

DIAMOND ESSENTIALS



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Presenting Diamond Jewelry



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Facing page: Customers are sometimes bewildered by the variety of jewelry on the market. It's your job as a knowledgeable sales associate to guide them through it.



Eric Welch/GIA

Presenting Diamond Jewelry

Monday at 1:30 PM, Adam Stone and Anita Jones were talking about the differences between selling jewelry and selling other types of merchandise. Anita described her experiences at the last place she worked: an electronics store.

“Our biggest job there was explaining how the equipment worked. Every once in a while we’d get a customer who had done some research and knew exactly what they wanted.”

“That’s one way jewelry is different from any other type of merchandise I can think of,” Adam said. “Jewelry is much more difficult to research. Every piece of jewelry is different. There are even big differences among mass-produced pieces.”

“How can that be?” Anita asked.



David Cumming/Eye Ubiquitous/Corbis

Customers can have trouble understanding why seemingly small differences between jewelry items equal large differences in price. You can increase their understanding by using your product knowledge.

Key Concepts

Variations in diamond quality
might seem minor, but they
can make a big difference in
the value of diamond jewelry.

"Let me show you," Adam replied. He reached into a case and took out two rings. Their designs were similar, and each was set with a single diamond. The diamonds looked like they were about the same size.

"Aside from the slight design differences, do you see how these two rings are different?" he asked.

"They're both yellow metal, and each one has a diamond," Anita replied. "Or at least I guess they're diamonds—I remember what you said this morning about not assuming that all colorless stones are diamonds."

"Good for you," Adam laughed. "The ring in my right hand retails for \$1,700. The one in my left hand goes for \$3,000. Its diamond has higher clarity and color grades than the one in the first ring. These differences might seem small, but they can make big differences in value. That's what makes selling jewelry such a challenge."

"It's difficult for customers who try to comparison shop, too," he continued. "At least once a month, a customer says to me, 'I saw a ring just like that at another jewelry store. It had a diamond that looked about the same size, but they were selling it for a lot less.'"

"How do you handle people like that?" Anita asked.

"That's where product knowledge really is important to the sales presentation. You usually get that kind of statement late in the presentation—after you've shown them the ring and are discussing price. You're already past the information-exchange stage and are on to the stages where you're about to build value and create desire," Adam answered.

"It usually makes my job easier if they know the other diamond's carat weight, color, and clarity," he went on to say. "Then I can explain the price differences without having to explain how diamonds are graded. I can give them information to help them understand how the two diamonds are different, and why our diamond is worth the price. Then I can get back on track with my sales presentation."

"It sounds like you have a pretty formal sales procedure," said Anita.

"Well, it's not all that formal," Adam answered. "But it is very organized. I find that successful selling really requires an organized approach. Didn't you have a system for showing the merchandise at your other job?"

"Not really," Anita replied. "Usually, people came in, asked a few questions, then either bought something or left. We just had to understand and explain how to operate the equipment."

"Selling jewelry is the same—but different," Adam joked. "It was important for you to understand the equipment in order to sell it. That's also true of selling jewelry: You need to know what makes it valuable. But I bet you could have sold more electronics equipment if you had combined what you knew about the merchandise with an organized, logical approach to selling. That's how we sell in this store."

Key Concepts

Product knowledge helps you explain differences in value to a jewelry customer.

To successfully sell jewelry, you need an organized sales presentation.



Anne-Christine Poujoulat/AFP

In some retail settings, customers know what they want before they enter the store. And they can "comparison shop" by reading each item's posted features. Diamonds and other gemstones are mysterious to many shoppers, so the jewelry customer needs a sales associate's knowledge and guidance.



Roberto Coin

If you combine product knowledge with an organized sales approach, you'll have more jewelry sales success.

"Yes, but how can I memorize a sales procedure? I'll be busy enough just learning about jewelry and how two diamonds can look the same but have very different prices," Anita said.

"Don't worry," Adam replied. "Organizing your presentation isn't difficult—in fact, part of getting organized is getting to know the merchandise. And once you've done that, the rest is simply a matter of learning the steps that can help a customer make an informed and comfortable buying decision."

You might not realize it, but you've already seen the steps of a sale that Adam is talking about. They were demonstrated in the scenarios that opened each assignment. You've seen the importance of knowing the merchandise in your store, and of following some simple steps to guide your customer toward a buying decision. Without organization, it's difficult—often impossible—to explain value factors in a way that's understandable and reassuring to a customer.

In this assignment, you'll learn how to combine product knowledge with an organized approach to presenting diamond jewelry. To succeed, you must draw on everything you've learned about diamonds. You'll see why it's important to understand how differences in the Four Cs can make dramatic differences in value. And you'll see how you can use this information to close more sales as well as to increase the average price of your sales.

The Seven Steps to a Sale

- What can you do when a customer says, "I'm just looking"?
- What role does product knowledge play in a sales presentation?
- What's the main motivation for a jewelry purchase?
- Why is follow-up important?

Later that same Monday, Adam and Anita were still discussing the details of presenting and selling diamond jewelry. Adam was explaining the steps he follows in his sales presentations.

"When people came into your old store, how did you approach them—what did you usually say first?" he asked.

"Well, they'd usually be standing in front of the equipment they were interested in, so I'd walk up to them and ask, 'Can I help you with anything?'" Anita answered.

"And I'd bet that nine out of ten would answer, 'No thanks, I'm just looking.' Right?" Adam said.

"That's usually the way it went," Anita replied. "I'd let them know I was there to help, then I'd keep an eye on them. I could always tell when they needed me to come back."

Focus on Features and Benefits

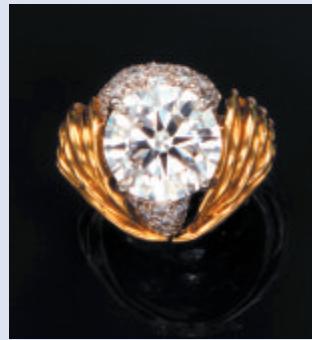
Throughout this assignment, you'll find photos that represent jewelry that your store might offer. The caption for each photo lists the item's major *feature* and corresponding *benefit*. A feature is a distinctive part of a piece of jewelry. A benefit is the value that feature has for the customer.

Another way to look at it is that features are technical—clarity grades, the hardness of a diamond, the toughness of a jewelry metal, the style of the mounting, or the size of the table on a round brilliant. Benefits tend to be romantic, emotional, or financial. Diamonds with higher clarity grades (features) are rare (benefit), the table on the diamond (feature) makes it shine and sparkle (benefit).

If your store carries jewelry that's similar to the examples, try coming up with your own benefit, based on the example that accompanies each photo. Take a look at your store's inventory and list features and benefits for each item.

Once you've determined the features and benefits of the jewelry in your store, you'll be ready to handle the temporary obstacles—called *objections*—that customers raise, and to address questions about value.

Ultimately, discussing an item's features and benefits will become second nature. Remember, though, that people have differing views of what's important to them. This means that benefits will be different for each customer. Focus your discussion of benefits on the value a feature holds for each particular customer you serve.



Christie's Images Inc.

