. A gemologist and regular Tucson show goer explained the

Battling Obstacles

Amidst treacherous winter storms, devotees forged ahead to the dusty desert oasis in Arizona this year in search of exceptional, popular and just plain oddball gems. What began over a half century ago as a hobbyist's rock club has exploded into the world's largest gem and mineral bazaar.

Each February, Tucson swells by the double digit thousands. Attendees haggle for the best price with exhibitors who pitch their wares in tents, makeshift outdoor booths, roadside motel rooms, and snazzy hotels and convention hall sites.

This year during the 2011 show, Tucson attendees proved to be not only

Extraordinary large and rare conch pearl measuring 20.5 mm diameter creates the centerpiece of this lavish brooch from Paula Crevoshay. Photo Courtesy: Paula Crevoshay.

eager buyers, but a hardy lot, as well. Temperatures plummeted, outdoor fountains froze mid-stream, and sellers hunkered down against winds and frigid temperatures dipping to record lows.

Weather aside, it was anyone's guess as to what would be shown this year. What are guaranteed however is what's traded in Tucson soon appear in retailers showcases everywhere because Tucson is the global trendsetter for jewelry and gemstones.

price spike, claiming the increase is due to a shortage in finer grades of Indian Adularia material. Quality blue moonstone, a rarer variety, has always been a bigger seller and remained stable at higher prices than the whitish moonstone varieties.

Still Hot—Pearls in New Varieties

Pearls were everywhere. All sizes and shapes. They were met with enthusiasm from couture designers who need to deliver original and exquisite jewelry to a very demanding clientele. Silver pearls, gray pearls, and lots of Keshi pearls moved off the trading tables early in the week. A pearl expert remarked that she was fascinated by the minute freshwater pearls strung together in multi-strands creating a bold yet delicate fashion forward statement. They deliver a big look, without making the woman's style appear over-done, or weighed down with her accessories. Smart design—could those charming strands have been created by a woman?

Bead Fever

Beads continued to be strong sellers. One could not have predicted however, their potential to endure past the fad stage into becoming the fashion staple they are. What makes beads so universally attractive are their almost endless combination possibilities and their price points for budget minded shoppers who still crave to own personalized accessories.

The independent artisan shows orbiting the epicenter of the American Gem Trade Association Gem Fair (AGTA) and its buddy, the Gem & Jewelry Expo (GJX) were abuzz with buyers searching for beaded dangle earrings, and shoulder dusters—those sexy ber-long earrings that sway with the slightest gesture of the head. And beaded bracelets were snapped with the intention of being worn all the way up the arm. Paired or in sets of five or more, beaded bracelets give any outfit an updated look that's effortless to achieve. The way they are worn is with bold abandon in mixing and matching colors.

Trending to Exotics

Gemologist Renee Newman, author of many gem specific books, debuted her



Exotic Gems Volume 2, the companion to her Exotic Gems Volume 1 she brought to Tucson last year. Newman found the exotic gemstone seller's booths to be the hub of intense trading, especially in the first few days of the show. Buyers were lined up five deep at some booths. This foretells of a trend toward more exotic stones appearing in everything from designer one-offs to volume manufactured goods.

Lesser known but appealing gemstones

Colorful gemstone stack rings offer multiple collectible opportunities from designer Julia Behrends. Photo Courtesy: Julia Behrends.

are often priced very attractively. Some that are only available in limited supply allow couture designers to bring an exclusive jewelry item to their clientele who can be assured that they will never see their exact jewelry item on anyone else.

What's All the Talk About LED?

BY SENIOR LIGHTING CONSULTANT BRENT NEAL



Since the modern lighting industry began to take shape over 100 years ago, the pace of change and innovation has been slow and steady. The timeline between discovery in the laboratory and penetration in the market was measured in decades. Since advances in lighting technology have been slow, people tend to take the technology for granted and not think too much about it. When we flip the switch, the light either comes on or it doesn't. When it doesn't, we know we need to change the bulb. That's all

most people want to know about lighting. Everything is changing now. The lighting industry is now in the incipient stage of the biggest technological revolution since Edison invented the tungsten filament light bulb.

While some observant types may be aware that LEDs are being used in traffic lights and auto tail lights, the majority of the public hasn't taken notice yet. If you ask professionals in the lighting industry about LED, you'll detect excitement, fear,

or, a little of both. LED, or Solid State Lighting, as it is more formally referred to, is a giant wave that will eventually affect every application of lighting from backlights for flat screen TVs to parking lot lights. As in the development of all technology, people adopt a new technology at that time when it makes sense for them to do so. You cannot find a business today that doesn't use computers. The added productivity makes it worth paying the price for hardware, software, internet

connections, etc. The same will be true for the adoption of LED technology. A home owner could retrofit most of the lighting in his or her house to LED today if they wanted. It would certainly decrease the amount of electricity consumed, thereby lowering the monthly electric bill. The problem is that the initial cost of the LED bulbs and fixtures could be prohibitive. Therefore, home owners probably won't adopt LED until sometime in the future. An example of an early adopter of LED technology would be a museum.

