



Moving Forward

1 **Advanced Jewelry Sales**

Moving Forward

In This Lesson:

- The Best You Can Be
- How This Course Works
- Sales Basics Review
- Ideas and Info to Start Using

THE BEST YOU CAN BE

Welcome to the Diamond Council of America's Advanced Jewelry Sales course!

DCA developed this course to help you become the best you can be at selling fine jewelry. That might sound like a lot to aim for. After all, your store, market, customers, and merchandise add up to a unique combination. You also have your own personal set of strengths, weaknesses, experiences, and potentials. So, how can any educational program account for all these variables and enable you to put them together in the way that really is best? In fact, what does "best" even mean?

To answer the last question first: Being the best you can be means consistently surpassing the expectations customers and store management have for you – and the goals you set for yourself too. Of course, the expectations and goals have to be realistic to begin with, but as long as that's the case, the higher they are the better.

This course will help you achieve that kind of top-level star performance by building on the knowledge and skills you already have. It will examine factors that affect the selling process, present strategies for different kinds of fine jewelry merchandise, and give you plenty of opportunities to practice what you learn and verify your progress.



You can become a sales star by building on the knowledge and skills you already have.

Course Objective

When you have successfully completed this course, you will be able to:

- Identify key factors in making more and bigger jewelry sales.
- Describe ways to create stronger relationships with customers.
- Discuss characteristics and behaviors of today's fine jewelry consumers.
- Identify ways to create exceptional shopping and buying experiences for customers.
- Explain how sales associates can help to build and communicate a store's brand.
- Identify and respond to changes that affect interactions with customers.
- Discuss ways to maximize performance in selling key jewelry categories.
- Describe how to keep moving ahead as a jewelry sales professional in the future.



This course was developed specifically for experienced jewelry sales professionals.

HOW THIS COURSE WORKS

DCA developed the Advanced Jewelry Sales course especially for fine jewelry sales professionals and those who support them at a management level. The course is designed to meet adult learning needs and suit adult learning styles. As a result, the lessons and exercises combine reading and thinking, listening and talking, observing and examining, acting and doing.

Over the years, this approach has worked for more than 100,000 students who have taken DCA courses. It will enable you to apply what you learn to the specifics of your store's operations, the merchandise you have to offer, and the customers you serve.

At the same time, it's important to recognize that this is an advanced course, which builds on education and experience you have previously acquired. To get the most out of Advanced Jewelry Sales, you must have completed the DCA Diamond and Colored Gemstone courses or similar training. You should also have at least one year of experience in retail jewelry sales.

ONLINE FORMAT

This course is currently available only in an online format. To access it, you must go through DCA's website at www.diamondcouncil.org. You'll also need your username and password. These were listed on the Course Instruction Sheet that was emailed to you after you enrolled.

If you can't find your username and password, contact DCA. Email studenthelp@diamondcouncil.org or phone 615-385-5301 / toll free 877-283-5669.

COURSE SECTIONS AND TOPICS

The course has 12 lessons divided into two main sections. The first section includes Lessons 2 through 5. It covers critical variables in the jewelry-selling equation – customers, the buying experience, branding, and trends.

In Lesson 2, for example, you'll take a detailed look at the consumers who are buying jewelry today. You'll examine differences related to gender, age, and income. You'll also identify common priorities and concerns. Most importantly, you'll find out how to use what you know about people in general to connect with customers individually.

The second section of the course includes Lessons 6 through 11. It focuses on specific product categories – bridal, fashion, men's designs, custom work, estate jewelry, and fine watches. Some of these are important for every jewelry retailer. Others represent possibilities for creating specialized competitive niches. But even if your store doesn't carry the category that's discussed in a particular lesson, you'll learn things you can use in selling other types of merchandise.

At the very end of the course, Lesson 12 is a final review. It will help you prepare for and pass the Final Examination.