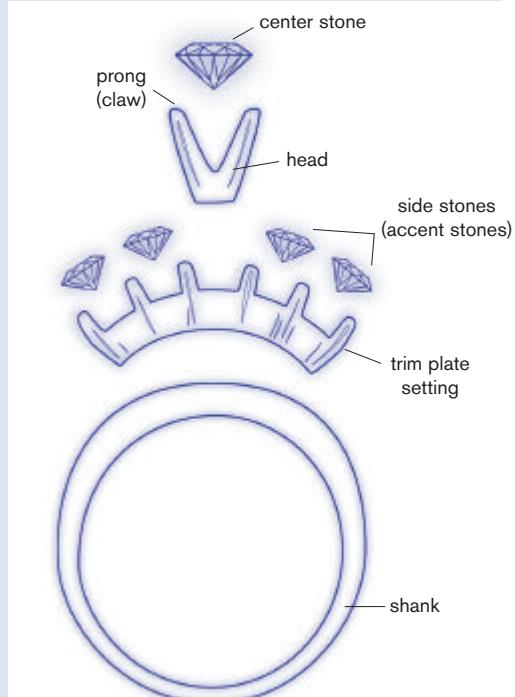
This 6.11-ct. diamond's features—its exceptional clarity and large size—make it rare. Rarity is one of a diamond's most valued benefits.



Feature—A characteristic or part of a piece of jewelry.

Benefit—The value a feature holds for a customer.

Objection—A temporary obstacle, raised by the customer, that delays or even stops the sale.



Peter Johnston/GIA

It's important to know the parts of a ring. It makes you appear more professional, and you can relate those parts—or features—to benefits that customers can appreciate.



Barton Stabler/Artville/PictureQuest

The more information you have, and the more organized your approach, the easier it will be for you to overcome the barriers to successful jewelry sales.

Closing ratio—The number of successful sales compared to the number of total sales attempts.

"That shows you have good sales instincts. They'll serve you well here," Adam said. "But you can increase the number of successful sales you have—we call it your *closing ratio*—by being more organized and systematic in your sales approach."

Adam explained the closing ratio a little more by using an example: "If you make 20 successful sales out of 100 sales attempts in a week, your closing ratio is 1-to-5." Then, he went on to discuss sales procedures.

"The first step is to approach the customer. This step is important—you won't succeed if you don't start by making a good impression," Adam explained.

Then, he went on to say, "So, at your old job, after you initially approached a customer and they said they were just looking, what usually happened next?"

"After a couple of minutes—if they were still there—they'd usually start looking around for me," Anita said. "I'd go over and turn the equipment on for them and show them how it worked. If they liked it, they'd buy it."

"When did you discuss price?" Adam asked.

"Lots of times, we didn't," Anita answered. "The prices were marked. Some people would ask, 'Is that your best price?' But our store didn't negotiate: The price was whatever the sticker said it was."

"As I understand it, your usual sales presentation went through three steps," Adam said. "You approached the customer, sooner or later you demonstrated the product and told the customer something about it, then closed the sale—or not. Does that pretty much sum it up?"

"I never thought of it that way, but yes, you're right," Anita confirmed.

"I'll show you how to break your presentations down into seven steps. Each step is important to the ultimate goal, which is to help the customer make an informed buying decision based on solid information," Adam said.

Here are the seven steps Adam told Anita about:

1 Approach the customer

2 Exchange information

3 Build value

4 Create desire

5 Trial close

6 Close

7 Follow-up



Andy Lucas/GIA

Even a customer who's "just looking" can be influenced by a positive attitude on your part. You can make a great first impression by approaching customers in a friendly, enthusiastic way.

Approach the Customer

Greet customers and start a conversation. It's important to make them feel welcome and at ease. You might be comfortable in the jewelry store, but it can be intimidating for someone who isn't used to buying jewelry. Even the happiest of jewelry-buying occasions—shopping for engagement and wedding rings—can be stressful.

The best way to make customers feel at home is to show interest in them, not just in a sale. Start a conversation with comments that show you care about them personally, rather than reciting a mechanical, "May I help you?" If customers don't feel you sincerely care about meeting their needs right from the start, it's unlikely you'll get a second chance. You might say, "Welcome," or even comment on the weather.



Feature: Solitaire rings

Benefit: The setting offers a classic, timeless look that enhances any diamond, and allows a choice of diamond shapes to suit any taste.



Eric Welch/GIA

Try to learn as much as possible about the diamonds in your inventory so you can explain how the Four Cs contribute to the value of each stone.

Teaching Customers the Four Cs



It's important for you to convey honesty and sincerity to your customers. When they accept that you're sincerely interested in helping them, they'll regard you as a trusted advisor who will help them select the right jewelry. A good way to start is by explaining the Four Cs of diamond quality and value.

The reason for explaining the Four Cs is not to show off your knowledge or to pressure customers into making a purchase. Instead, the patience and concern you demonstrate by explaining how to choose a diamond will cement the bond with your customers and deepen their trust in you as a sales associate.

A good opening question for your lesson on the Four Cs is, "What do you know about diamonds?" Listen to their answer and then invite them to learn more. Few people will refuse an opportunity to learn about something they're interested in—especially when it involves something as emotionally and financially important as a jewelry purchase.

Prepare for your presentation by learning as much as you can about the diamonds and diamond jewelry in your store's inventory. Take the time to explain that the value of a diamond depends on its quality. Then explain that diamond quality depends on the relationship between its color, clarity, cut, and carat weight. These factors work together to determine the overall beauty—and quality—of the diamond.

Ask *open-ended questions*—questions that require more than “Yes,” “No,” or “I’m just looking,” as an answer. A *closed-ended* question doesn’t require the customer to give you any information—and many won’t.

“Are you shopping for yourself or for a gift?” is a good open-ended question. It gets customers talking—and the more they talk, the more you know about them. That increases your chances of ultimately closing the sale.

You saw an effective use of an open-ended question at the beginning of Assignment 5 when Carol James asked the customers, “How can I help you today?” While it’s possible to give a short answer to that, most people will be inclined to answer just as Scott and Elizabeth did: “We’re shopping for an engagement ring.”

If Carol had dropped the word “How” and asked, “Can I help you today?” the answer probably would have been, “No thanks, we’re just looking.”

In that case, Carol would have had to work much harder. She would have had to follow up with an open-ended question to keep the conversation going. Here are some questions that can get past a “just-looking” response:

- “Are you looking for a ring or some other type of jewelry?”
- “We have lots of beautiful things to look at. Would you like to see diamond or colored stone jewelry?”
- “Are you looking for something for yourself, or for a gift?”

Then, if they reply that they’re looking for a gift, you can follow up with, “What’s the occasion?”



James Darell/Stone

Shopping can be stressful. It's your job to help customers feel relaxed and comfortable when they're in your store. You can do this by showing interest in them personally.

Key Concepts

Effective open-ended questions are essential to successful sales presentations.

Don't let "just looking" stop your sales presentation.

Open-ended question—A question that requires a thoughtful, specific answer other than “yes” or “no.”

Closed-ended question—A question that only requires a “yes” or “no” response.



Feature: Ring with emerald cut and baguette diamonds

Benefit: This combines an elegant, sophisticated center diamond and side baguettes for a more opulent look.



Feature: Marquise-cut diamond ring

Benefit: The marquise is a stylish, nontraditional shape that has a slimming effect on the wearer's hand.



Jack Kelége & Co.

Many customers are unaware that diamonds come in colors. You can show them how fancy-colored diamonds can give a piece of jewelry an exciting look.

Selling Color

Explain to your customer that the most valuable diamonds display the least amount of color, unless they're fancy-colored diamonds in prized, strongly colored hues, which are extremely rare and costly.

Almost all diamonds have some yellowish or brownish tints. Sometimes these tints are barely noticeable unless the diamond is compared side by side with another diamond that has a different amount of color. They're even more difficult to see when the diamond is set in a piece of jewelry.