A major advantage of LED lighting is that it doesn't emit ultraviolet or infra-red radiation. Therefore, it's a great choice to illuminate priceless objects that could be damaged by other light sources. Clearly, there is enough benefit to warrant the additional cost.

Another obvious case where early adoption of LED technology makes sense is in jewelry display lighting.

As most of the readers of this publication are aware, jewelry purchases are often emotionally driven. A jewelry store owner can make an emotional impact on a prospective customer by enhancing the appearance of the jewelry with lighting. Since LED is an inherently directional point source light that is available in different color temperatures, it has the ability to make diamond jewelry scintillate without diminishing the true whiteness of the diamonds. In other words, the potential customer is emotionally impacted by what they see inside the jewelry case. The end result is an increase in sales, with a decrease in monthly electric consumption as an added bonus.

By now, most retail jewelers have some awareness of the potential benefits to using LED technology in their stores. The question then becomes; is LED right for my store? As a lighting professional, my suggestion is to be wary of big promises. There are many companies hoping to get in on the ground floor of an exciting new market. However, history tells us that most of them won't be around five years from now. Work with companies that you know and trust – as with other matters of business. You can also check the veracity of a manufacturer's claims

About Eastern Lighting

I am excited that Eastern Lighting, Inc. is now an associate member of the Texas Jewelers Association. Some of you already know us from The JCK Show and have given us the privilege of fulfilling your store's lighting needs for many years now. For others, this may be the first time you've heard of us. You may be wondering what a company called "Eastern Lighting" is doing in the great state of Texas. The fact of the matter is that Eastern doesn't refer to the east coast of the United States, but refers to the East, as in the Orient. The founder and president of the company, Warren Wang, was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the U.S. as a teenager. Warren was paying homage to his "Eastern" roots when he named the company 18 years ago. Ever since then, Eastern Lighting has been focused on the application of lighting technology and how it relates to jewelry display lighting. I gladly make myself available to answer any questions that fellow members of the Texas Jewelers Association may have regarding lighting in their stores. If I don't have the right fixture to meet your need, I'll do my best to guide you to another source that does.

As Eastern Lighting, Inc.'s dedicated Senior Lighting Consultant for Texas, I welcome any questions. If I don't have right LED fixture to meet your application, I will do my best to help you find another suitable source. I can be contacted at (281) 207-2652, or via e-mail: brent.neal@easternlighting.com

by going to trusted third party sources such as the U.S. Department of Energy and the Illumination Engineering Society of North America. Also, you need to

try samples first. Since all LEDs have different characteristics you won't know what you like the best until you see it with your own eyes.

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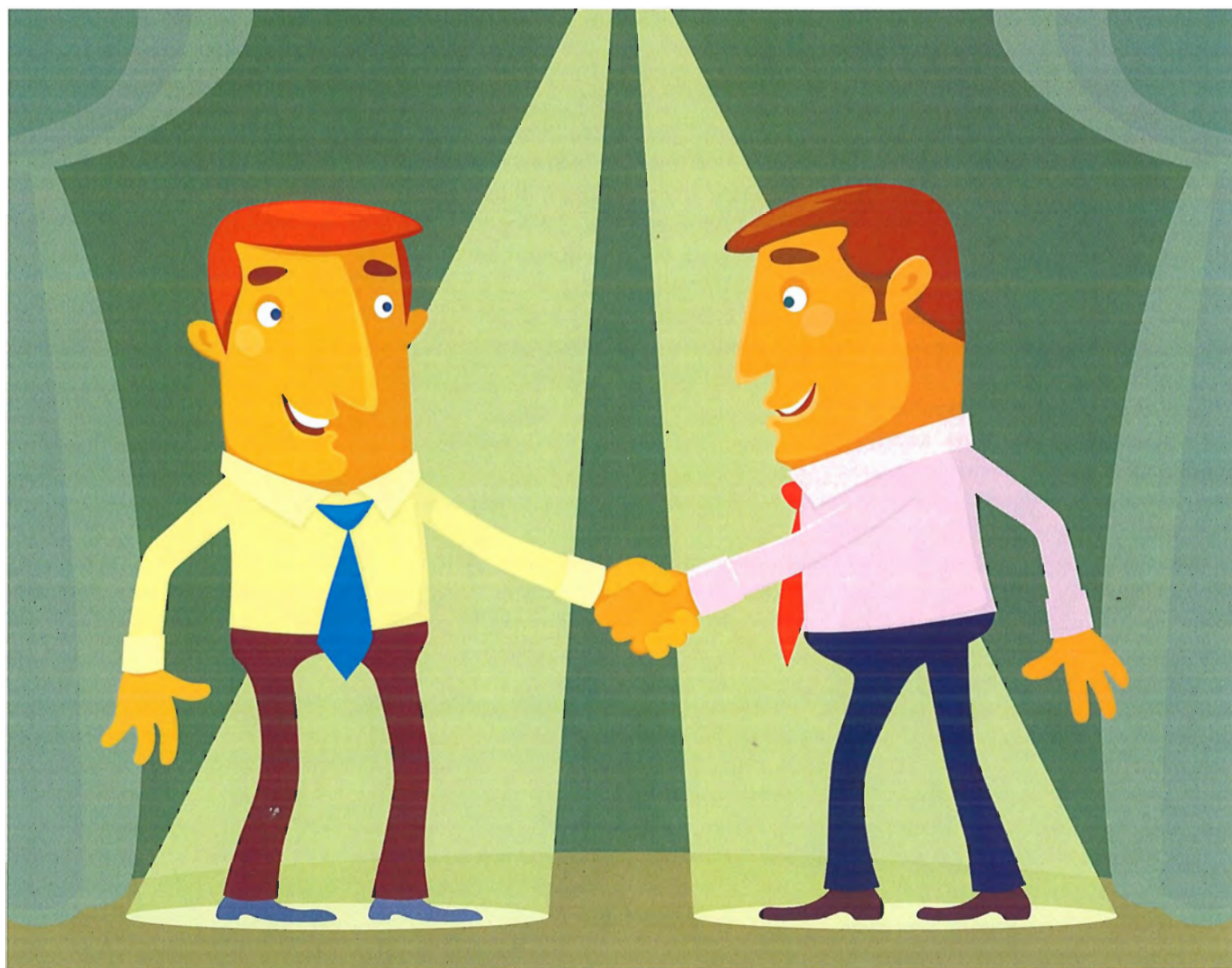