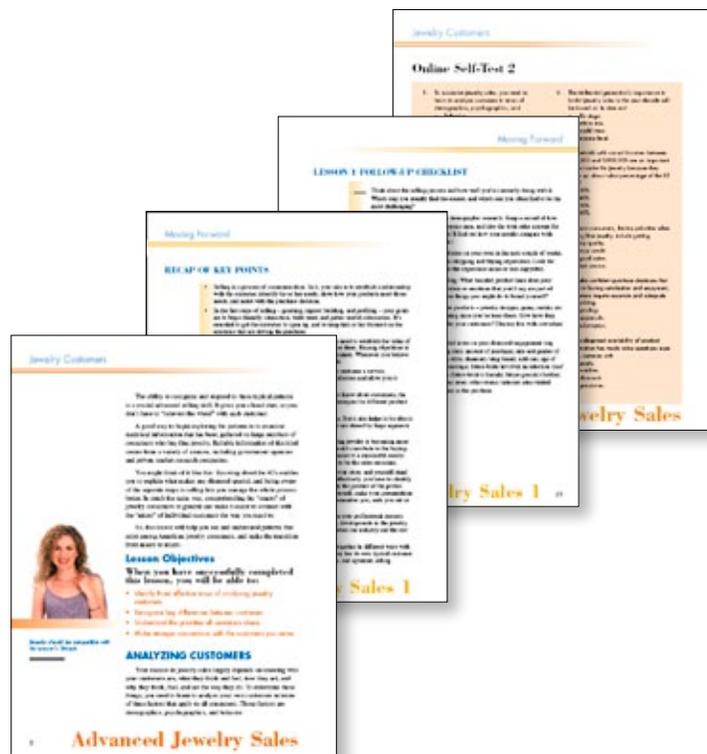


In the first part of the course, you'll look at critical variables in the jewelry-selling equation.

LESSON COMPONENTS

Most lessons have eight distinct components that are designed to create a complete and personalized learning experience.

- **In This Lesson** – A short bullet list that provides an initial snapshot of what’s in the lesson. This will give you a good idea of the information that’s coming.
- **Introduction** – Sets the stage by identifying the main lesson topic, highlighting its importance, and providing general context.
- **Lesson Objectives** – Lists the knowledge and skills you’ll gain by completing the lesson and follow-up exercises.



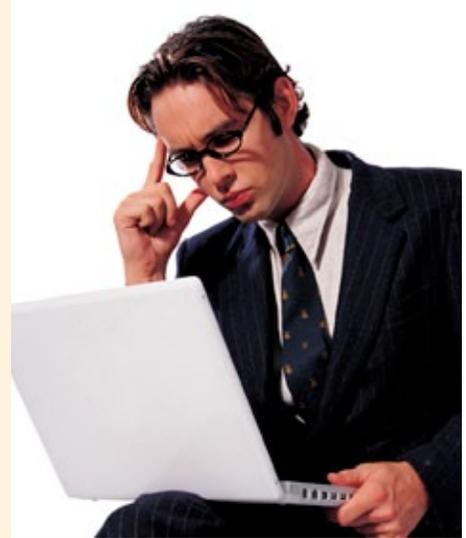
Lesson components are designed for complete and personalized learning.

- **Main Text** – Presents the lesson’s core content.
- **Sidebar** – Contains information that expands or supports the lesson discussion.
- **Recap of Key Points** – Summarizes important ideas and facts from the lesson.
- **Follow-Up Checklist** – Directs additional steps to help you apply what you learn to your own real-life work situation.
- **Self-Test** – Multiple-choice questions that allow you to gauge your comprehension of the lesson material.

STUDY TIPS

Here are some proven study tips that will help you complete this course successfully:

- Set a schedule and stick to it. Designate at least a couple of hours each week as your DCA Study Time. Mark the dates and times on your calendar, and be sure to keep these important appointments with yourself.
- Arrange a comfortable, distraction-free place to do your studying.
- Begin each lesson by scanning it. Be sure to look at the Recap of Key Facts and the Lesson Follow-Up Checklist. This will give you an idea of what you're expected to learn. Then read the lesson thoroughly, from beginning to end.
- Whenever your attention starts to lag during a study session, take a short break.
- Apply what you learn as soon as possible. Each lesson contains a Follow-Up Checklist with practice exercises for turning knowledge into skill. Be sure to complete the checklists. They're essential for a full learning experience.