Small differences in color add up to big differences in price. A couple might select a color grade or two below what they planned when they realize they can't see the difference.



Some people are overwhelmed when they're faced with too many choices. You can help them by asking the right questions and finding out what they're really looking for.

Your attitude and manner are as important as the actual words you say. Try to match your body language and speech patterns to the individual customer. If a customer moves and speaks slowly, don't rush around the counter and chatter rapidly. If someone laughs loudly and jokes, don't respond in hushed, serious tones. Let customers set the pace during the approach. If a customer doesn't want to chat, then move away, but stay visible and available.

Exchange Information

During the information exchange, you find out what the customer wants. Be a good listener. Ask what they know about diamonds. If it's appropriate, explain the Four Cs.

Some customers might be overwhelmed by all the choices. Others will enter your store knowing exactly what they want. Either way, exchanging information with customers can help you show them jewelry that fits their individual wants and needs.

Try not to begin your information exchange by focusing on mountings, setting styles, or diamond shapes. Ask questions that get customers to talk about themselves. This will help them feel at ease with you and also start building a bond between you and them.

In addition to establishing trust with your customers, asking the right questions has another, equally important function. Customers' individual stories can give you clues about their tastes in jewelry styles.

For example, if a prospective bride shares her plans to wear a cutting-edge designer wedding gown, you might show her contemporary, fashion-

forward engagement rings. If the couple shares a love of nature, you might show them a ring with a floral design. Help your customers find jewelry that reflects their personalities.

Although you might be tempted to do so, don't ask, "How much do you want to spend?" When a customer's mind is on romance, this kind of question can be upsetting. And it can limit the size of your sale.

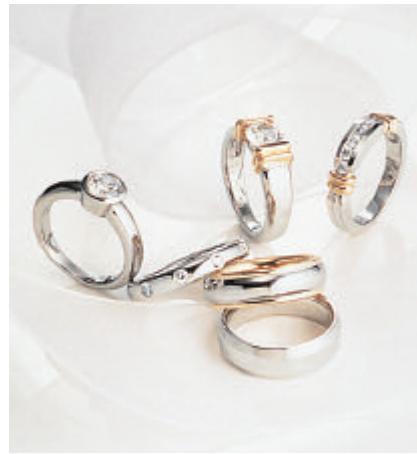
You might have heard the advice, "Sell down to sell up." This technique works especially well with customers who haven't decided how much they're willing to spend.

Start by showing the most valuable jewelry in your inventory. Then "sell down" by showing a less costly piece that's still fairly expensive. After confronting the possibility of buying a \$10,000 ring, necklace, or bracelet, the idea of spending only \$2,000 won't be nearly as intimidating.

On the other hand, a customer might insist, "I want to spend \$1,500 and that's my limit." Don't ignore him and take out a \$3,000 item anyway, or he'll probably be offended that you disregarded his wishes and go elsewhere to make his purchase.

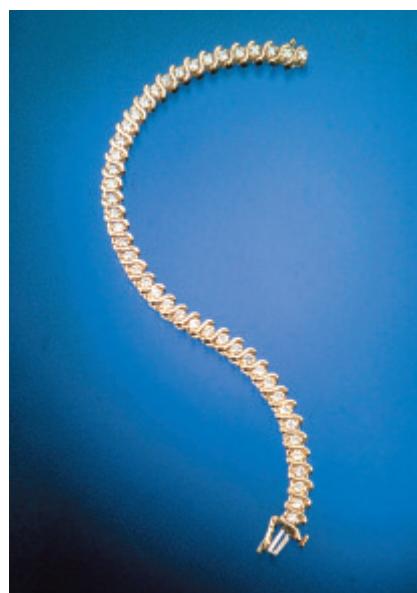
Instead of being aggressive, get your customer to think about higher figures, even if they aren't jewelry related. You might try saying something like, "I know that \$3,000 sounds like a lot, but it's still less than you'd spend for that seven-day cruise you mentioned earlier. And you'll have this jewelry for the rest of your life."

If the customer asks to see a piece of jewelry that's much less expensive than the one you'd hoped to sell, be graceful and enthusiastic when you present it. Handle a simple gold ring with a 0.25-ct. diamond with as much care as you would a \$10,000 piece.



Stuller/Platinum Guild International

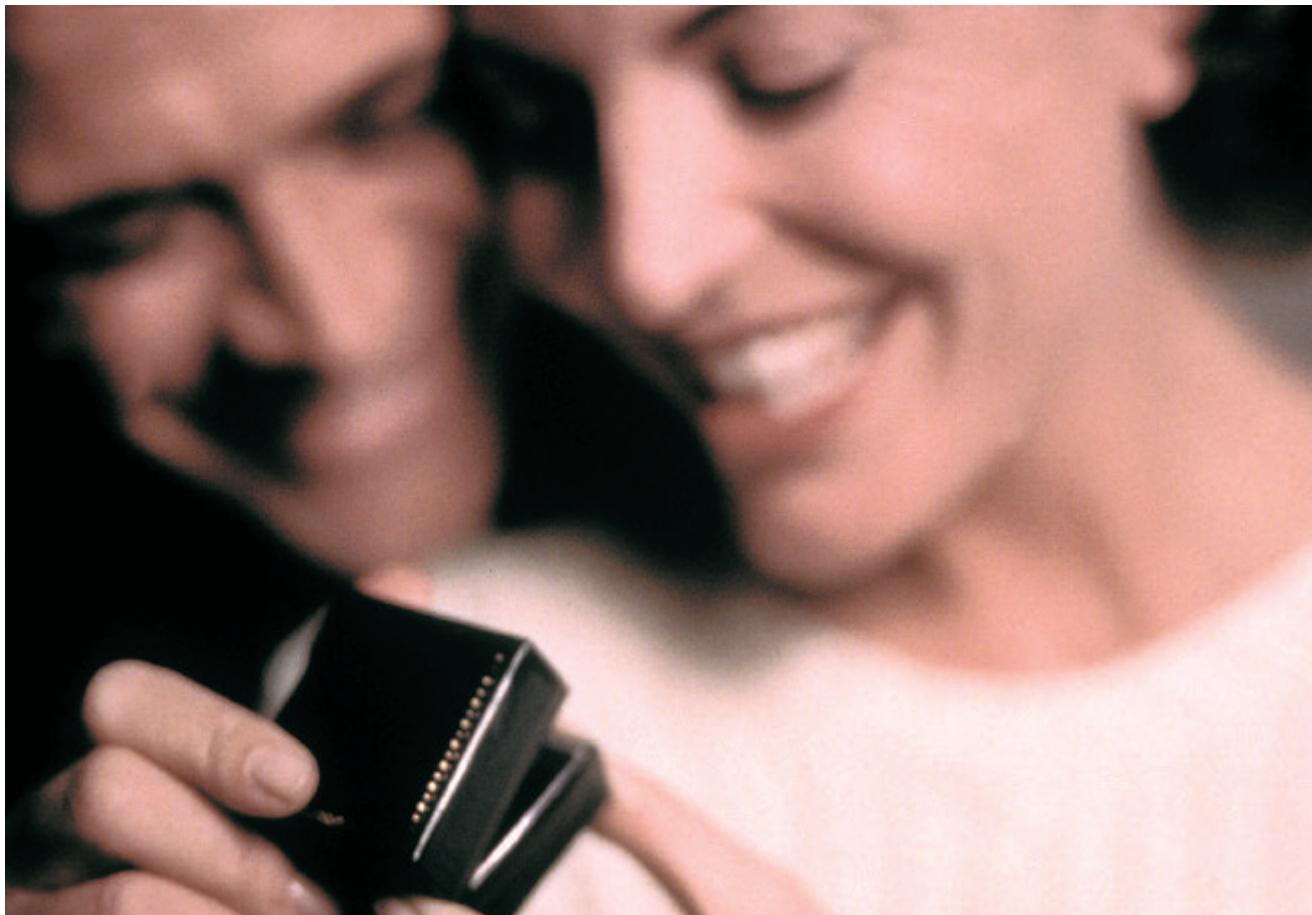
If you understand your customers' preferences, you can show them jewelry styles that closely suit their needs and desires. This assortment of rings would appeal to someone with contemporary tastes.