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You're Hired!

Selecting the Right Estate and Business Planning Attorney



Through the years, you've learned the fine art of hiring the right person for the right job. You know that if an employee doesn't have what it takes to perform well in a particular position, your business will suffer in many seen and unseen ways. So, you take great pains to clarify the abilities needed for key positions and carefully screen candidates to see if those abilities are present—and present to the degree needed. You seek out the best of the best—

because you know you are hiring not only for today, but for the future.

Shouldn't it be the same when "hiring" an attorney to guide you and your business through the planning process to transfer of your business and your estate? In many ways, this may be the most important hire you will ever make. As a practical matter, the quality of the estate and business planning attorney will determine the quality of the plan.

Job Description

Given the current and future values of your estate (including your business) and all the people who depend on you—your loved ones, your employees and their families, organizations you support—it is advisable to outline a "job description" for the Estate and Business Planning Attorney who would be your best hire.

Experience matters. For long-term, phased-in planning that coordinates many

Position Title:

Attorney Expert at Estate and Business Planning

Primary Purpose of Position:

Design, recommend, and implement future-oriented and coordinated estate and business transfer plans

Essential Job Skills:

Understanding of the auto industry
Understanding of auto dealers and their complex business and financial situations
Ability to design plans that:

- Minimize taxation and other financial and human losses
- Position the organization for future prosperity
- Maximize benefits to owners and their families

Other Skills and Responsibilities:

Ability to explain things in plain language
Ability to work collaboratively with business owners, loved ones, and professional advisors
Ability to suggest proven and/or "breakthrough" alternatives

Minimum Position Requirements:

Attorney
Knowledge of business law
Knowledge of estate and business planning

Desired Education/Experience:

Extensive access to industry knowledge
Superior knowledge of estate and business planning laws, taxes, tools, techniques, and opportunities—current, proposed, and trends
References available upon request to industry owners and associations

assets with business and family, you would do well to hire an attorney who has "been there, done that" all along the way.

Business owners with first-rate estates need first-rate planning. With help from your association and current advisors (such as your insurance representative and accountant), seek an attorney experienced in helping business owners reach their goals. Think of yourself as a mountain climber who wants to ascend Mount Everest. That person would hire an experienced, successful guide and pay slightly more up front to avoid paying the ultimate price on the way to the summit.

A quote from novelist Robert Smith Surtees goes like this: "There are three sorts of lawyers – able, unable, and lamentable." Perhaps, when it comes to specialized estate and business planning, there is a fourth sort—the exceptionally able. This is the sort a successful business owner needs and deserves when it comes to protecting and passing on a life's work and a family legacy.

Use your available resources to find that exceptionally able estate planning attorney

and say: You're hired!

This article was provided by Federated Insurance. Federated is committed to

helping family business owners complete this important planning. Go to our Web site at www.federatedinsurance.com for information on all of Federated's value-added programs.

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Seeking the High Ground:

Ziad H. Noshie's Artist's Eye & Spirit

BY SHARON KLANDER



Noshie's Quetzal piece is on display at the Objets d'Art Collection in the GIA's Museum in Carlsbad, Calif.

The lucky visitor who steps inside the door to Almaza Jewelers is at once removed from the crowded parking and sidewalks of "The Village," the high-end retail section of Houston's exclusive Rice University neighborhood, and drawn into an intimate, custom-designed space of pink and black granite hosting a museum-worthy collection of carved ivory, ancient African bronze sculptures, and a life-sized Mandalay Buddhist monk sparkling with mirror tesserae – all standing watch around glass and rosewood cabinets filled with the hand-wrought artistry of Master Jeweler Ziad H. Noshie, who may very well be the one to emerge from his workbench in the

back room of the store, reach out his hand and say, "Hello. You are welcome."

This ardent, gracious personality, one which undergirds an honesty that can seem scarce in the fourth largest city in the United States, is shared by Lydia Noshie, Ziad's wife, business partner, and "true soul mate" for the past 16 years. Together they have been the foundation of this spot of elegance – an offering begun in family that continues today with family.

