



Selling Jewelry

1 Beginning Jewelry Sales

Selling Jewelry

In This Lesson:

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- How This Course Works
- Sales Professional Basics
- Product Info Essentials

OFF TO A GOOD START

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

DCA developed this course to help you get off to a good start as a fine jewelry sales professional. Retail sales is one of the biggest fields of employment in the US, and fine jewelry is one of the most interesting and rewarding of all the many areas in retailing. When you sell jewelry, you offer merchandise of great beauty, value, and meaning. You help your customers celebrate some of life's best feelings and happiest occasions. You're part of a talented and motivated team working in an attractive, supportive, and stimulating environment. And you have many opportunities for growth in both personal and professional directions.

At the same time, jewelry sales is a demanding occupation. You deal with a large number of products, and there's a lot to know about each of them. Customers are complicated and can sometimes be challenging – especially when they're spending large sums on important purchases they don't know much about. It also takes a multitude of details and duties to keep a jewelry store running smoothly.

This course is designed to provide fast and effective basic training for retail jewelry sales associates. Whether you're just beginning or you have previous experience, this course will help you quickly increase your knowledge and professionalism as a jewelry salesperson.



When you sell jewelry, you offer merchandise of great beauty, value, and meaning.

The course will start with an overview of today's jewelry retailing, then go on to cover jewelry professionalism, the selling process, customer service, operations support, and store security. It will also supply you with essential product knowledge for jewelry, diamonds, gemstones, and watches.

Course Objectives

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

- Understand and support your company's vision, mission, and objectives.
- Establish or build on a personal foundation for jewelry professionalism.
- Successfully manage the process of selling fine jewelry.
- Describe jewelry in terms of form, function, style, quality, and value.
- Discuss the various metals from which today's fine jewelry is made.
- Present essential information about diamonds, the top-selling colored gemstones, and cultured pearls.
- Explain product options, demonstrate functions and technical features, and discuss quality and value factors for watches.
- Clean and care for jewelry in your store, and teach customers to do the same for jewelry they own or purchase.
- Do your part in providing services to customers and performing tasks that are necessary for the store's operation.
- Function with competence and confidence at the repair counter.
- Fulfill your responsibilities in safeguarding the store's customers, personnel, and resources.

THE DCA'S MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Diamond Council of America *is to provide quality, affordable distance education to enhance the ability of our members' associates to sell fine jewelry with expertise, integrity, and professionalism and to fuel the passion of those looking to learn about our industry.*

HOW THIS COURSE WORKS

DCA developed the Beginning Jewelry Sales course especially for fine jewelry sales professionals and those who support them at a management or training level. The course is designed to meet adult learning needs and suit adult learning styles. To accomplish this, 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.

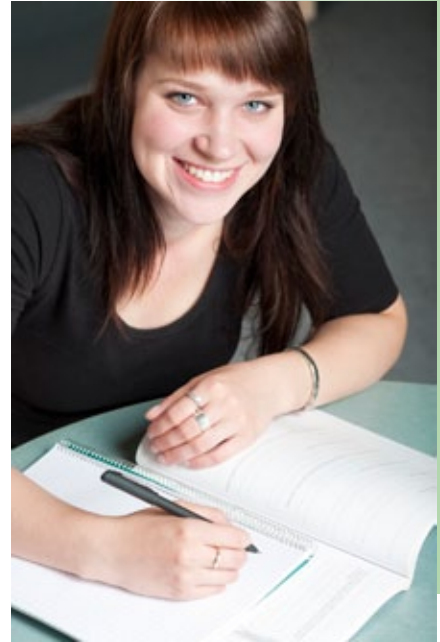


Photo courtesy Shutterstock Henri Ensio.

ONLINE FORMAT

This course is 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 ever need your username and password and can't find them, contact DCA. You can phone 615-385-5301 / toll free 877-283-5669, or email studenthelp@diamondcouncil.org.



LESSONS AND SECTIONS

The course has 13 lessons. This first one is an introduction. It explains how the course works and presents some information you can start using right away.

