



From the Editor

Be Proud: You MAKE Something!

Jack Bogle, founder and former CEO of the Vanguard Group, an investment company, was interviewed two weeks ago on the [Michael Smerconish](#) radio show here in Philadelphia.

In discussing the current economic situation, Bogle was asked how to improve the economy. To paraphrase, Bogle said that it's important for people to make things that have real value. By "things," he meant tangible things that people can buy and possess, as opposed to intangible things, like internet access, where there is no physical product.

Your jewelry has tremendous value beyond the esthetics. The piece you sell will last for generations. I can't find a toaster that lasts three months, but for the same price I can buy a ring that may last forever. Think about (and promote) the extraordinary value that jewelry possesses.

Also, if you make a piece that doesn't sell, you can take it apart and re-use the components to make something else. Think a baker would like that option? "Hey, let's take apart that cheesecake – it didn't sell today."

Feel great about your ability to make and sell things of beauty and value. You're way ahead of the curve.

To selling more!



David Weiman
Editor and Publisher

5 Quick Tips

Here are five quick tips for selling your jewelry more effectively. All of these tips are related to how you show your jewelry in photos:

- 1. Use simple backgrounds.** The jewelry should be the main “star” in your photography. Avoid busy backgrounds that detract from that principle. Simple gray, white, or black “seamless” papers work well.
- 2. Don’t show jewelry on live models.** Similar to the idea above, showing jewelry on a model often works against you. People who don’t look like the model may have difficulty imagining themselves wearing it. Most artisan jewelers use amateur models, who may not have the appropriate skin to show off jewelry well.
- 3. Hot glue works wonders!** A professional photographer shared a secret: He uses a small ball of hot glue to hold jewelry and rings in place while photographing them “on edge” so they can be shown better. Arts and crafts stores also sell a flexible putty that can be used to temporarily hold your jewelry in place while you photograph it.
- 4. Make sure colors are “true.”** Buyers trust that the color of stones and other materials shown in photos are correct. Check photos to make sure they are true to the original piece. If the ad is appearing in a color print publication or other printed promotion material, make sure the printer knows how important it is to get the color of the original correct.
- 5. Shoot one at a time.** Even professional photographers have a tough time photographing jewelry. That’s because the shiny, curved surfaces of metal and the facets of gems make focusing things tough. That difficulty increases with multiple pieces, so try shooting them separately and then combining them in your marketing materials.

To share a selling tip, send an e-mail to david@marketingjewelry.com. If we use your tip, we’ll extend your subscription by one FREE issue.

 Q & A

Q: You talk a lot about raising prices, but in this economy, I feel like that's going to hurt my sales. How do I justify raising prices when it seems like fewer people may buy as a result?

A: Thank you for an outstanding question. The national economy has trends that don't always hold at the local level. For example, in a community near where I live, new restaurants have opened every few months in what is considered a "hot" area. Although you might expect people to spend less on dining out these days, these restaurants are packed.

As well, someone who may have typically gone on a shopping spree for clothing and jewelry may not do that now, but they will probably still buy individual pieces that they like.

So, as I advise in my seminars, you should have a spread of prices for your jewelry, with some at the lower end, some at the higher end, and more than half in between.

That spread does a few things: First of all, it protects you against buyers who are cutting back, because you'll have a lower-priced line they can buy. Second, it ensures that "entry level" customers have options at higher price points. Finally, it gives you more options for selling venues ... allowing you to flexibly move jewelry around at your booth, for example, if you find that buyers at a show or holiday gift bazaar are shopping for specific price points.

Keep in mind, as well, that artisan jewelry is not generally bought on price — it's bought because it's one-of-a-kind, handmade and created by a live person they can connect with. That trust is worth a lot!

Have a question you'd like answered in this space? E-mail questions@marketingjewelry.com.

Feature

Selling with a Sales Rep: Pros and Cons



by Margaret Shuster

Wouldn't it be nice if you could just sit in your studio and make jewelry and never have to worry about getting out there and trying to sell it? It's a dream scenario for many jewelry makers, and it seems like a great idea – why not spend all your time doing what you do best and let someone who excels at selling put their skills to work for you?

The most likely candidate to handle such a task for you is a professional jewelry representative – someone who shows and sells a jewelry artist's work to boutiques, stores and galleries. Often, however, jewelry representatives work for fairly established designers who make what is considered “high-end” jewelry, because there is usually enough space in the profit margin of the more expensive jewelry lines to make hiring a middleman feasible.

The greatest benefit of hiring a sales rep is that it does, indeed, free up more time to produce, and there's a chance it will also help you expand your jewelry empire into new markets, making the added cost worthwhile in the long run. But do these benefits exist for makers of artisan jewelry, who usually produce fewer pieces and with tighter profit margins than the bigger designers? In other words, is it even worthwhile for you to hire a

rep, or will it eat up all your profits? And where does one find a good sales rep for artisan jewelry?

Definitive answers to these questions are hard to come by, but some people who are pretty involved in the field of promoting artisan jewelry have written about it.