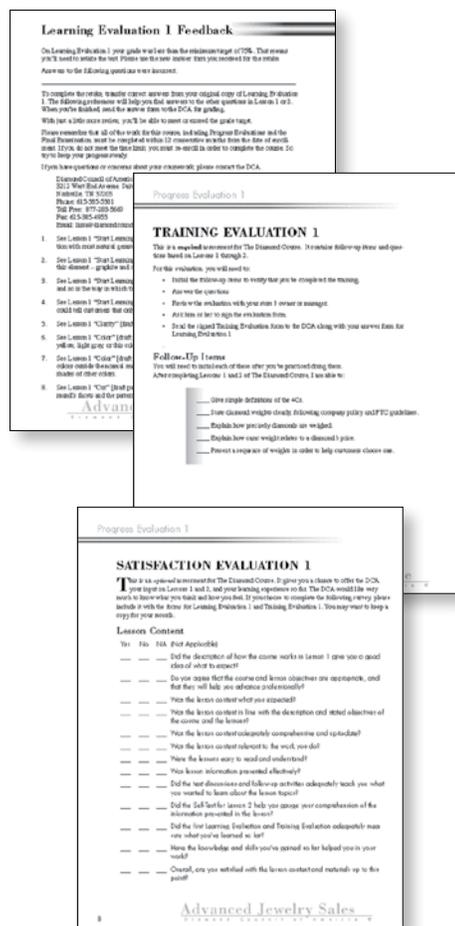


For success with
your DCA studies,
set a schedule and stick to it.

PROGRESS EVALUATIONS

This course includes four Progress Evaluations. The first one comes after Lesson 2, and it's intended to make sure you get off to a good start. The others follow Lessons 5, 8, and 11. The Progress Evaluations allow DCA to measure what you've learned at logical points in your coursework. They also let you offer input on the course and how it's being administered.

Each Progress Evaluation has three parts – a Learning Evaluation, a Training Evaluation, and a Satisfaction Evaluation:



- **Learning Evaluation** – This is the section test. It has 20 to 30 multiple-choice questions covering all the lessons in the section.
- **Training Evaluation** – This ensures that you can apply new knowledge and skills. It contains items based on the follow-up checklists in the section, and also some short-answer questions.
- **Satisfaction Evaluation** – This gives you a chance to rate and comment on the objectives, content, presentation, and service for that section of the course.

Learning Evaluations must be taken online, but you can complete Training and Satisfaction Evaluations online or by mail. Detailed instructions for Learning Evaluations are in the Testing Center section of the Student Learning Center on this website. Instructions for Training and Satisfaction Evaluations are in the Evaluations section.

Learning Evaluations and Training Evaluations are **required** coursework. Satisfaction Evaluations are **optional**, but DCA would like very much to know what you think and how you feel about your education experience.

EVALUATION SERVICING

DCA grades Learning Evaluations and provides appropriate feedback on them. With online testing, you also get your results immediately.

- **Grading** – Grades for Learning Evaluations are percentages based on the number of correct answers compared to the total number of questions. For example, if you correctly answer 20 out of 25 questions, your grade is 80%.
- **Grade Target** – The minimum grade target for Learning Evaluations is 75%.
 - **Retakes** – If your grade for a Learning Evaluation is less than 75%, you must retake the test. You may retake a Learning Evaluation as many times as you need to. When you score 75% or higher, that grade will be averaged with the other(s) to determine an overall grade for the test.
 - **Feedback** – On every Learning Evaluation you'll receive feedback. If you score less than 75%, the Learning Feedback will list the questions you missed and give section references, helpful hints, and additional explanations. If you score over 75%, you'll be notified of any questions you answered incorrectly. The Learning Feedback will also list correct responses and page references, and supply further information.

DCA
wants to
know what
you think!

On every
Learning
Evaluation
you'll
receive
feedback.

COMPLETING THE COURSE

When you've completed all four Progress Evaluations, you'll be eligible to take the Final Examination. You can find details about the exam in Lesson 12 (Final Review) or in the FAQs section of DCA's online Student Learning Center.



Be sure to plan your coursework to meet the time limit for completion.