Ziad H. Noshie was born to parents Hashim and Elfat Noshie in Ghana, West Africa, on the Gold Coast, the youngest of four brothers and one sister. They moved when Ziad was four back

to their native Lebanon, where they re-established their long-standing business in the diamond trade and the import of exquisite art objects for which they were the sole agents in Beirut, including Italian Capodimonte porcelain and Murano glass, Czechoslovakian cut-lead crystal, and German Karlsbader porcelain. In addition, Noshie's parents traveled every year to Nagoya, Japan, where they lived for three to four months while his father designed and decorated all manner of fine porcelain table settings.

Noshie believes that this formative time, during which he was surrounded and stimulated by both natural and cultural

beauty, gave rise to his passion for lifting moments from the cycles of earth and all earth's plants and animals in order to fix their mortality in the precious metals and gemstones that are the earth's gifts. Noshie also credits his father for understanding his need to hand-fabricate objects. He recalls, "All my summer vacations from the age of nine began with a gift from my Dad of a coil of gauge-12 wire 100 meters long with which I made multiple items, such as little cars and buses. Because the wire was not fully annealed, I used pliers and cutters to create wheels for these toys that would turn so that I could pull them behind me, attached to the wheel of my bicycle, roaming through the village for hours and hours. Another powerful influence during these summers was the small zoo my father owned in the mountains above the village, filled with monkeys, chimpanzees, rabbits, hens, peacocks, pheasants, canaries, and birds of paradise. We spent many wonderful afternoons there."

When in 1966 Noshie, then 22, was sent by his parents to study Business Administration at The University of Houston, their influence was outweighed only by his considerable talent and a near-insatiable drive to learn, to improve, and to constantly work at his craft. He held to an old Lebanese proverb as closely as to a sacred creed: "Whoever seeks the high ground must work through the night." He took two classes in jewelry design and manufacturing taught by Master Jeweler William Steffy at what is now the Glassell School of Art. Noshie remembers when he asked Steffy if he could leave the second semester early to travel to Ghana for a business trip, and Steffy replied, "You don't need to come back. The rest of the class is still cutting, and you've finished your entire project." Noshie augmented his expertise acquired in this brief, intense education with other educational and networking opportunities in Houston at that time, accepting an invitation from Mickey Calderon, who owned and operated a jeweler's workshop, to audit her seminars and learn whatever he could from anyone there.

Noshie returned in 1968 to his fiancée, whom he'd met at university, and opened his first business, an import shop he named



Almaza – "a small precious diamond" – in the old Magnolia Brewery building in downtown Houston. It was an incredibly busy time for Noshie, who not only continued his studies part time at UH, completing two to three courses a year until 1972, but who also began a family with his former wife, bringing his precious daughters, Amy and Alissa, into the world. When he closed Almaza's doors at the end of each day, he continued at the jeweler's bench he'd set up in his two-bedroom apartment, working into the early morning hours to complete repair jobs and to brainstorm new, hand-drawn graphics from which he'd fabricate his own pieces.

His father, Hashim, was often at his side in the shop during extended visits from Lebanon, partnering with his son and instilling in him the value that "integrity is worth more than any amount of money." Almaza Importers moved through a couple of different locations downtown until 1975, in the Tenneco Building at 1100 Milam, the business evolved to become Almaza Jewelers. Noshie lost his father in 1985, but to this day Noshie claims that "any artist statement of mine must begin with my father."

In July 1992 Noshie established Almaza

Jewelers in its current location where he, Lydia, and Jose Hernandez – the bench jeweler who's been with Noshie for 28 years – have constituted the Almaza team. Here, in addition to Noshie's one-of-a-kind, fine-art jewelry, customers can examine Almaza's loose gem collection – one of the largest in Houston – from which they can choose a stone around which Noshie will sketch a few designs for the client's perusal. Once a design is selected, Noshie fabricates the treasure with the highest standards of handiwork – "hand-fabrication will always be my favorite technique as a jeweler, not only allowing but requiring the greatest scrutiny as I work." It is worth noting that Noshie does not limit himself to working with gems sought out and purchased at international markets. For example, in April 1994 he traveled to Lightning Ridge, Australia, New South Wales, to mine his own fire and black opals. An entire display case now features the remarkable creations he has built around those stones. In fact, Noshie plans to return to Australia within the next year to acquire more opals.

In 1998, with his wife, Lydia's, encouragement, Noshie began to enter his hand-wrought pieces in professional jewelers' competitions. In fact, he started



at the top, winning First Place in the 1998 Platinum Guild International Competition for a wedding set of platinum and 18K green gold, bead-set with diamonds along their wide edges, and Second Place in the American Pearl Company's biennial Vision Awards for a brooch he named "The Rascal," a praying mantis whose legs and head are distinguished by diamonds and whose body is made of an elongated freshwater pearl from the Tennessee River. "The Rascal" is an early example of Noshie's artistic ethos to design "outside the box," to "combine elements without fear, creating things around pearls or other materials that few others would think to juxtapose with precious stones or metals." Another early award-winning brooch of a perambulator with diamond revolving wheels set in platinum and gold with a Tennessee River cultured pearl canopy evokes the rolling toy cars Noshie made and pulled behind his bicycle as a boy. Among Noshie's Texas Jeweler's Association prizes is the 2003 "Grape Vines," a necklace of 18K yellow gold set with diamonds and briolette-shaped amethysts that represents his interest in wine-making, first sparked in his 1974 travels to Naples, Italy, near the Gulf of Sorrento, where he would go to buy coral. Noshie continues to work as hard at this hobby as he works at any project, winning over one hundred awards for independent vintners across the country

since 1993 – and doing it all for love of his family and friends who receive his wine as gifts, since he's not bonded to sell.