Tino Hammid/GIA



A customer is less likely to be shocked by the price of the jewelry they select if you start by showing them higher-priced items. The platinum and diamond line bracelet (right) is a more expensive version of the gold and diamond line bracelet (above) because of the metal choice, diamond quality, and total weight.



Roy McMahon/Corbis Stock Market

Important occasions inspire most jewelry purchases. If you show your customers that you honor those special times in their lives, you'll earn their respect and appreciation.



Feature: Matching gold and diamond wedding trio

Benefit: The set provides a coordinated look that reflects the bridal couple's sense of unity.

No matter what color, clarity, cut, or carat weight diamond they eventually buy, or how much the precious metal mounting weighs, a jewelry purchase creates a memory that lasts a lifetime. Honor the moment and you'll earn your customers' respect—and future business.

Build Value

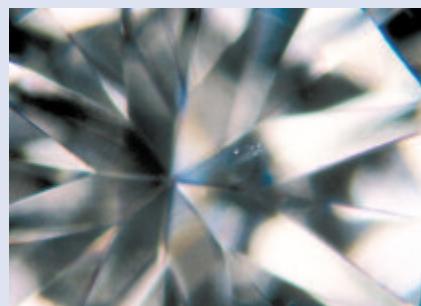
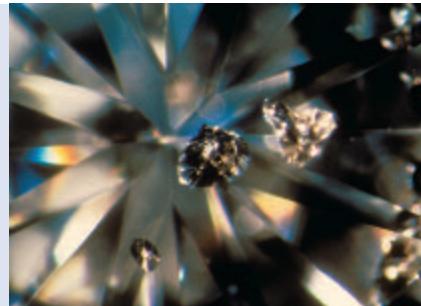
Even if your emphasis is on romance when you sell jewelry, you need to give customers other reasons to buy. You've already helped them understand the Four Cs and how they relate to the unique item they're selecting. Don't forget to balance romance with information about the value of the jewelry you're showing. A final purchase depends not just on emotional appeal, but also on the feeling that they're getting good value for their money.

What can you do if a customer falls in love with a certain style of setting but doesn't care for the size or shape of the diamond? She might not buy from you, despite the personal connection you've made.

Selling Clarity

Clarity is a diamond's degree of freedom from inclusions and blemishes. In most diamond grades, inclusions are not visible to the unaided eye. And yet, their presence affects a diamond's price. Make sure your customer understands that inclusions can affect a diamond's value, even if they're only visible under magnification.

Customers can get a good idea of clarity if you let them compare two diamonds under magnification—one with many inclusions and one with few inclusions. You can also emphasize the value of clarity by mentioning that, according to industry estimates, fewer than one percent of diamonds mined are free of inclusions.



Gary Roskin

Most diamonds have inclusions that can be seen under magnification (top). Diamonds with exceptional clarity (bottom) are rare. Learn to use inclusions as features that make a diamond unique.

It's not an issue of price but of personal preference. In fact, 72 percent of wedding-jewelry buyers surveyed by *Bride's Magazine* said they're not as concerned about bargain prices as they are about getting what they truly want. Surveys indicate that the same is true for people shopping for other types of jewelry. Many of them were willing to spend more than they actually did.

Be prepared to meet any of your customers' needs by knowing what options are available. Some stores offer a selection of semi-mounts, which are jewelry pieces preset with small gems surrounding a central area where a stone of the customer's choice can be added. A semi-mount can be set with a variety of gemstone shapes, sizes, and types.

Your customer might love a particular setting, but prefer a 1-ct. faint yellow diamond to the 0.50-ct. colorless diamond you offer. If your store carries a selection of loose diamonds, or if you can special order the diamond she wants, you might be able to accommodate her wishes.

Manufacturers give customers many mix-and-match possibilities, from switching metals to changing the size of gemstones in a mounting. Take



Feature: White and yellow gold semi-mount with baguette trim

Benefit: The empty mounting allows flexibility in selecting the size, quality, and shape of the center stone.



C. Borland/PhotoDisc

Price is less of an issue when customers are happy with the jewelry they choose. Keep this in mind as you find ways to satisfy your customers' wishes.



Often, the same style ring is available in both white (top) and yellow (bottom) metals, and can contain diamonds with different clarity, size, cut, or color. Know what options your store offers so you can accommodate each customer's individual preferences.

advantage of these options, and try not to lose sales over details you can be flexible on.

As you start showing jewelry, you should also start pointing out features (specific characteristics) and benefits (the value each feature holds for your customer).

Here's an example: The fine, delicate platinum mounting around the point of a marquise center diamond in an engagement ring is a feature. The benefit is that the durability of the platinum will protect the diamond while giving the ring a sleek design.

You can draw on the product knowledge you've acquired in this course to identify features and translate them into benefits. You know how diamonds form, and that they come in different levels of color and clarity. You also know how cut affects beauty, and how rarity and value are related. All of these are keys to your sales success.

You should be able to explain how the features and benefits of a piece of jewelry contribute to its emotional or financial value. That's what Adam Stone did at the beginning of Assignment 2 when he said:

"Diamonds with fewer clarity characteristics are more rare, so they tend to be more valuable. I can show you a diamond with no clarity characteristics, but it will cost you about three times more than this one if you want the same size and color. I can assure you, though, that this diamond's clarity is very good."

He also said, "The crystals inside this diamond have been there since it formed. They make the diamond unique. I can't even guess at the odds of finding another diamond with the same color, weight, and two identical crystals in the same locations. You can tell that to Tess when you give it to her—this diamond is truly one of a kind. There's not another one exactly like it."

He turned one feature (the clarity grade) into two benefits. One was financial, the other was purely emotional. In most cases, the emotional benefit will close the sale. Adam led with the financial benefit and ended with the emotional one because he wanted it to be foremost in his customer's mind.

Add *tags* to your feature and benefit presentations. Tags are simple questions that keep your customer involved in the sale. Always try to relate them to things you've learned about your customer.

Here's an example of a tag you might use in a sales presentation for a triangular diamond:

Feature: "The diamond is a triangular brilliant."

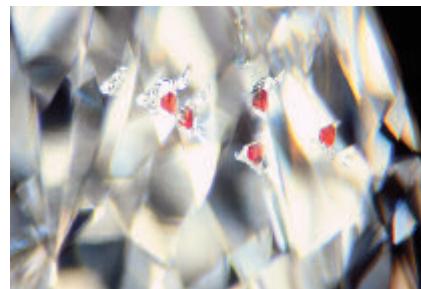
Benefit: "The diamond's triangular shape has a fresh, contemporary look."

Tag: "You said earlier that you wanted a modern style—doesn't the diamond's shape give this ring a modern look?"



Valerie Power/GIA

The platinum mounting is a feature that can easily be expressed as a benefit. You can tell your customer that, with platinum holding the diamonds in place, this ring is likely to last a lifetime.