The main part of the course is divided into three sections:

- **Section 1:** Your Industry, Your Store, and You – This section consists of Lessons 2, 3, and 4. It will give you an overview of today's jewelry retailing industry and help you understand where your store fits in the "big picture" of things. The lessons in this section also discuss the fundamentals of jewelry professionalism and outline the selling process step-by-step.
- **Section 2:** The Products You Sell – Lessons 5 through 8 supply essential information about jewelry, diamonds, other top-selling gemstones, and watches. In these lessons, you'll find facts and ideas you can use to build customers' desire, appreciation, and understanding of the merchandise you offer, and help them make good buying decisions.



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Photo courtesy Andrew Meyer Jewelry.

- **Section 3:** Providing Service and Support – Lessons 9 through 12 will boost your ability to act as a valued member of your store's professional team. These lessons will also equip you to serve customers in extra ways that support and enhance your selling efforts.

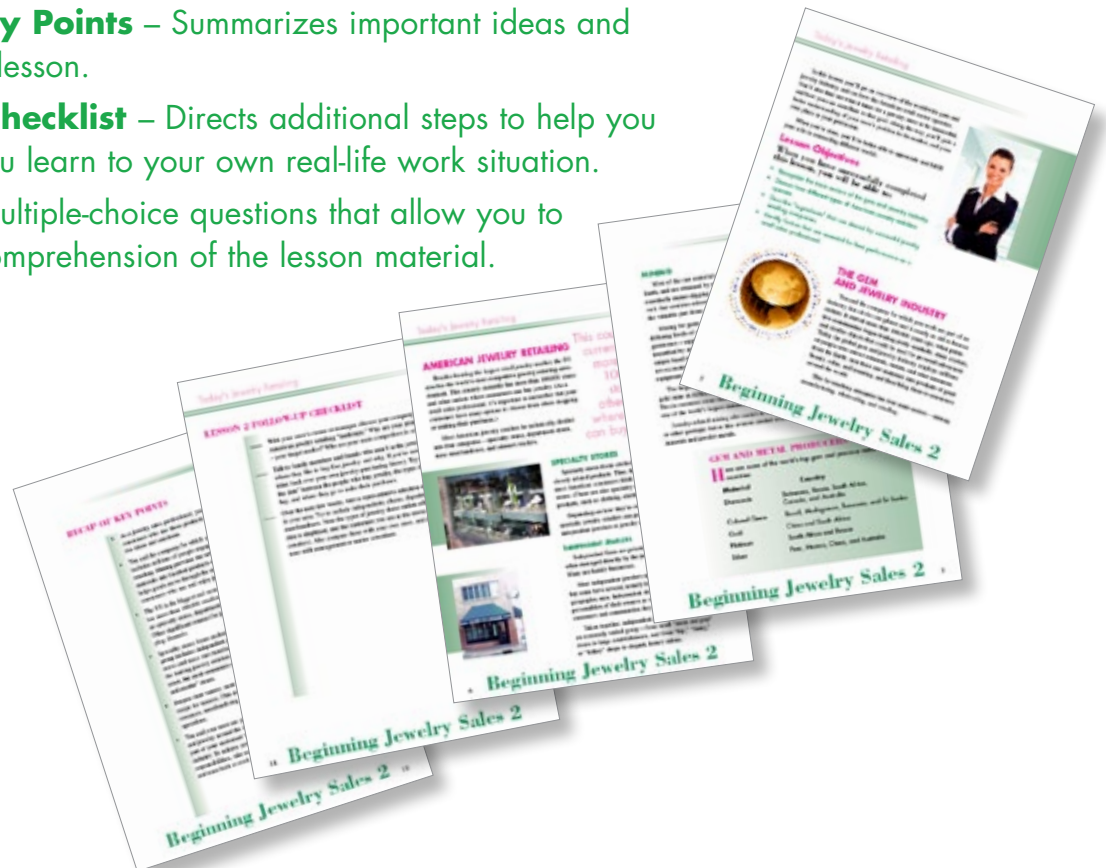
At the very end of the course, Lesson 13 is a final review. It will help you prepare for and pass the Final Examination.