By 2004, Noshie's success in state, national, and international arenas attracted the attention of jewelry historian Elise B. Misiorowski, G.G., who recommended him to Patricia Syvrud, G.G., then-Manager of the GIA Museum's Robert Mouawad Campus, to ask if he would honor the association by donating one of his prize-winning works of art to the museum's permanent collection. However, because Noshie decided long ago to never sell or display outside of his shop any of his pieces that have won awards, he answered Syvrud by offering to create something new just for the museum. Only a few days later, a customer who'd recently returned from Guatemala showed Noshie some Guatemalan paper currency – quetzáls – on which is pictured the Quetzál, the national bird of Guatemala. Noshie's eye was caught by the bird's striking jewel-toned feathers of scarlet, green, and indigo, so he began to research it, coming across some stunning photographs of the Quetzál by Mason Fisher and reading that, tragically, this bird is now on the endangered species list. Thus, Noshie was inspired to honor and save the Quetzál in his own way by fashioning from 18K white, rose, and yellow gold a three-dimensional Quetzál sparked with tiny black diamonds, tsavorites, sapphires,

and Burmese rubies set across and down its breast all the way to the tips of long tail feathers curved as if to guide the eye back up to the bird's head. Noshie claims that the Quetzál "represents the culmination of my career, a work of art more difficult to produce than anything I've ever done." This is obvious in the separate sterling knuckles of the bird's claws, curved in succession; the tooling of white gold down the bird's back to give it wings; the one long tail feather out of three that twists so naturally as to not even attract notice; the tuft of head feathers made with hundreds of 1/4 -inch long sterling wires, soldered individually and curled slightly while still soft. Even more fascinating is the way Noshie devised an accurate mirror of one necessary element for a bird to see: rather than facing its head straight and forward, he turned the neck slightly to the left, bringing the bird's left eye up so as to actually observe the viewer. Which summer in his father's zoo holds the genesis of this work? The Quetzál is now numbered among the Objets d'Art Collection in the GIA's Museum in Carlsbad, California, and Noshie was inducted into the Institute's Circle of Honor in 2005 for this gift.

For the past two years Noshie's daughters, Amy and Alissa – having earned their own degrees in business – have worked alongside their father, Lydia, and Hernandez at Almaza Jewelers to learn the trade passed down from their grandfather and to supplement the studies they've begun on gemologist's degrees from GIA. Hence, another family cycle is completed.

Noshie continues to collect awards for his amazing jewelry craftsmanship and design, honored to date with a total of sixty-six at all levels of competition, including three national first place awards in the Jewelers of America Design Competition – and with twenty awards earned in 2010 alone. While his level of accomplishment over the past forty-plus years is astonishing, Noshie never lets anyone forget that "it doesn't come easy." However, the lucky visitor stepping inside the door into Almaza's calming atmosphere of absolute beauty and easy smiles might be forgiven for thinking otherwise, if only for a few glorious moments.



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What Can IJO Do For You?

BY PENNY A. PALMER, DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES



Our mission is to build successful and prosperous jewelry careers for independent retailers, their employees and their families. IJO is the industry's leading professional association and the world's largest jewelry buying group.

Not every program we offer is going to interest you or "fit" in your market area, nor can you take on a lot of changes all at once. I'm always so pleased when new members "jump in with both feet", but I suggest you select a few programs to start, master them, and then begin adding new programs so that you do each one of them well. Here's a glimpse of some of the benefits of IJO membership.

Attending IJO Conferences: In order to see a dramatic change in your business, attendance at our conferences is one of the most important elements to help make that happen. We feel the smarter you are the more money you'll make, and we try to fill you with new information at each and every show. We do not require that you attend, but we give you an incentive to attend both conferences each year with our Travel Reward Program. You pay your way to one conference, we'll pay your way to the next, by providing two airline tickets, four hotel nights and a check for a minimum of \$500 based on purchases from IJO vendors in a specific twelve-month period to a maximum of \$3,000. 80-85% of IJO members attend both shows, every year.

Bonus Travel Dollars: In addition to the discounts you receive on your invoices when you purchase from IJO vendors, you also receive a check at each conference you attend, representing 1-3% of your purchases and averaging a little more than 1%. This is another incentive to attend our conferences, and BT\$ can only be collected there.

VIP Program: Support of the IJO Buying Group is vital to the organization, and it's what funds all the education and programs we provide. But it also brings many rewards for you. When your purchases through the group reach the \$100,000 level for a specific 12-month period, you become a VIP member. VIP's are treated to a sumptuous brunch on Sunday morning, a lavish cocktail reception Sunday evening, a full breakfast Monday morning, and exciting gifts. As purchases increase rewards increase. At the \$150,000 level you are an Elite VIP, at \$200,000 you are in the President's Club, at the \$300,000 level you're part of the Chairman's Circle. Members at the Elite VIP level and above are invited to a memorable event on Wednesday evening at each conference – our way of showing our thanks for their support.