There are two limits on course completion that you need to keep in mind:

- **Academic Limit** – The minimum grade target for the Final Examination is 75%. As with Learning Evaluations, the grade is a percentage based on correct versus total answers. But if your grade is less than 75% on the exam, you may retake it only once. If you do not reach or exceed the target on the second attempt, you must re-enroll in order to complete the course.
- **Time Limit** – All of the work for this course, including Learning Evaluations and the Final Examination, must be completed within 12 consecutive months from the date of enrollment. If you do not meet the time limit, you must reenroll in order to complete the course. Your Completion Deadline is noted on the Course Instruction Sheet that was emailed to you after you enrolled, and on the "Welcome" page of the online Student Learning Center. You can also obtain the date from DCA.

After you've successfully completed all course requirements – the four Progress Evaluations and the Final Examination – you will receive formal recognition from the Diamond Council of America, marking your achievement.

After completing the course,
you'll receive formal recognition
from DCA.

CONTACTING DCA

If you ever have questions or concerns about this course – its objectives, design, content, presentation, administration, service, or anything else – please contact the Diamond Council. You'll receive a prompt and full response. DCA is 100% committed to your satisfaction and success!

Diamond Council of America

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JA SALES PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Jewelers of America (JA) is one of the foremost US jewelry trade organizations. With a mission to increase consumer confidence in the jewelry industry, JA advocates professionalism and adherence to high ethical, social, and environmental standards. It works to enhance its members' profitability by offering education, certification, marketing, and cost-saving programs.

JA created the Sales Professional Certification (SPC) program to establish, maintain, and recognize superior standards of knowledge and skill among jewelry sales professionals. For more than a decade, JA's certification programs have validated the talent and proficiency of jewelry industry professionals to national standards. JA certification can advance your career, differentiate your store, and improve your reputation with fine jewelry customers.

The SPC program has two levels:

JA Certified Sales Professional (CSP) – This level reflects knowledge and skills generally expected of trained entry-level jewelry sales personnel with about one year's experience.

JA Certified Senior Sales Professional (CSSP) – This level reflects moderate to advanced sales knowledge and skills, and includes some areas not tested at the first level.

To qualify for either designation you must be employed by a JA member store, have at least one year of retail jewelry sales experience, and pass the SPC written exam(s). For complete program information contact:



Jewelers of America, Inc.
Certification Manager
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New York, NY 10271
Phone: 800-223-0673 / 646-658-0246
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Website: www.jewelers.org

DCA and JA share the goal of increasing professionalism throughout the jewelry industry, and both organizations believe education is essential. For these reasons, the DCA curriculum is designed to educate students and offer support to individuals who elect to pursue the goal of professional certification through Jewelers of America.

SALES BASICS REVIEW

This course will concentrate on the process of selling fine jewelry at an advanced level. So, it makes sense to start by reviewing what you've learned about selling in other DCA courses. While you're at it, think about the knowledge, skills, and insights you've gained from your own experience.

(To review the selling process in detail, see Diamond Course Lesson 17 or Colored Gemstone Course Lesson 14.)

THE SELLING PROCESS

Selling is a process of personal communication. As a jewelry sales professional, your aim in that process is to establish a relationship with your customer, identify his or her needs, show how the products you offer can meet those needs, and then actively assist the customer in making a satisfying purchase decision.

The selling process includes eight definable steps:

- Greeting
- Rapport Building
- Profiling
- Presenting Choices
- Overcoming Objections
- Closing the Sale
- Adding-On
- Following-Up

Let's take a brief look at each of these steps in turn.

GREETING

The first objective in the selling process is to initiate friendly interaction. This begins with a greeting that combines a genuine smile, direct eye contact, positive body language, and an appropriate verbal signal.

Greet customers as soon as they enter your store. Unless you're already working with another customer, drop whatever you're doing and give the new guest your undivided attention. Never make customers feel as if they're interruptions.



Smiling is the best way to start an encounter with a customer.

Common opening lines like “May I help you?” invite polite brush-offs. So, with the verbal part of your greeting, try to find a way to set yourself apart while getting the customer’s attention in a polite, upbeat, and sincere manner

RAPPORT BUILDING

After greeting, the next priority is establishing person-to-person comfort, trust, and “chemistry.” The goal in this step is to assure customers that you’re truly interested in them.