Kristie Leong, owner of www.jewelry-marketing.com, published an informative article on her website about what's involved in enlisting the services of a rep. We have her permission to reprint the piece here as part of our discussion:

Kristie's Thoughts:

There's no doubt about it! Jewelry marketing takes time, especially if you exhibit at craft and jewelry shows, which requires preparation and travel. This takes precious time away from jewelry design and production. Your first love is jewelry design, and you'd like to spend more time doing just that! Is there a solution?

For some jewelry makers and designers, the answer is to enlist the services of a sales rep. A jewelry sales rep is a traveling salesperson who carries several independent lines of jewelry that he or she markets to various boutiques and galleries.

The sales rep is paid a commission by the jewelry designer of between 10-20% of the wholesale price. For example, if a bracelet sells for a retail price of \$100, the store pays \$50 for the item. Out of that \$50, you pay the rep \$7.50, assuming a commission rate of 15%.

This may sound like a lot, but you have to consider the cost savings of not traveling as well as the time savings of being able to spend more time in your studio producing jewelry.

A sales rep can also help you reach a national audience by exhibiting your designs at trade shows in large cities. This can be a very rewarding situation for you as the jewelry designer; your jewelry is marketed in a professional manner, and you never have to leave your studio.

An additional benefit of having a rep is that a rep can keep you abreast of jewelry design trends and give you updates on what's selling and what's not. She can also suggest potential modifications to your jewelry line based on her experience in the marketplace. This may result in increased sales for you.

In order to sell your jewelry through a sales rep, you'll need:

1. Price lists for your jewelry neatly printed up to give to the rep. Actual catalog sheets are usually unnecessary, since the rep will have samples of your individual jewelry pieces.
2. A statement of your terms of sale, including your return policy.
3. Clarification of your shipping terms — which carrier will ship your jewelry and any special shipping bonuses such as free shipping with a minimum purchase. You should also make a statement about when items will be shipped (i.e. "within three days," etc.)
4. A brief biography of your jewelry design experience that the rep can use to promote your work. Consider including a photo on your bio to personalize it.
5. Representative samples of your jewelry line for the rep to show retailers. An accurate record should be kept of what samples were given to the rep as well as when they should be returned and what is owed in the event that samples are lost (which hopefully won't happen!).

Once you've determined you'd like to work with a rep, how do you go about locating one? Here are some suggestions:

1. Check the classified sections of various jewelry and gift trade journals. Jewelry reps often advertise here when they're seeking new accounts. Try checking the classified section of *Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist*. Another good source is *Accessories Magazine*, a specialized trade journal for the jewelry and accessories business.
2. Attend jewelry trade shows in large cities such as New York, Boston and Chicago. Jewelry reps exhibit their lines at these trade shows in order to

attract new boutique accounts. Walk through the show and find reps who are displaying lines of jewelry that are somewhat similar to your own in price and style. When you find one, take a business card so you can contact the rep later to discuss carrying your line of jewelry. Important! These shows are for the trade only, so you'll probably be asked to show your credentials.

3. Visit jewelry marts and showrooms in New York City where reps display. Again, get their contact information.

4. Find retailers in your area who carry jewelry similar to yours. Ask if they have a rep who calls upon them. See if you can get their contact information.

5. Network with other jewelry artisans who market their jewelry through reps.

6. Advertise for a rep through one of the jewelry trade journals.

Other Thoughts:

Tammy Powley, who writes for the [About.com jewelry making site](#), adds that you might also find reps through [The United Association of Manufacturers' Representatives](#), a national organization that brings manufacturers and sales reps together; by looking up [George Little Management](#), a major producer of gift shows in the U.S. and Canada; or by browsing through [The Crafts Report](#) for gift show listings.

While finding a rep might be doable for a jewelry artisan, it does eat into profits, and, as Kristie pointed out, you still have to consider the added time and expense of all the sales materials you'll have to provide, not to mention trade show fees and perhaps a website.

But there are a few alternatives to using a jewelry sales rep. In fact, in smaller markets, artists themselves may still have the advantage when it comes to selling.

In a recent [article](#) on her website, Rena Klingenberg interviewed Jo-Ann Gibbons, a jewelry sales rep with years of experience, who said, "A less-

expensive alternative to hiring a sales rep is to put your jewelry on consignment at various stores that cater to jewelry artists. As a rep, there's no way these places would entertain our business."

If you decide to enter into a consignment agreement, make sure the deal is in writing and that there is a time limit after which you can take the jewelry back. Some jewelry makers report problems with having too much jewelry out on other people's shelves that isn't selling. The more jewelry you have out of your own control, the more difficult it can be to quickly turn a profit.

There are still more alternatives for creating buzz about your work without a rep. One possibility that is gaining steam at the moment is the concept of selling your work through home parties, just like Avon and Mary Kay do. Lorrie Ely offers an article about it at <http://www.making-jewelry.com/Jewelry-Business.html>, and she has even written an e-book on the subject.

Or perhaps you can enlist the help of a couple of especially sociable or sales-savvy friends by having them wear your designs and carry your business cards to hand out to those who admire your pieces on them, or they can even sell the piece to the admirer right then and there.