Antwerp Diamond Broker Program: This program has literally changed the lives of many hundreds of IJO members. It will change your image in your community, you'll become known as THE diamond jeweler, and you will increase your diamond sales. Skeptical? We're here to help you market and advertise the program to maximize your success. We have a "How To" information booklet on our website, and it explains how to "pre-sell" diamonds before you go and collect some or all of the money up-front. TV filming

is available right in the diamond offices and cutting factories, and our members have found both the 30- and 60-second spots extremely effective, as well as the 10-15 minute infomercial which they play on a loop in their stores (and also use as a direct-mail piece). AVP can even film you in a "Pre-Trip" commercial right at our conferences. This is one more tool to help set yourself apart from your competition, and the average in extra diamond sales is \$47,000 per store – sales you would not have had without the program.

IJO National Branding Campaign: This program was created to make the term "Master IJO Jeweler" a household name with the purpose of preventing our members from being "swallowed up" by the big chain stores, similar to what happened to independent hardware stores when Home Depot came on the scene. IJO suppliers have provided a number of exclusive pieces which you can advertise locally with all the tools we supply. Just by using the IJO logo in your advertising (any form) you are eligible to receive a \$500 co-op refund.

Exclusive Merchandise: IJO offers a vast selection of merchandise that is only available to IJO members, backed by a large assortment of support material. You may see all the pieces online at www.masterjeweler.com. We are constantly expanding the number of pieces available to you, and all pieces are selected by our membership.

Exclusive Diamond Cut: The "Forever 10" (recently acquired by Simon Golub) is a unique diamond cut that is only available to IJO members. With ten hearts and ten arrows it stands apart from all other diamonds and has exceptional brilliance. IJO members are getting key and better,

even on one carat and larger stones. All you have to do is put this diamond next to any other – even Ideal cuts -- and it sells itself. You can obtain further information at www.forever10.com.

www.ijodiamonds.com: This website was created to help you capture some of the diamond sales you're losing to internet sites, and it's provided for free! It will focus on the quality and integrity of a Master IJO Jeweler, and advise that the best way to buy a diamond is to see it first and to compare it to others.

TV/Radio Commercials: AVP Digital Studios has been providing IJO members with a large selection of first-class, personalized, high-quality, extremely effective commercials and infomercials for more than eighteen years, at a very reasonable price. Commercials include jewelry from IJO suppliers and are based around upcoming holidays or services offered by your store, including the Antwerp Diamond Broker Program. For your convenience filming is available right at our conferences.

Eternal Diamond Guarantees, IJO Consumer Newsletters, 4 C's Personalized Diamond Buying Guide Pamphlet and the Branding Calendar. EDG's were created simply to help you close more diamond sales, the Consumer Newsletter is written for you quarterly to help boost your image in your community and help with TOMA (including a monthly newsletter which you can email to customers), and the 4-C's pamphlet is a great hand-out for your customers. In addition, there is also a Branding Calendar to keep your name in front of your customers year-round, while showing very attractive jewelry each month.

The www.ijo.com Website: Everything about IJO can be found on our website. It has dates for all upcoming events, a diamond search, online show and Antwerp registration, logos, a daily metals pricing, information on all our benefits and services, advertising, promotions, manufacturers directory, jeweler roster,

The Independent Jewelers Organization: Facts at a glance:

Starting in 1972, the Independent Jewelers Organization has become the largest buying group in the world. From its modest beginnings with 52 members, the company has grown to over 850 members worldwide.

The Independent Jewelers Organization offers consumers the opportunity to buy with confidence from a local jeweler behind the dot.com who will design, create, manufacture and stand behind the jewelry of your dreams, as well as offer the very best prices. A little bit more about this organization:

History: IJO began as a Buying Group in 1972 with 52 retail members and a handful of manufacturer members. It has evolved into a service organization whose sole purpose is to help members market themselves more effectively to increase sales and profits.

Membership requirements: Master IJO Jewelers is an elite group of retailers, and to be eligible for membership in IJO a prospective member must be in an area not already occupied by an existing member, and must have excellent credit. IJO accepts only jewelers with the highest ethical standards and superior professional integrity.

Services: IJO provides extensive marketing materials and advertising, the Antwerp Diamond Broker Program, intensive education, training and consulting, including the IJO Business College and personal store evaluation visits, group purchasing power, exclusive product and the Forever10 Diamond cut, an online chat channel called the Indy Chanel, and much more. Members are given exclusive territory and have the flexibility of paying suppliers directly.

Buying Requirements: New members have up to 23 months to purchase \$35,000 through the group, and then the minimum purchase requirement is based on annual sales. For stores doing \$500,000 to \$1 million the minimum is \$50,000, and for stores doing over \$4 million it's \$250,000 – a very small percentage of their Open to Buy.

Conferences: IJO Conferences are held winter and summer in varying locations.