To build rapport, engage in a friendly conversation that’s not about buying jewelry. Good topics include seasonal activities and local events. Children are natural conversation starters as well. Politics, religion, other potentially controversial subjects, and “personal” matters are off limits.



A handshake is a powerful tool for building trust and comfort.

To build
rapport,
engage in
a friendly
conversation.

At an appropriate point near the beginning of the conversation, introduce yourself. When customers give their names, look and listen for clues about how they may prefer to be treated. Use your handshake as means of communication. A warm, confident handshake builds trust.

Help customers relax and reveal themselves by wording questions in a way that invites open responses. Try to avoid setting up Yes, No, or simple fact answers.

While building rapport – and throughout the selling process – stay positive and sincere. Demonstrate your interest both verbally and through body language.

During this step, be alert for clues that the customer is ready to move on. When you get the signal, direct the conversation to business.

PROFILING

In profiling, your goal is to gather the information you need to make the right merchandise suggestions and present them in a way that connects with the customer's reasons for making the purchase.

A logical place to begin is finding out whether the customer is buying a gift or making a self-purchase. You also need to know if a special occasion is involved. Then, as you continue to discover added details, keep the focus on the emotions that are driving the purchase.

As in rapport building, word your questions to be open-ended. Listen actively and stay alert for clues from vocal tone and body language. Employ simple remarks like "Oh?" "How so?" and "Tell me more!" to keep the revelations coming. When it's your turn to speak, restate what the customer has said in your own words, and empathize with feelings or concerns the customer has expressed.

Use the insights you gain to keep the process moving forward, and give the customer plenty of opportunities to offer input and direction. During the interchange, begin to formulate the list of items you'll suggest, and the selling points to go with them. But don't try to take the next step until you're sure you have all the information you need.



Always be prepared to offer alternate suggestions.

PRESENTING CHOICES

To help the customer reach a decision, you need to establish the value of items you suggest, and build the desire to own or give them. This takes getting the customer physically, mentally, and emotionally involved.

Even if you're certain you know the perfect item for the occasion, be prepared to offer alternate suggestions. Having choices helps customers feel in control.

Don't allow price to dictate your suggestions. Concentrate on satisfying needs and desires.

To create physical involvement, encourage customers to hold jewelry and try it on. If the item is for a self-purchase, try placing it on the customer. If it's for a gift, have someone in the store model it. Also learn to use the professional tools and presentation aids that are available to you, and integrate them smoothly into your presentation.

A good way to create mental involvement is highlighting features and benefits that relate to a customer's reasons for making the purchase.

To build emotional involvement, choose your words to reflect the customer's emotions. Also try to paint word pictures of the customer owning or giving the piece.



Show items that satisfy the need, regardless of the price.

Photo courtesy DPS.



Clarify objections by asking questions and watching for nonverbal clues.

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Raising objections is a part of the decision-making process for many customers. Objections are often buying signals, and they can give direction to the selling process by indicating unresolved issues that are important to the customer.

Overcoming objections usually involves three steps:

1. Clarify the objection by asking questions and looking for nonverbal clues. Try to determine whether the customer truly doesn't like the item, or just wants additional information or validation.
2. Put the customer at ease by expressing understanding and empathy. Never argue.
3. If the item is not being rejected, try to overcome the objection by reviewing features and benefits that have already been agreed on, and then adding one or two more.

CLOSING THE SALE

Soon after you begin presenting suggestions, start making periodic attempts to close the sale. Early attempts – or trial closes – allow you to gauge the customer’s place in the decision-making process. To formulate a trial close, sum up your reply to an objection or your assessment of key points, and turn it into a question. No matter what the response, you’ll be guided to your next step.

Customers can make purchase decisions at almost any point. So, develop your ability to read buying signals. These can be subtle or obvious, verbal or nonverbal.

Soon after
you begin
presenting,
start
trial closing.



If a customer is teetering between choices, clarify the decision.