Vincent Cracco/GIA

You can use inclusions as selling features that make a diamond one-of-a-kind, especially if the inclusions are extraordinary, like these vibrant red crystals.



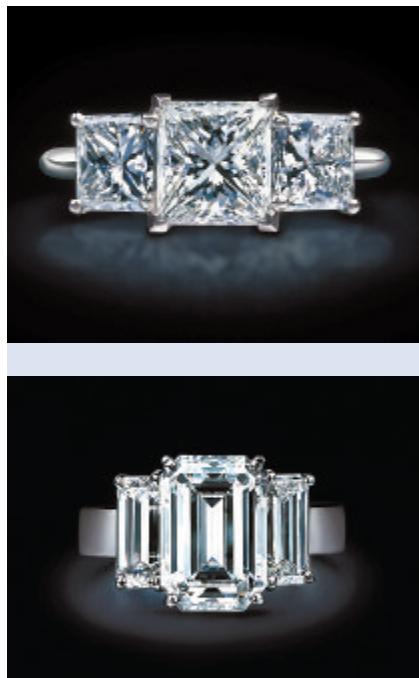
Wedding rings symbolize the love and commitment between two people. Remind customers of this priceless emotional benefit.

Key Concepts

Draw on your product knowledge to translate features into benefits.

People usually buy jewelry based on its emotional benefits.

Tag—Restatement of a benefit, posed as a question, designed to elicit agreement.



Princess cuts display an impressive flash of brilliance (top) while emerald cuts have a more subtle, elegant beauty (bottom). If you show customers a variety of cuts, you can let their preferences guide you.

choose a step-cut diamond. Brilliant cuts tend to show more “sparkle” than step cuts, but the latter tend to show off a diamond’s clarity and transparency. Or they might want a mixed cut, which combines the two.

Selling Cut

A diamond’s cut affects its brilliance. A poorly cut diamond is less brilliant, even if it has good color and clarity. Some proportion variations can make a diamond appear too deep or too shallow—two factors that affect how well the diamond takes in and reflects light. Fire and scintillation are also affected by cut.

Let your customers tell you the look they like. Show them a range of diamond cuts, then listen to their responses. Each individual will have his or her own preferences. It’s important to understand those preferences.

If customers like a dramatic display of light, they might choose a brilliant cut in either a round or a fancy shape. Customers who prefer a subtler look might



Feature: Gold and diamond wrap-around ring

Benefit: The setting fits around a solitaire to give it a larger look.

Handling a Customer’s Objections

A customer might state an objection at any point during your sales presentation. Objections are a way for customers to request more information before they buy. Think of objections as challenges by your customer and as an opportunity for you to further refine your sales presentation.

Most objections are centered on value. Customers will frequently ask, “Why is it so expensive?” They might make that statement in any number of different ways. Here are some examples:

- “I’m sorry, but we can’t afford it.”
- “I didn’t realize it was that expensive.”
- “Sorry, honey, but this ring costs more than our car did.”

This is a cue for you to skillfully apply your product knowledge. Describe the quality and rarity of the diamond. If there is more than one stone, point



Most diamonds begin their journey to the jewelry counter in a mine and recovery plant much like this one. Explaining the complex mining and manufacturing processes to an unconvincing customer might help build the case for a diamond's value.

out how well the diamonds are matched to each other and to the overall design. Point out how well the ring is made, the type of metal, and the quality of the finish.

It's more difficult to respond to objections like this: "We can't afford it at the moment, we've got so many other expenses to take care of." Don't forget that questions about price almost always indicate that your customer is seriously interested in buying the piece.

Under other circumstances, they might be prepared to spend at least as much—if not more—on a cruise or a skiing holiday. They might just be having trouble coming to terms with the large price for such a small object.

There are plenty of emotionally effective lines you can use: "This diamond is not just for today. That cruise you mentioned will be over in a week, but in 10 years, this beautiful ring will still be on your finger to remind you of the commitment you made to each other on your wedding day."

Diamond's timeless, long-lasting appeal is a bonus, so don't hesitate to emphasize it. Say something like, "You'll treasure this beautiful ring, and so will your children and grandchildren."

There's no reason why—if you feel you've established trust and the appropriate rapport with your customers—that you can't use a little humor to lighten the atmosphere and speed the process up a little: "Jim, isn't Anne's happiness worth every penny? The only obstacles left are you and your checkbook . . . Go on, why not make her happy?"



Feature: Diamond stud earrings

Benefit: Classic studs are versatile enough for day or evening wear and complement any outfit.



Feature: Gold and diamond earring jackets

Benefit: They give plain earring studs a new and dazzling look, and dress them up for social occasions.



H. Armstrong Roberts/Corbis Stock Market

Diamonds, with their timeless beauty, can become treasured family heirlooms. Add value to jewelry by telling customers that the jewelry they buy now might someday be worn by their grandchildren.



Feature: Platinum pendant with bezel-set pear

Benefit: The platinum bezel setting protects the pear's point and makes it look larger.



Feature: White gold anniversary ring with diamonds at top and sides

Benefit: The white gold enhances the colorless beauty of the diamonds. The stones set into the sides add unique sparkle.



Alex Mak/ORO Diamante Inc.

Men's jewelry that features diamonds comes in simple and classic or more ornate styles.



Feature: Gold round brilliant solitaire pendant

Benefit: This classic look is available in a wide variety of sizes and price ranges.

Create Desire

Creating desire is a lot like establishing value. In fact, the stages are usually intertwined when you show jewelry. Your customers already have a desire for jewelry—they wouldn't be in your store if they didn't. Your job is to show the customer how a particular item matches their unique needs.

For example, you might say, “You and Rachel are looking for a ring with sapphires as well as diamonds. These deep blue sapphire baguettes are a vibrant contrast to the stunning F-color diamond.” Or, “Since your fiancée is interested in jewelry with a traditional look, she'll love this classic Tiffany mounting. Its elegance is timeless.” If a man dislikes fancy, ornate jewelry and prefers plain, streamlined designs, you might say, “This man's wedding band is tasteful and elegant. Platinum is rich looking and lustrous.”

A good way to arouse desire in any sales transaction is the “try-on.” Trying on jewelry gives the customer a sense of ownership and often adds special significance to the sale.

When you've narrowed the potential purchase down to a few selections, remember the try-on. Don't just hand over the ring—make a ceremony of it.

Key Concepts

**A good way to create desire
for an item is to let the cus-
tomer try it on.**



SuperStock

You can help a customer connect emotionally to a piece of jewelry by suggesting that she try it on. If it's wedding jewelry, make the moment special by allowing the groom-to-be to place the ring on his fiancée's finger.

If you're serving a couple, ask the man if he'd like to place the ring on his sweetheart's finger, if store policy allows. If it's a wedding band for him, ask if she'd like to place it on his finger.

In a sense, the couple has just rehearsed their wedding with you as witness. And they're likely to become emotionally wedded to purchasing from you as a result. But be careful when suggesting this type of try-on: Some couples are superstitious about acting out their ring exchange prior to the wedding. Just mention it casually and then abide by their decision.

If a man or woman alone is making the purchase as a gift, you can still use the idea of the try-on by asking customers to visualize the ring on their loved one's finger. "Can you imagine the expression on her face when you slip this breathtaking ring on her hand?" you might ask. Or, "Just imagine how he'll be reminded of you every time he sees this impressive platinum wedding band on his finger."

In general, building desire is about linking the customer with the product. If you inspire the couple to feel a personal connection with a particular item, they'll be more likely to buy it from you than to search for a better deal down the street or on the Internet.