There is a current list of IJO member suppliers on the IJO website – www.ijo.com. Click on "Interested in Joining" at the very top, then "More Information for Retailers". You will also find eligibility requirements, cost information and an informative video.

To inquire about membership please call Penny Palmer, Director of Member Services, or email penny@ijo.com.

Independent Jewelers Organization

25 Seir Hill Road
Norwalk, CT 06850-1322
Phone: 800.624.9252
www.ijo.com

Retail Members: 840
Manufacturer/Supplier Members: 190

a link to track your IJO purchases, and much, much more. Part of the website is the IJO Discussion Channel, also known as the Indy Channel, and it is the pulse of IJO. It connects you 24 hours a day to more than 800 retail jewelers with whom you don't compete, and it's a wonderful feeling to know you're no longer alone.

The IJO Business College: Held each year in April or May and November, this program is open to a maximum of five stores per session. You spend two days at our office in Norwalk, CT for an intense analysis of your business. Upon your return, recommendations are made to help you operate more profitably. You pay for your transportation to CT (if you fly we have you picked up at the airport) and two nights at the hotel. The cost of this comprehensive, life-changing program is FREE.

Personal Store Visits: Chip Terry, a former IJO member and son-in-law of the IJO Founder, will spend two to three days at your store, basically bringing the IJO Business College to you. He will shop your competition, and do a comprehensive evaluation of your store layout and color scheme, inventory, personnel, financial statements and overall operations. He will then send a letter with suggestions that will help make your store more profitable.

Certified Gem Lab™ Program: This distinguished title designation will recognize a Master IJO Jeweler as adhering to the highest standards of consistently delivering quality gems and jewelry to customers. This title can only be acquired by having a GIA Graduate Gemologist on staff, specific instruments and equipment in-store and, most-importantly, a desire to uphold the obligation that goes along with being a Certified Gem Lab.

Certified Diamond Grader™ Program: This title affords Master IJO Jewelers additional recognition, representing a level of combined expertise and quality with the highest educational background, unchallenged by competing jewelers in their communities. The title is awarded only to members of IJO successfully meeting the exacting

requirements of the Gemological Institute of America, earning recognition as an accomplished diamond grader by holding either the GIA Diamond Grading and Evaluation Certificate or having received the GIA Graduate Diamond Diploma.

The IJO National Recognition Awards were created to recognize and honor excellence in Master IJO Jewelers around the nation. This program was established and implemented by IJO to develop awareness and demand for the Master IJO Jeweler and boost individual images in home communities. All members are eligible to enter and each winner receives \$1,000 cash, an engraved crystal trophy, signed award certificate, personalized press release, and recognition on www.ijo.com to consumers and retailers.

Five awards will be presented annually, one in each of the following categories: Community Leadership, Best Family Diamond Store in America, Superior Customer Service, Superlative Design & Innovation, and Ultimate Gem & Jewelry Education.

GE Money Luxury & TD Bank provide an in-store credit program for IJO members to help you close sales you may miss by not having this valuable tool. They often announce monthly "specials" at lower rates for IJO members only. They also have created a complete marketing program to help you attract more customers to your store.

The IJO/GIA Title Program: The requirements for IJO's prestigious title program are more stringent than others. Combined with traditional GIA study, including the Pearls Course, IJO requires completion of our three business courses, Your People, Your Store and Your Money. Testing for all three programs is conveniently offered at our conferences.

IJO/GIA Scholarships: IJO provides four (4) \$500 scholarships annually to its members and their staffs. Applications are awarded directly by GIA. IJO also provides two (2) \$500 Robert Schwager Memorial Pearl Scholarships annually, specifically for the study of pearls through GIA.

VISA/MC Processing: IJO membership helps save you money on your Visa and MasterCard processing. Integrity Merchant Solutions and First National Merchant Solutions both offer special IJO rates, generating substantial savings.

IJO Business Services: In an effort to help save you money and provide you with "added value" for your membership in IJO we have created a program available to both retailers and suppliers. IJO has partnered with more than 200,000 other businesses who collectively represent more than \$166 Billion in buying power. With this power we are able to offer significant savings on a variety of your everyday services like FedEx, Staples, Office Max, Sprint, Monster.com, ADP, Chase Paymentech, Avis Budget Group -- to name a few. Average small to medium sized businesses are saving \$2,000-\$6,000 annually with this program.

IJO Annual Buyer's Review: Mary Moses Kinney, the IJO Merchandising Director, looks at hundreds of new lines every year from vendors interested in becoming part of our Buying Group. Each November she puts together a group of 20-25 whom she pre-selects as possible "good fits" for the group, and then five of our retail members are selected for the panel, whom we bring in at our expense over a two-day period to evaluate the lines. IJO does not buy product – our members do – so we always leave these decisions to them.

Floating Memo Program: At each conference we provide the means for a 3-day in-store event to help build traffic and increase sales. Five or six vendors participate and offer a nice selection of memo product for the event, along with great marketing tools.

"Promotions That Really Work", website design, store design, 12-month marketing plan, computer software programs, employee evaluation systems, store policy manual, front window display blueprints, insurance... The list goes on and on. Membership is what you make of it, and the resources are here for the taking, so the more involved you are, the better your business – and your life – will be. It's not just about the buying.