When you believe you have identified a buying signal, try closing the sale. Four of the proven techniques are:

- **Assuming Close** – From the beginning, assume the customer will make a purchase. Transfer ownership by referring to items as “yours,” “his,” or “hers.” At the right moment, ask a question that prompts commitment. For example, “How do you plan to give her the ring?”
- **Alternate Choice Close** – If a customer is teetering between two choices, clarify the decision: “Do you prefer the design in white or yellow gold?”
- **Summary Close** – Recap features and benefits to which the customer has responded most positively, and then give your assessment: “It sounds like this is exactly what you want.”
- **Suggestive Close** – When customer is poised on the brink of a decision, but just needs an extra nudge, provide a little encouragement: “Why don’t you give it a try?”

If you encounter an objection when you attempt to close, resolve it and try again.

ADDING-ON

When you close a sale, the personal chemistry is working and the customer is feeling positive. In many instances, you're also doing the customer a service by suggesting further possibilities.

Begin laying the foundation for an add-on sale early in the presentation. Focus on completing the first sale, then return to your add-on suggestion.

Logical choices for add-ons are items that complement or coordinate with the initial purchase. Others include gift or self-purchase possibilities for upcoming events such as holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries.



There are countless scenarios for add-on sales, but the best formula is to start early, then ask for the add-on right after the first item is closed.

Effective follow-up is essential for your success



Follow-up with every customer you assist - even those who don't make purchases.

FOLLOWING-UP

Effective follow-up is essential to your long-range success. It ensures satisfaction with purchases, enhances your professional image, builds stronger relationships, attracts repeat business, and generates positive word-of-mouth advertising.

Because it's such a crucial step, you need to follow-up with everyone you assist. With customers who make purchases, there should be two follow-up contacts – a thank-you note and a satisfaction call.

- **Thank-You Note** – Within a week after the purchase, send a personal handwritten note. Thank the customer for visiting you and trusting you to help them with an important decision. Also confirm that they made a great choice, and end with a brief comment about your in-store conversation. This helps to eliminate buyer's remorse, and also strengthens the relationship you've established.

- **Satisfaction Call** – Make this about a month after the purchase. The primary aim is to ensure that the customer is completely satisfied with what they bought. If you uncover problems, do your best to correct them. Thank the customer once more for their trust and confidence, and also invite them to visit you again.

These post-sale contacts, combined with ongoing activities like service calls and buying reminders, can help you turn casual customers into life-long clients.



If you uncover problems during a satisfaction call, try to correct them.

IDEAS AND INFO TO START USING

The lessons ahead will explore five areas that you need to know about in order to sell fine jewelry at an advanced, star-performance level:

- Jewelry Customers
- The Buying Experience
- The Process of Branding
- Dealing with Change
- Strategies for Different Product Categories

Here are some ideas and information from each area, which you can start thinking about and using right away:

CUSTOMERS

Every customer is unique. You have to keep this in mind and treat each person you serve as a one-of-a-kind individual. But it also helps to be able to recognize and respond to distinctive characteristics that are shared by large segments of the population.

These characteristics can involve **demographics**, which are based on statistics such as gender, age, and income. They can also relate to **psychographics**, which encompass psychological factors like attitudes, values, and motivations.



In dealing with customers, you need to recognize both individual traits and shared characteristics.

In selling jewelry, one of the most important demographic distinctions you deal with is gender-based – women versus men. For example, women (considered as a group) make the greatest number of jewelry purchases, while men (also considered as a group) make the most expensive purchases.

The female-male divide has behavioral and psychographic aspects too. Women most often buy jewelry for themselves. Their top priorities include design, style, and fashion. In contrast, men usually buy jewelry for a gift, and they tend to look for a balance of value and “impact” (or how well the piece will express the messages they want to send).

Women most
often buy
jewelry for
themselves.

BUYING

In today’s super-competitive retail environment, the buying experience is becoming more and more important. This is particularly true with jewelry.

Most customers regard fine jewelry as a special kind of purchase. They buy jewelry to celebrate happy moments and major milestones. They also want the emotional quality of the buying experience to match up with the occasion.

This means you need to make it enjoyable to shop for and buy jewelry. Depending on the customer and the occasion, the right elements to evoke might be romance, fashion, entertainment, education, or creative involvement – to name just a few.