In addition to lessons, the course also includes a Glossary of Gems and Jewelry. This document contains hundreds of entries that define professional terms, describe gems and jewelry, or briefly explain important concepts. Thus, the glossary gives you a quick and easy way to find specific information when you need it.

LESSON COMPONENTS

Most lessons in this course have eight components. These are designed to create a complete and personalized learning experience for each topic.

- **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, explaining why this topic is important, and providing a little general background or context.
- **Lesson Objectives** – Lists the knowledge and skills you’ll gain by completing the lesson and follow-up exercises.
- **Main Text** – Presents the lesson’s core content.
- **Sidebars** – Contain 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.



TIPS FOR STUDY SUCCESS

One of the keys to success with distance education is consistency. It's important to work through this course steadily, without putting it aside and letting it get cold. If you complete two lessons per week, you can finish the course in fewer than 60 days.

Here are some proven study tips that will help you succeed with your coursework:

- **Scheduling** – 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. You'll probably retain more if you have two or three short sessions per week, rather than a single long study "marathon."
- **Setting** – Try to arrange a quiet, comfortable, distraction-free place to do your studying. Soon you'll associate the setting with your coursework, and your mind will automatically shift into "learning mode."
- **Approach** – Begin each lesson by scanning through it. This will give you an idea of what you're expected to learn. Then read the lesson thoroughly from beginning to end.
- **Pacing** – Treat yourself well when you study. If your attention starts to lag, take a short break, stand up and move around, or have a light snack. Keep the learning process enjoyable.
- **Practice** – 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. Also discuss what you've learned with your coworkers, and look for opportunities to use it in your sales presentations and other daily work activities. Remember: Practice makes perfect!



ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing – also called skills practice – is a proven training technique that lets people to learn by doing “test runs” in a controlled setting. It’s used extensively in the Follow-Up Checklists for Beginning Jewelry Sales lessons and in other DCA courses.

The process of role-playing involves six basic steps:

- 1. Defining Objectives** – First, it’s necessary to determine what you should know or be able to do at the conclusion of the exercise. For example: “Explain diamond clarity in simple terms.” The objective of role-playing will usually be stated in the Follow-Up Checklist.
- 2. Assigning Roles** – For most role-plays, you need an “Associate,” one or two “Customers,” and a “Director.” It’s best if the Director has previous experience with this type of training. A manager or senior coworker can also fulfill this role. Other store personnel can participate as “Observers.”
- 3. Warming Up** – Next, you need to set the stage. This usually involves filling in essential background. For example, to practice a certain step in the selling process, everyone needs to know what has happened up to that point.
- 4. Practicing** – At the Director’s signal the practice begins. The Director stops the action and intervenes if the Associate runs into trouble or the exercise somehow veers off course. Then the practice is restarted at a point when things were going right.
- 5. Reinforcing** – At the end of the practice, the Director summarizes what has happened and provides feedback that’s constructive, specific, and focused on changeable behavior – one or two things that “went best” and one or two to “focus on for the future.”
- 6. Discussing** – Finally, the entire group goes over feelings, observations, and questions about the role-play and what was learned.

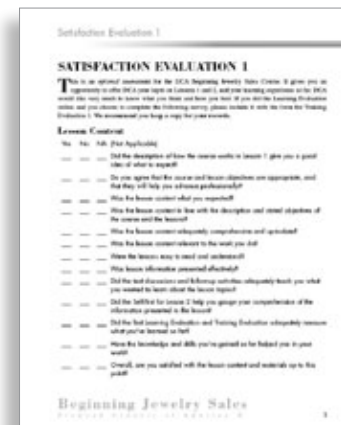
Some people are intimidated by the prospect of practicing – or “acting” – in front of their peers. But with a little experience, comfort levels rise, “real-life” benefits can be seen, and the process even becomes fun.