Feature: Gold and diamond bangle bracelet

Benefit: This is a style that's versatile enough for day or evening wear.



Gary Cralle/Image Bank

Rarely does a major purchase have the lasting power of diamond. After several years, cars end up in junk piles, while diamonds remain as bright and beautiful as they were on the day they were purchased.

Key Concepts

An objection can be a customer's way of asking for reassurance, or for more information.

The Trial Close

The trial close tests the customer's readiness to buy. Use the trial close after you've narrowed the selection to a single special item, built up its value, and kindled desire.

Handle the trial close delicately. After all, this isn't a decision to be rushed. But if a customer seems ready to make a decision, ask a question that doesn't require a commitment to buy, but instead requests the customer's opinion. For example:

- "How do you like the rich color of the 18K gold?"
- "What do you think of the diamond's brilliance?"
- "I think she'll love this exquisite platinum mounting, don't you?"

If the customer responds, "It's great! I think she'll really like it," then close the sale.

Of course, closing isn't always easy, especially when a customer is buying jewelry that will last a lifetime. A man buying alone might hesitate because he isn't sure his wife will like his selection. Or a woman shopping with her fiancé might be reluctant to choose something too expensive without a sign from him that it's all right.

Don't interpret hesitation or objections as rejection. An objection can be an opportunity if you respond to it in the right way. Often, the customer merely wants reassurance that his or her selection is a good one. Try to pinpoint customers' objections and find ways to address them.

For example, if a man admits that he's worried about choosing the wrong ring for his bride-to-be, offer to arrange an appointment for her to join him at your store and pick her favorite from his selections. Or offer him the opportunity to exchange the ring, if your store policy allows it.

If the purchase price is a problem, emphasize value to the customer. Point out how long the jewelry will be cherished—now and into the future. "Would you pay that much or more for a new car, Mr. Peterson? Well, that new car will deteriorate and lose almost 90 percent of its value in 10 years. But this beautiful diamond will still be sparkling and bright. A diamond keeps its value over a lifetime and beyond."

Payment plans can help to overcome objections. Customers sometimes hesitate to admit financial concerns. Without assuming a couple's credit status, mention the payment options your store offers.

Written guarantees—if your store offers them—will reassure customers who are worried about getting their money's worth. Some written guarantees include a one-year period during which the purchase will be repaired for free. Others might promise to accept the purchase as a trade-in toward a more expensive diamond later on.

A GIA Laboratory report can also be very reassuring for a customer contemplating a diamond purchase.



SuperStock

Couples often communicate non-verbally with each other while making important purchases. Be alert to cues like a shared smile or knowing glance that might mean they've found exactly what they're looking for.

Sometimes, "couple's code" can help you understand the hidden meaning behind an objection. Couple's code is simply a way for each partner to communicate with the other and to send messages that might not be obvious to a third person.

For example, if a woman voices the concern, "It costs more than we'd planned to spend," don't bargain with her. Instead, turn to the man and ask,



Feature: Cocktail ring set with small rounds and baguettes

Benefit: The field of small diamonds provides a lot of sparkle at a reasonable price.



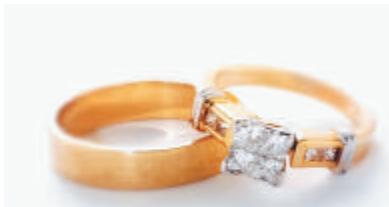
Feature: Channel-set diamond ring

Benefit: The setting provides sleek, contemporary styling and protects and secures the ribbon of stones.



Feature: Man's gold ring with round brilliants

Benefit: The bold look provides a symbol of success.



Burazin/Masterfile



Large diamonds are much more rare than small ones. That's why the collective price of the four small princess-cut diamonds (top) is much less than the price of the single large princess cut (bottom).

sum of the four 0.25-ct. diamonds because large diamonds are so rare.

Bigger is not always better. It depends on a customer's taste and budget. If your customer considers some diamond attributes—such as cut or color—more important than size, she might decide to go with a small, high-quality diamond rather than a large diamond with lower clarity.

Also, don't give customers the idea that small diamonds lack beauty and rarity. People shopping for small diamonds today might be shopping for larger diamonds in the future.

Selling Carat Weight

Many people like the opulent look of a single large diamond. Others might prefer the shimmer of multiple channel-set baguettes, or the classic symmetry of a three-stone ring with one large center diamond between two smaller ones. According to industry surveys, fewer than one percent of women will ever own a diamond of one carat or more. Nevertheless, size counts, even in diamonds under one carat.

The larger a diamond, the more rare it is. That's why a diamond's price per carat tends to increase sharply as the size of the diamond increases. For example, a 1-ct. diamond weighs the same as four 0.25-ct. diamonds. But if all other factors are equal, the larger diamond costs much more than the

"What do you think, Martin?" Chances are, the meaning behind the woman's "objection" was not "I think the price is too high" at all. Instead it was, "I really want this ring, but is Marty willing to pay for it?" If you give Martin time to respond to his girlfriend's code, he'll probably agree to pay the price.

A couple's code might also be nonverbal. Often, when a couple decides on the ring they like best, they will smile at each other, hold hands, or show other signs of affection. If you notice this type of body language, get ready to close the sale.



Jay Silverman/Image Bank

Asking how a customer will pay for an item is a simple and effective closing technique. Regardless of the method you choose, your close should leave people feeling confident that they made the right purchase.

The Close

The close should always be sensitive, respectful, and ethical. And, as always, you should choose closes that work best for you and your customers. One smooth way to close a sale is the “assumed close.” For example, if you’ve discussed placing a 0.75-ct. princess-cut diamond in an 18K semi-mount with two trillion-cut diamonds, say something like, “So, I can have our bench jeweler set the diamond and we’ll have the ring for you shortly.” Then be prepared to do it.



Feature: White and yellow gold and diamond earrings

Benefit: The two-tone look is sophisticated and coordinates with any other jewelry pieces being worn.



Feature: Diamond and sapphire ring jacket

Benefit: The combination of stones adds color and a fuller look to a traditional solitaire.

If a man or woman is buying a ring as a gift, a graceful way to close the sale might be, “Would you like me to gift wrap this for you?” Or, “We have a beautiful presentation box to put this in.” Another way to close the sale is simply to ask about the form of payment that they prefer.

No matter how you decide to close your sale, think about adding the word “Congratulations,” accompanied by a warm smile. Always remember how significant this purchase is to your customers. You can make it a happy memory.

Add-on Sales

When you sell jewelry, it's always appropriate to suggest an add-on. A customer buying a ring might be interested in matching earrings or a matching necklace. Even if they don't buy the suggested add-on right away, they might return for it later.

A customer might be willing to buy an add-on but not want to spend a large amount of money all at once. If your store allows it, a tactful solution is layaway, which allows the customer to hold additional purchases until a later date.

Don't push add-ons if customers aren't ready. Eagerness to increase the sale might tempt you to pressure your customer. But it can offend customers who have just begun to think of you as a trusted advisor.



Dave Bartruff/Index Stock

Suggesting add-ons that complement or match the selected jewelry is always a good idea. Even if customers don't purchase the additional jewelry right then, they might come back later.



One way to build customer relationships is to record their special occasions and follow through with mailings.

Follow-up

Selling a ring, bracelet, or pair of earrings isn't the end of the sales process. It offers an opportunity to embark on a rewarding, lifelong relationship with your customers. All it takes is a plan for following up the original sale and exploring other sales opportunities.

Special occasions like Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Christmas, and birthdays are all popular jewelry-giving occasions. Be sure to record your jewelry customers' special dates at the time of the original purchase and follow through with mailings throughout the year in keeping with your store's policy.