Everything about your store should contribute to the buying experience. This includes decor, merchandise, and displays, but it also extends to things like housekeeping details and the music that’s playing in the background.

In drawing the experience to a successful conclusion, the most critical factor is almost always going to be you – the knowledge, skill, interest, and other qualities you bring to the interaction.



For most customers, fine jewelry is a special kind of purchase.

BRANDING

The ultimate purpose of branding is to make your products and your store stand out from competitors in positive ways, but you can adapt the concept to yourself as well.

- **Product Branding** – Today most jewelry stores offer branded merchandise as part of their product mix. Virtually all fine watches are sold under brand names. Branding is also a growing trend in jewelry, diamonds, and other gems. To present one of these products effectively, you have to identify and interpret the signature and story. This is the combination of features and associations that make the brand unique and give it added value or appeal.
- **Store Branding** – The public side of a jewelry store’s brand is everything the store stands for and means to its customers. A store brand is reflected and supported by physical elements like decor and merchandise. But the brand also includes the store’s reputation and the professional image you and your team work hard to create.
- **Personal Branding** – You are the frontline spokesperson for your store and its products. So, you’re essential to making those branding components work. But you also need to stand out as an individual and brand yourself. Jewelry retailing is a team enterprise, and you should always do your part – plus some extra – for the group’s success. At the same time, it’s appropriate to strive to make your presentations and other interactions so great that customers will remember you, seek you out in the future, and recommend you to others.



The purpose of branding is to make your products and your store stand out in positive ways.

Photo courtesy Panowicz Jewelers.

CHANGES

Like many areas of modern life, the jewelry industry is changing rapidly and dramatically. This makes it vital to be able to spot and utilize significant patterns of change that have an impact on your professional success.

Three important sources of changes today are fashion, developments in the jewelry industry, and bigger issues that reflect the links between our industry and the world we all live in.

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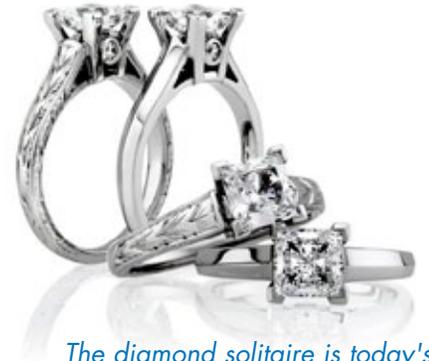
Jewelry today is a prime fashion accessory.

- **Jewelry and Fashion** – Throughout history there’s been a connection between jewelry and fashion. But over the last 40 years that connection has become increasingly close. One result is that jewelry is now a prime fashion accessory. This trend is being driven by fashion-conscious women, and it’s one of the big factors contributing to the growth of branding in jewelry products.
- **Industry Developments** – Inside the jewelry industry, the forces of creativity, discovery, and competition are producing more and better choices for customers. Recent years have seen the debuts of exciting new concepts like Three-Stone and Journey Diamond Jewelry. Palladium, titanium, and other metals have joined gold, platinum, and silver. Treatments are expanding the availability and affordability of many gems. And synthetic diamonds – a dream for hundreds of years – are finally becoming a reality in the marketplace.
- **Bigger Issues** – The world is growing more interconnected every day. As a result, the jewelry industry (including you and your store) can often be involved in issues that are global in scope. In the past decade, our industry has worked with governments and outside groups to fight the trade in “conflict diamonds.” More recently, similar efforts have been aimed at corporate social responsibility – making sure activities like gem mining protect the environment and benefit the communities in which they occur.

CATEGORIES

The variables of the jewelry-selling equation come together in different ways with different types of merchandise. Each product category has its own typical customers and buying scenarios. Each one also has its own concerns and potential issues, and for each category there are certain approaches that tend to work best.

Bridal jewelry provides a good example of how various factors can come into play. This is the most important category for most jewelry retailers. It consists of jewelry that's purchased and given as gifts to celebrate engagements, weddings, and anniversaries.



The diamond solitaire is today's most popular engagement choice.

Photo courtesy Courtesy of A Jaffe.