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 with your studies. The others follow Lessons 4, 8, and 12. 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 15 to 30 multiple-choice questions covering all the lessons in the section.
- **Training Evaluation** – This ensures that you can apply new knowledge and skills on the job. 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 Evaluations and Satisfaction Evaluations either online or by mail. Detailed instructions for Learning Evaluations are in the Testing Center section of DCA's 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 educational experience.

SELF-TESTS vs LEARNING EVALUATIONS

As you're doing the work for this course, keep in mind that Self-Tests and Learning Evaluations are different. Self-Tests cover individual lessons; they allow you to gauge your own comprehension of the lesson material, and they don't count toward your course grade. On the other hand, Learning Evaluations cover whole sections of related lessons; they allow DCA to measure what you have learned at logical points in your coursework, and they do count in calculating your final course grade.

EVALUATION SERVICING

DCA grades Learning Evaluations and provides appropriate feedback on them. With online tests, you 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 on the test. 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 the 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.

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 13 (Final Review) or in the FAQ page of DCA's online Student Learning Center.

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. However, 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 required work for this course, including the Progress Evaluations and 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 have successfully completed all required work for the course – the four Progress Evaluations and the Final Examination – you will receive formal recognition from the Diamond Council of America, marking your achievement.



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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!

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DCA ON THE INTERNET

Besides offering its courses online, DCA utilizes the internet to communicate and interact in multiple ways with students, the jewelry industry, and members of the public. The two main “channels” for this activity are DCA’s website and its Facebook page.



- **Website** – Located at www.diamondcouncil.org, DCA’s website is divided into a number of different sections. Two of the largest and most important are devoted to members and students. Another is the **Reading Room**. This section contains dozens of video clips and print articles on topics of interest to retail jewelry professionals.

- **Facebook Page** – While this has informative and educational features, it’s also about having fun and networking with people. You can visit the page to see new jewelry, take part in discussions, and keep up with news related to gems and jewelry.

Exploring DCA’s online channels can help you expand and enhance what you learn through your coursework. And if you have questions or suggestions, you can get directly in touch with DCA and all its resources.



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:



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 Certification Manager
 120 Broadway, Suite 2820
 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 PROFESSIONAL BASICS

Selling fine jewelry at a professional level is a lot more than taking merchandise out of the showcase, letting customers look at it, and processing the payment if they decide to buy. Instead, professional jewelry sales is a challenging yet enjoyable and highly rewarding career that requires knowledge, skills, and continued learning in a number of areas.

Of course, you need to know about the products you offer. But you also have to be able to relate to people, as well as communicate and interact with them. You need to make customers feel welcome in your store, earn their trust, and help them make good buying decisions. In addition, you must do your part to keep your store operating efficiently, and to ensure that its customers, staff, merchandise, and other resources are secure at all times.

In the lessons ahead, you'll learn how to do all these things – and more. For now, let's look at some fundamental points that can help you get started.



You need to make customers feel welcome in your store, earn their trust, and help them make good buying decisions.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

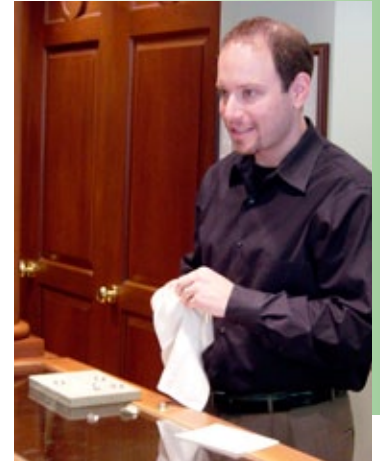
The job responsibilities of jewelry sales professionals vary, depending on the nature, size, and organization of the stores in which they work. But you can divide most tasks and concerns into five broad categories – *servicing customers, selling merchandise, supporting the store's operation, protecting its assets, and working as part of its professional team.*

- **Servicing Customers** – This is really your Number 1 priority. Customers are the reason your store exists, and they ultimately determine both its success and yours. So, everything you do should contribute to the goal of providing your customers with exceptional service. This begins with initiating contacts in a positive manner, and goes on to include discovering each customer's needs, doing your best to meet those needs, making the interaction enjoyable, and setting the stage for future encounters.