Many stores ask customers to fill out cards while completing the transaction. These cards include contact information and a record of purchases, as well as blanks for the customer's birthday, anniversary, and other important dates.

Some people might not want to be contacted after the purchase. Respect their desire for privacy and don't press the matter. For the people who do give you the information, though, try to make a follow-up telephone call as soon after the sale as practical—the next day, if possible. You need to reassure the customer that they made a wise purchase.

Your call can also reinforce the emotional reasons for the purchase. If your customer bought the jewelry as a birthday present, for example, say something like, "I know your wife is going to love that very special ring you bought for her. Please let me know how it goes when you give it to her." Just be careful not to give away the surprise if the wife answers when you call.



Feature: Heart-design teen ring

Benefit: The ring has romantic styling, and it's set with the perfect "beginner" diamonds.



Feature: Heart-shaped pendant with baguettes

Benefit: The shape gives it a romantic, feminine look and makes it the perfect gift for a wedding or for Valentine's Day.



Feature: Bee-shaped diamond pin

Benefit: This fun novelty look can accent a lapel or shoulder.

A week or so after the purchase, send them a simple, handwritten note thanking them for their business. They'll appreciate your thoughtfulness and respect your professionalism. It will also add to their positive feelings about the purchase and make them more likely to return to you for future purchases. Equally important, they'll be more inclined to send friends to your store, too.

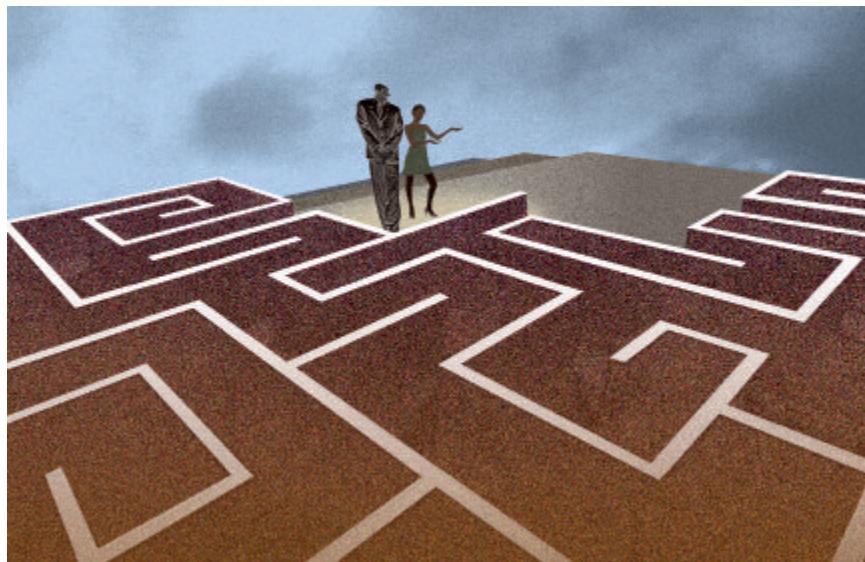
Final Thoughts and Actions

- How can you use what you've learned?
- What are the benefits you get from taking this course?

You've learned a lot about diamonds in this course. You know the value factors. You know how diamonds are graded. You've read about the relationship between the Four Cs, rarity, and value. Your challenge is to put that information to work. This assignment has given you the tools you need to do that. The key is an organized and effective sales presentation.

Striking a Balance

By the time you finish selling customers on each of the Four Cs, they'll probably realize that selecting diamond jewelry is a delicate balancing act. Ultimately, customers must decide which aspects of diamond quality are most important to them. Don't push one C on a customer at the expense of the others. Explain that each is important, and each affects quality and value. Then let your customers tell you what's important to them.



Peter Johnston/GIA

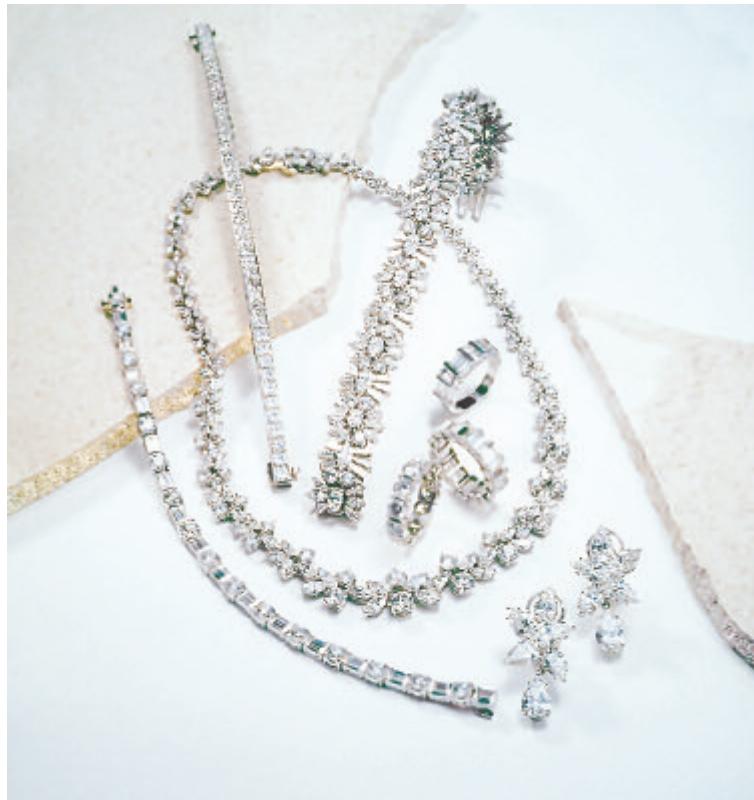
You can guide customers through the maze of jewelry buying by providing them with useful information, answering their questions, and showing them what's available.

The best way to get customers to tell you what they want is to begin showing them jewelry. As their sales associate, you are the matchmaker between customers and their perfect diamond jewelry.

In this course, you've gained the power and ability to present jewelry ethically and honestly. You can use what you've learned here to give customers accurate information about diamond jewelry. That will speak well of you as a professional, and also will reflect well on your store and on the jewelry industry as a whole.

Don't underestimate the power of that image. The jewelry industry is built on trust. Your customers rely on you to guide them through a purchase that can be as frightening as it is exciting. People worry that they won't get good value for their money. They might worry that the quality of the diamond is less than you said it was.

If you can answer their questions and objections with accurate and clear information, you will gain their trust. They'll also respect your professionalism.



Kwiat/Platinum Guild International

No matter what style of diamond jewelry you're selling, your knowledge of the Four Cs will help you present merchandise confidently and successfully.

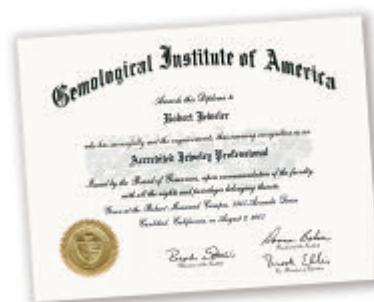
The Fifth C

Now that you're nearing the end of the GIA *Diamond Essentials* course, you're more at home in the world of diamonds. This course has given you the vocabulary you need to make more sales. Now, when you talk about diamonds, you can easily use terms like "melee" or "feather." You can explain fancy cuts and fancy colors.

When you look at a diamond mounted in a ring, you're aware of the effort it took by nature and humans to put it there. And you know what might lie just beyond the surface—inclusions, treatment, dirt build-up, and wear around the prongs of a mounted stone.