For many consumers, the most iconic item of bridal jewelry is the diamond engagement ring. Eight out of 10 first-time brides in the US receive one.

Today the process of buying a diamond engagement ring can be extended and elaborate. It may involve a number of separate steps, with multiple configurations of people.

The process may begin with the future-bride and one or more of her friends coming to your store “just looking.” If that visit goes well, she and the future-groom may come in together to identify possible choices. Then the man may return alone to make the final selection, do some negotiating, and complete the purchase.

At each step in the process, there are specific goals to achieve, questions to answer, and issues to address. In order to close the sale, you have to navigate all the steps successfully and deal with all the personalities effectively. But if you can do that, you may also lay the foundation for a long-term relationship.



Many engagement rings feature a center diamond among smaller accent diamonds.

Courtesy of True Romance

RECAP OF KEY POINTS

- Selling is a process of communication. In it, your aim is to establish a relationship with the customer, identify his or her needs, show how your products meet those needs, and assist with the purchase decision.
- In the first steps of selling – greeting, rapport building, and profiling – your goals are to begin friendly interaction, build trust, and gather useful information. It's essential to get the customer to open up, and to keep him or her focused on the emotions that are driving the purchase.
- To help the customer reach a purchase decision, you need to establish the value of items you suggest, and build the desire to own or give them. Raising objections is a part of the decision-making process for many customers. Whenever you believe you've identified a buying signal, try closing the sale.
- By suggesting add-on possibilities, you're doing the customer a service. Following-up after the sale can help you ensure satisfaction and allow you to strengthen the relationship you've established.
- To sell jewelry at an advanced level, it's necessary to know about customers, the buying experience, branding, dealing with changes, and effective strategies for different product categories.
- You need to remember that every customer is unique. But it also helps to be able to use demographic and psychographic differences that are shared by large segments of the population.
- In today's retail environment, the experience of buying jewelry is becoming more and more important. Everything about your store should contribute to the buying experience, but when it comes to drawing the experience to a successful conclusion, the most critical factor is almost always going to be the sales associate.
- The purpose of branding is to make your products, your store, and yourself stand out in positive ways. To present a branded product effectively, you have to identify and interpret its signature and story. Your store brand is largely the product of the professional image you and your team create. To brand yourself, make your presentations and other interactions so great that customers will remember you, seek you out in the future, and recommend you to others.
- Changes have an impact on your professional success. Three important sources of change today are fashion, developments in the jewelry industry, and bigger issues that reflect the links between our industry and the rest of the world.
- The variables of the jewelry-selling equation come together in different ways with different types of merchandise. Each product category has its own typical customer profiles, buying scenarios, concerns, potential issues, and optimum selling approaches.

LESSON 1 FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

- _____ Think about the selling process and how well you're currently doing with it. Which step do you usually find the easiest, and which one do you often find to be the most challenging?
- _____ This week conduct some simple demographic research. Keep a record of how many items you sell to women versus men, and also the total sales amount for each gender. (In the next lesson, you'll find out how your results compare with jewelry professionals nationwide.)
- _____ As you visit retail stores and websites on your own in the next couple of weeks, pay attention to the quality of the shopping and buying experience. Look for and think about factors that make the experience more or less enjoyable.
- _____ Also give some thought to branding: What branded product lines does your store carry? Try to pick out two ideas or emotions that you'd say are part of your store's brand. What are some things you might do to brand yourself?
- _____ In the area of changes, identify new products – jewelry designs, gems, metals, etc – that your store has started offering since you've been there. How have they added to the choices you can offer your customers? Discuss this with coworkers too.
- _____ Over the next month, keep detailed notes on your diamond engagement ring sales. Try to gather the following data: amount of purchase; size and grades of center diamond; ring metal; ring style; diamond / ring brand; add-ons; age of purchaser; first / second / third marriage; future-bride involved in selection (yes/no); others involved in selection (future-bride's friends; future-groom's brother, etc); total number of visits to your store; other stores / internet sites visited (number and names); top concerns in the purchase.

Congratulations!

*You're on your way to becoming
Advanced Sales Certified by DCA!
There's no Self-Test for this lesson,
so you can go ahead to Lesson 2.
Enjoy!*