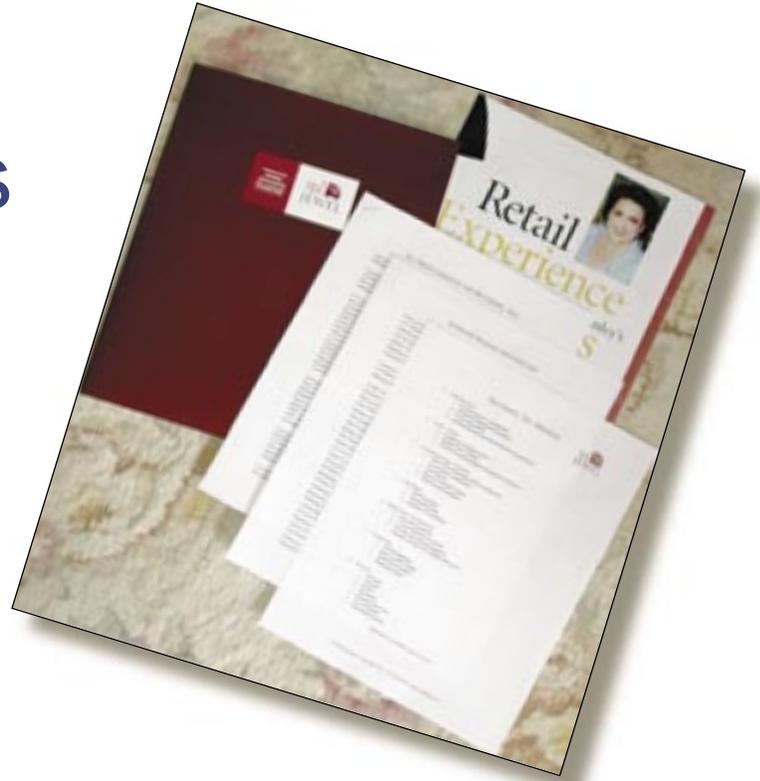


Top Five Things Every Jeweler Should Know

BY CAROLINE STANLEY,
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WHILE EVERY JEWELER TAKES ON multiple roles within their business requiring knowledge of many areas, there are a few items that every jeweler should know about. In my experiences, both as a retailer and as someone working within the trade side of the industry for the last decade, these are currently my top five. Do you agree?

1. THE INTERNET MATTERS

It doesn't matter if you are on the Internet or not – the Internet matters. It matters to your business, to your sales and to your bottom line. If you've had your head in the sand, it's past time to evaluate your place in the Internet. You should have one!

Whether your customer base purchases on the web or not, there is a high probability that they research and browse on the web first. At the very least, they may "Google" your store name to see what they find. Hopefully it is your website. You're not sure it will be? Go to www.google.com and put in your company name and see what exactly turns up. This is often the first impression a new customer may have of your store or business. There may be press mentions of your business or you may even find someone has written about your store. Investigate. See what your potential customers are seeing.

Not finding any relevant search results? See #2.

2. EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A BASIC WEB SITE

Having an expensive site with lots of bells and whistles isn't the answer for everyone. A basic site is the best place to start. Even if it's just one page – inviting potential customers to come by in a warm, friendly manner and including your most important information – that's enough. If someone wants to know a bit about you, they are likely to look on the Internet. Make it easy for them to learn about you.

Have a picture or two of your store. Show a few pieces of jewelry. List your store hours and basic directional information. Give an easy-to-find phone number. Consider listing the brands you carry, talk about your services and detail anything that makes your store different from everyone else's.

Most importantly, devote one (or more) well-written paragraph(s) to why someone should shop with you. And as you get comfortable with the site, you might consider adding email newsletters, e-commerce and/or a more comprehensive site to fit your changing needs.

3. WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Do you know where to go for assistance when you need it? The chart accompanying this article shows many of the helpful organizations in our industry, their area of

The photo is a sample of Caroline's basic press kit. Nice folder with the back side of her business card showing; Recent trade article; Company/personal bio; Articles/Publications List; Services page. Caroline adds or subtracts items from this basic list. Don't forget a business card!

smarts and a contact phone number. These are the ones you'd probably use most – but not *all* by any means. For others, keep your eye on trade magazines for an organization that meets your specific needs (such as the Women's Jewelry Association, www.womensjewelry.org).

Almost all of those companies on the list have low-cost or no-cost items that can help you in your everyday business. It's worth the time to make a phone call or visit their Web site to get better acquainted and see what these trade organizations have to offer you and your company.