"I was working with someone who had a couple of friends who were selling her jewelry, and she was giving them 20 percent of whatever they sold," said David Weiman, jewelry marketing expert and publisher of this newsletter. "The friends loved it because it was extra money for them, and she gave them each a piece that they could wear for free, essentially, as a piece to attract attention. She said it has worked out very successfully."

So there you have it! There's more than one way to skin a cat — or sell a piece of jewelry — without having to become overly involved in the process should you choose not to. It's just a matter of finding the right people to do the job. After all, you already have the right jewelry!

Best Timing for Holiday Ads?



Halloween decorations in August ... Santas in October ... it seems retailers are rolling out the holidays a little earlier each year, and it's a trend that has many consumers reacting negatively. At the same time, we all want to get a jump on advertising our products for the lucrative holiday markets.

So when is the best time to start your holiday promotions? A recent article in [Jeweler's Circular Keystone](#) reports that early November is the best time to begin your ad campaign because most gift buyers decide what to buy in November and then make their purchases in December.

That means that if you are planning any spots for TV or radio — the two forms of media that have been found to influence consumer decisions the most — you should buy that air time in September to get the best rates and make sure you aren't crowded out by all the other businesses competing for those coveted time slots.

If you only have a little bit to spend on holiday advertising, you can get the most bang for your buck with ads that run during the two weeks before Christmas. So don't despair — you can get plenty of holiday attention for your jewelry without starting Christmas in July.

Use Color In Print Advertising



Advertising, as we all know, is rarely inexpensive. And if you're advertising in print media such as magazines and newspapers, you may be tempted to economize by purchasing black-and-white ads, which can cost 40 to 60 percent less than color ads.

But before you cut that corner, consider this: research has shown that response to color ads is as much as 100 percent greater than response to black-and-white ads, according to the [National Federation of Independent Business](#).

They further report that while black-and-white ads in newspapers are more common, black-and-white ads in magazines are almost completely ignored.

In addition to the higher placement cost, color ads can be expensive because most publications require that you provide them with a camera-ready, four-color separation of your ad – something most of us aren't equipped to produce, meaning we usually have to pay experts to create the ad for us. But there are ways to save while still enjoying the benefits of color. Once you've paid to have a fancy color ad produced, you can use it again and again, especially if the body text is in black and white so it can be easily changed or replaced without interfering with the color plates.

Another option is to purchase a spot-color ad (a black-and-white ad with one-color highlights), which costs considerably less than a four-color ad and can usually be produced without outside help. According to the American Psychology Association online's [PsychMarketer](#), these two-color ads can have the same psychological effect on consumers as their full-color cousins, especially when they're done in bright red, blue, or yellow.

Selling Your Jewelry at Holiday Fairs and Bazaars



When the winter holidays approach, it seems you can barely drive a block or two without seeing signs stapled to light posts advertising holiday gift bazaars. These mini craft shows are major fundraisers for the churches, synagogues and civic groups that sponsor them, but can they be profitable for you?

If you are new to selling your work, the answer may be yes. Though they are small and not as selective as the bigger and better-known craft shows, bazaars may offer several advantages to those new to showing their handmade work, according to the [Inspiri Art and Craft](#) website.

First, the booth fees are low — typically far less than \$100 — allowing you to try out different selling techniques, experiment with display ideas and get feedback on your work from real, live strangers with minimal financial risk and, therefore, a higher profit margin. Second, if the process of applying to juried shows seems daunting, then small, non-juried shows may be a good intermediate step until you gain more confidence.

But there are drawbacks. Because anyone can buy a booth at a bazaar, you may find yourself surrounded by goods of far lower quality than your own, and higher-end products may not sell at all. A survey by the [National Craft Association](#) found that these types of shows mainly attract browsers, and the buyers are typically only interested in items priced from \$1 to \$15. So you might profit at such shows if you bring some of your lower-priced items or a special line of holiday jewelry or ornaments to sell; otherwise, a bigger, more established show would provide a greater return for the two to three days most craftspeople have to spend at a show.

If you decide a small show may be right for you, you can find ones in your area at [Festival Network Online](#), [ArtandCrafts.com](#), [FindaCraftFair.com](#) and [ABCCraftEvents.com](#).

Jewelry Selling INSIGHTS

S T A F F



David A. Weiman, Psy.D.
Editor and Publisher



Margaret Shuster
Associate Editor

Subscription Information: \$36/12 issues distributed monthly.

[Click here](#) to subscribe.

For excellent selling tools for artisan jewelry makers, please visit:

<http://www.MarketingJewelry.com>

© 2008 David A. Weiman, Psy.D., PC. All rights reserved.

Content from *Jewelry Selling Insights* may be used for your own personal, non-commercial use. WITH THAT SAID – we often give reprint permission, so if you'd like to copy or reproduce content from *Jewelry Selling Insights*, please contact Dr. David Weiman toll-free at 877-WEIMAN8.
333 E. Lancaster Avenue, Suite 202, Wynnewood, PA 19096-1929