Houston Racers Vie for 15K Ring

Ring-hungry lovebirds braved the elements in the Space City in March for the Amazing Ring Race--Houston, a scavenger hunt sponsored by Thomas Markle Jewelers and ArtCarved Bridal that garnered a slew of free local publicity.

Held March 9 in The Woodlands area, the ring race was produced in association with SCVNGR, the Boston-based geogaming company that organizes "ring races" and "diamond dashes" for jewelers nationwide. The contests are modern-day scavenger hunts in which contestants use their mobile devices to answer and track down various clues.

The weekend featured less than ideal weather, as cold rain and winds pelted Houston. But it wasn't enough to stop nearly 1,000 people from sloshing around in the elements for the chance to take

home the grand prize: a \$15,000 limited edition ArtCarved engagement ring.

North Carolina Jeweler Loses Bet Against a White Christmas

A North Carolina jewelry store owner made a \$400,000 bet against a white Christmas — and lost.

Alan Perry, owner of Perry's Emporium in Wilmington, promised refunds for everything bought at his store between Nov. 26 and Dec. 11 if more than three inches of snow fell in Asheville on Christmas Day. The city got more than six inches.

Perry says the total payout for customers will be around \$400,000. He says he paid for an insurance policy that will cover the refunds.

Perry is undaunted by losing the bet. He says he's thinking of a similar promotion for Valentine's Day, based on how much snow Asheville gets on Feb. 14.

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The Top Ten Craziest Questions Asked of Job Candidates in 2010



As a retail jeweler, chances are you frequently have the opportunity to interview candidates for a job at your store. And, it's typical for your line of questioning to touch on topics such as education, work experience, skill levels and other jewelry-related areas.

However, because methods and protocols change with the times, it seems some employers have found ways to vet job candidates even more, to drill down (if you will) to determine whether or not a candidate will fit in with the culture, the firm's way of doing things and other employees. Sometimes these efforts – and questions – are spot on. Other times...well,

you be the judge as you read some of the top 10 oddball job interview questions reported in 2010:

1. "If you were shrunk to the size of a pencil and put into a blender, how would you get out?"
2. "You have a birthday cake and have exactly 3 slices to cut it into eight equal pieces. How did you do it?"
3. "How many ridges are there around a quarter?"
4. "How many basketballs can you fit into this room?"
5. "An apple costs 20 cents, an orange costs 40 cents and a grapefruit costs 60

cents, so how much is a pear?"

6. "You are in charge of 20 people. Organize them to figure out how many bicycles were sold in your area last year."

7. "You in a dark room with no light. You need matching socks for your interview and you have 19 gray socks and 25 black socks. What are the chances you will get a matching pair?"

8. "Given the numbers 1 to 100, what are the minimum number of guesses needed to find a specific number if you are given the hint 'higher' or 'lower' after each guess you make?"

9. "If you had 5,623 participants in a tournament, how many games would need to be played to determine a winner?"

10. "A train leaves San Antonio for Houston at 60 mph. Another train leaves Houston for San Antonio at 80 mph. Houston and San Antonio are 300 miles apart. If a bird leaves San Antonio at 100 mph., and turns around and flies back once it reaches the Houston train, and continues to fly between the two, how far will it have flown when they collide?"

(This was printed in the Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal)

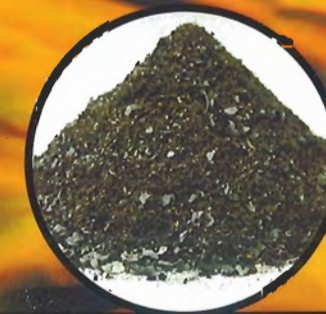
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- Blanche Schmidt, Schmidt Jewelers



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- Nick Leahu and Gayle Inbinder, Wilmette Jewelers

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Contact Name: _____ Title: _____

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☐ Retail Jewelry Store

☐ Leased Department

☐ Other (please specify)

Total Number of Outlets _____ (Attach a list of outlets with complete addresses)

Total number of employees at all locations _____

Year Established _____ Do you collect sales/use tax? _____

Tax ID Number: _____

List Below Two Industry References: (names, addresses, and phone numbers)

1) _____

() _____

2) _____

() _____

REDUCED PRICING!!

Renew Online at www.texasjewelers.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

REDUCED!!

~~\$125.00~~ **\$100**

\$50 for each additional Store

\$ _____

FIRST-TIME members deduct \$25

\$ ~~-25.00~~ (First Time Members Only)

TOTAL

→ \$ _____

Payment Information

☐ My check is enclosed, payable to Texas Jewelers Association

☐ Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ DISC ☐ AMEX

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Address of Card: _____

Signature: _____ Total Amount Paid: _____

☐ I have read and understand the Code of Ethics printed on the back of this form.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



**Become a
Member now &
SAVE \$25**

Any prospective member may deduct \$25 from first year membership dues

Simply fill out the complete form and send it with your payment to the address below.

Please mail your completed application with supporting documentation directly to:



Texas Jewelers Association
1306-A West Anderson Lane
Austin, TX 78757

Phone: (512) 454-8626
Fax: (512) 454-3036
www.texasjewelers.org