4. WHAT A PRESS KIT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

A press kit tells the world who you are in an official way. It's usually an imprinted folder or a nice folder with one of your

Organization	Specialty	Phone	Web
American Gem Trade Association (AGTA)	Gemstones	(800) 972-1162	www.agta.org
Cultured Pearl Information Center (CPIC)	Pearls	(212) 688-5580	www.pearlinfo.com *
Diamond Promotion Service (DPS)	Diamonds	(800) 370-6789	www.dps.org *
Gemological Institute of America (GIA)	Education	(800) 421-7250	www.gia.edu
Jewelers of America (JA) and your local affiliate	Retail Jewelers	(800) 223-0673	www.jewelers.org
Jewelers Board of Trade (JBT)	Credit and Collection Services	(401) 467-0055	www.jewelersboard.com
Jewelers Security Alliance (JSA)	Security Issues	(800) 537-0067	www.jewelerssecurity.org
Jewelers Vigilance Committee (JVC)	Legal Matters	(212) 997-2002	www.jvclegal.org
Jewelry Information Center (JIC)	Public Relations	(646) 658-0240	www.jewelryinfo.org
Manufacturing Jewelers & Suppliers of America (MJSA)	Manufacturers and suppliers	(800) 444-MJSA	www.mjsainc.com
Platinum Guild International (PGI)	Platinum	(949) 760-8279	www.preciousplatinum.com
World Gold Council (WGC)	Gold	(212) 317-3800	www.gold.org

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gift-wrap stickers (if you are a retailer) or a business card glued to the front with two pockets inside and a place for a business card. Why is a press kit important? For those times when you need to introduce yourself or your store to a particular person or company. And, no, you don't have to have one just for the press, though that's certainly a great use.

It's best to have a few kits made up and on hand—it's better to be proactive than reactive in this case. You'll probably want to have a few basic core items that go in every press kit and then customize other items depending on who is receiving the Kit.

You could mail one to a prospective customer (along with a well-written cover letter) or give one to the reporter who comes to you with a question. It's also a great way to introduce yourself and/or your company to a new designer or manufacturer whose line you'd like to carry—it makes a great impression!

Below is a short list of what could go in your own press kit. Add or subtract items so you end up with an impressive selling and public relations tool.

History Sheet/Backgrounder. This can be a few paragraphs or a few pages on the history of your store. You should include why you're in business, your store's personality and your selling philosophy.

Explain your tag line if you use one.

Products and Services Brochure. You may already have something to hand to customers who want to learn more about you. Include it in your press kit. Don't have one? Make one.

Biography of Owner(s). A photo (optional) and a few short paragraphs per person are great. You also may consider adding any other important staff members to this page(s), such as your experienced bench jeweler or top salesperson.

Press Clippings. These are items written about your store (or you) in the past year (or older if the article was especially impressive). They usually are from local newspapers or magazines. You may also have some national mentions in trade or consumer publications that could be included.

Product sheet or brochures. These will help familiarize the press kit reader with your store. You might include pre-printed brochures from manufacturers (make sure they have your contact info on them or your store's sticker), any fliers you've used in recent promotions and educational material such a brochure on diamonds.

Any print ads. If you have any great ads that show off your store, be sure to include them.

One overall note: Keep everything neat and pretty. If your print ads are small and may get lost among larger sheets of paper, use a glue stick or double sticky tape to put them neatly on a piece of your stationery. While you build the kit, keep putting yourself in your reader's shoes – is it easy to follow, does it appropriately convey your store's image, is it neat? If so, you're ready to go.

5. YOU ARE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT YOU SELL AND APPRAISE

This shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone, yet it often is. When you sell an item, you become responsible for what **you** say it is. It's not enough to use someone else's opinion as fact. The Jewelers Vigilance Committee can help you if you have additional questions.

You should know the actual content of your showcases and jewelry. And hopefully you're doing some quality control to ensure you're ordering and actually receiving items of the same quality. You don't have to test every item, just make random checks of merchandise from each vendor to ensure the correct quality – after all, just like your customers, you should get what you pay for.

Laws applying to the jewelry industry are from the Federal Trade Commission "Guides for the Jewelry Industry," as well as additional state and local laws.

The JVC advises that this responsibility applies to appraisals too. Here's what you should know:

- If you make a representation regarding anything that is an expression of opinion or a statement of fact, you can be held legally responsible.
- If your customer relies on that assertion and is harmed, you can be held liable.

Hopefully, as an appraiser, you've had advanced training from an appraisal organization. Know what you are doing. If you're not qualified or comfortable doing an appraisal, just say no!

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