In addition, you've gained tangible proof of your achievement: a GIA certificate declaring your standing as a diamond professional. When you inform customers of your GIA education, you've made a big step toward gaining their trust.

All these factors together provide you with the Fifth C—confidence. Your mastery over the Four Cs—color, cut, clarity, and carat weight—is a good foundation. This combination of knowledge and confidence helps you make your business—and the jewelry industry as a whole—better and stronger.



Your GIA education will help establish a customer's trust in you as a competent jewelry professional.

An Industry That's Forever

India was the only major source of diamonds until the 1730s. Brazil followed with supplies of its own until about 1870. But diamonds didn't become really abundant until late in the 1800s, when significant deposits were discovered in South Africa. Cecil Rhodes was one of the major figures in the South African diamond industry's early days, and the founder of De Beers Consolidated Mines.

De Beers determined that the extraordinary output of the South African diamond mines would have to be matched by an increased demand for diamonds. At the time, diamond sales were limited to royalty and the wealthiest citizens. The company determined that ordinary citizens would have to become diamond customers, too.

In the 1930s, after a series of reorganizations, De Beers formed the Central Selling Organisation (CSO) as a centralized buying and selling operation. Soon after that, they began to seriously pursue the great potential consumer market through their first US advertising agency, N.W. Ayer. The first advertisements for polished diamonds and diamond jewelry appeared in 1939.

Ayer quickly discovered the effectiveness of promoting diamonds as symbols of love and romance. In 1948, to reinforce this idea, De Beers adopted the now-famous slogan, "A Diamond Is Forever," the inspiration of a young Ayer copywriter named Frances Gerety.

When surveys revealed that American consumers also bought diamonds for status, Ayer began to advertise diamonds as symbols of social and economic achievement. For this purpose, they adorned Hollywood stars in spectacular diamond jewelry and encouraged the press to feature them. They also worked with screenwriters to promote the association of diamonds with romance.

In the early 1960s, De Beers expanded its campaign overseas. Their campaign to promote the diamond engagement ring was especially successful in Japan. In 1995, De Beers ended its longtime affiliation with N.W. Ayer and awarded its US advertising account to J. Walter Thompson, the advertising agency that was already handling the account in the rest of the world.

De Beers devotes enormous resources—about \$200 million a year—to promoting diamonds worldwide. Through J. Walter Thompson, De Beers maintains and enhances diamond's image by advertising in print and broadcast media. De Beers established the Diamond Information Center (DIC) and the Diamond Promotion Service (DPS) to help in the effort by providing employee training and in-store promotional materials at the retail level.



The Institution Columba, the Dove, painted for the De Beers Collection by Louis Welden.

De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.



1/4 carat \$75 per carat \$600 to \$700
1/2 carat \$150 per carat \$1200 to \$1400
1 carat \$300 per carat \$2400 to \$2800
2 carats \$600 per carat \$4800 to \$5100

FACTS ABOUT DIAMONDS Color, cutting and clarity, as well as carat weight, contribute to a diamond's beauty and value. A trusted jeweler is your best advisor. De Beers' diamond experts are available to help.

Please inquire above for prices on purchases no greater than the quantity in October, 1997, for these specific engagement diamonds (unmounted) in weights indicated. Prices vary with location offered. Exact weights cannot be guaranteed. Exact weights cannot be guaranteed. Add tax.

Bright messenger of love

Winging through the heavens, Columba, the starlit dove, has borne for countless centuries a message sweet to lovers, that of gentleness and peace. With a mission as timeless, a message as tender, a diamond long ago was wrought in the earth for you and me you love. Your engagement diamond is your personal starlit courier, brightly tolling of the loveliness of love, and of the joy and trust that give your life rich meaning...for you, and generations yet to be.

A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

Since the late 1940s, De Beers' worldwide advertising campaign has appealed to the public's emotions to make the diamond a universal symbol of love and commitment. These ads are from the 1950s (above), the late 1980s, and the late 1990s (right).

In 2001, the CSO became the Diamond Trading Company (DTC). Like its predecessor, the DTC sells more than half of the world's rough diamonds. Today, the company continues in its role as leader of the worldwide diamond industry.



DIAMOND PROMOTION SERVICE

**THERE IS
ONLY ONE THING
BETTER THAN SELLING
A BEAUTIFUL
DIAMOND**



SELLING THREE

THE THREE-STONE DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY RING
FOR YOUR CUSTOMER'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

To maintain consumer desire for The Three-Stone Diamond Anniversary Ring, the Diamond Trading Company will continue to provide promotional programs for the diamond trade. The Three-Stone Diamond Anniversary Ring is a registered trademark of De Beers Group of Companies. The Three-Stone Diamond Anniversary Ring is as well as marketing and education materials. For more information, call 1-800-384-3800 or visit www.dtc.org.

A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

Key Concepts

Variations in diamond quality might seem minor, but they can make a big difference in the value of diamond jewelry.

Product knowledge helps you explain differences in value to a jewelry customer.

To successfully sell jewelry, you need an organized sales presentation.

Effective open-ended questions are essential to successful sales presentations.

Don't let "just looking" stop your sales presentation.

Draw on your product knowledge to translate features into benefits.

People usually buy jewelry based on its emotional benefits.

A good way to create desire for an item is to let the customer try it on.

An objection can be a customer's way of asking for reassurance, or for more information.

Key Terms

Benefit—The value a feature holds for a customer.

Closed-ended question—A question that only requires a “yes” or “no” response.

Closing ratio—The number of successful sales compared to the number of total sales attempts.

Feature—A characteristic or part of a piece of jewelry.

Objection—A temporary obstacle, raised by the customer, that delays or even stops the sale.

Open-ended question—A question that requires a thoughtful, specific answer other than “yes” or “no.”

Tag—Restatement of a benefit, posed as a question, designed to elicit agreement.

PHOTO COURTESIES

The Gemological Institute of America gratefully acknowledges the following people and organizations for their assistance in gathering or producing some of the images used in this assignment:

Diamond Promotion Service, 11 (bottom right), 14 (center and bottom), 16 (top and center), 29

Diamond Trading Company, 17 (top left)

Finell's Jewelers, 1, 8

Gemworld International, Inc., 13 (center)

John O'Hara, 15 (top)

Joseph Schubach Jewelers, 22 (bottom)

Lauren Stomel Advertising, Features and Benefits on 7, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26



The constellation Columba, the Dove, painted for the De Beers Collection by Lorna Wood.

De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.



6 carat (25 points) \$360 to \$365
7 carat (30 points) \$460 to \$475
1 karat (100 points) \$1600 to \$2100
2 carats (198 points) \$1400 to \$1510

FACTS ABOUT DIAMONDS Color, cutting and clarity, as well as rated weight, contribute to a diamond's beauty and value. A trusted jeweler is your best advisor. Divided payments can usually be arranged.

Price ranges above are based on quotations by jewelers throughout the country in October, 1957, for diamond engagement diamonds. For larger weights indicated, Prices vary with top qualities offered. Commercial fine stones are higher priced. Exact weights shown are infrequent. Add tax.

Bright messenger of love

Winging through the heavens, Columba, the starlit dove, has borne for countless centuries a message sweet to lovers, that of gentleness and peace. With a mission as timeless, a message as tender, a diamond long ago was wrought in the earth for you and one you love. Your engagement diamond is your personal starlit courier, brightly telling of the loveliness of love, and of the joy and trust that give your life rich meaning...for you, and generations yet to be.

A DIAMOND IS FOREVER