Customers are the reason your store exists, and they ultimately determine both its success and yours.

- **Selling Merchandise** – In terms of time and effort, this is your primary focus. It takes a combination of product knowledge and selling skills. The product knowledge part involves learning the facts about the merchandise you present, and also figuring out what those facts mean, why they're important, and how to use them effectively. Selling skills enable you to create and manage a communication process in which you work with customers to help them reach satisfying purchase decisions based on what's important to them.
- **Supporting Operations** – Many of your job responsibilities are aimed at helping your store run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. This includes “housekeeping” duties like cleaning windows, displays, and showcases, as well as the jewelry that makes up your inventory. Another example of operational support is placing merchandise in your store's cases and displays at the beginning of the day, and putting it away again at closing time.



Housekeeping duties include cleaning the jewelry that makes up your inventory.



- **Protecting Assets** – Security is an issue for any business, but it's especially critical for a retail jewelry store. The merchandise you offer is valuable, easy to carry and hide, and also easy to sell or trade. This makes your store a potential target for crime, and it means that security is one of your top responsibilities. Examples of security-related tasks include monitoring the sales area, showing merchandise in a way that minimizes risk of theft, processing checks and credit cards correctly to avoid fraud, and alerting coworkers and management to suspicious customers or activities.
- **Working as a Team** – A successful jewelry store is the result of team effort. Each staff member has to do his or her part, and support coworkers in doing theirs. This involves a wide range of activities – conforming to the store's dress code; sharing information and ideas; participating in meetings and training sessions; turning over sales when necessary; resolving conflicts constructively; developing and pursuing goals for professional growth. Most of all, working as a team means pitching in to do whatever needs to be done, and looking beyond personal concerns to create accomplishment for the group.



Photo courtesy Shutterstock Minerva Studio

Many of the things you do in the store actually combine two or more of these responsibilities. For example, when you present merchandise to a customer, you're providing service as well as selling. You also have to keep security in mind, and you're contributing to your team's success. With experience, you'll learn to balance all the differing priorities, and make them work together in a truly professional performance.

Looking Ahead: You'll learn more about jewelry professionalism in Lesson 3, and Lesson 4 focuses on the selling process. Lessons 10, 11, and 12 cover service and support, working in the repair department, and security.



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Customers have to understand the factors that affect beauty, value, quality, and appeal.

PRODUCT INFO ESSENTIALS

Today's jewelry encompasses an almost endless variety of forms, styles, designs, and materials. In order to make wise choices among all these options, customers have to understand the factors that affect beauty, value, quality, and appeal. Just as important, they need to recognize the ways in which specific items of jewelry can contribute to the meaning and enjoyment of their lives.

Much of this course will be devoted to supplying you with the knowledge you must have in order to assist customers with the process of buying fine jewelry. This section presents some essential product information you can begin using right away.

JEWELRY PRODUCT CATEGORIES

Jewelry stores organize and categorize their inventories in various ways to support their marketing efforts and track sales. Here are some of the categories in which products are often placed:

- **Diamond Bridal Jewelry** – In most stores, this category is made up of rings that celebrate engagements, weddings, and milestone anniversaries. Designs are most often done in karat gold or platinum, and they feature diamonds set in ways that symbolize love and other ideas or emotions surrounding the event.
- **Diamond Fashion Jewelry** – A broad category that encompasses all diamond jewelry that’s not specifically intended for bridal purchases. Diamond fashion includes rings, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets in a wide range of styles.
- **Gemstone Jewelry** – Jewelry that primarily features gemstones other than diamond – sapphire, ruby, emerald, and so forth. (Small diamonds may be used as accents, however.)



Photo courtesy Shutterstock
Monkey Business Images.



Photo courtesy
Judith Ripka.



Photo courtesy Shutterstock Christo.

- **All-Metal Jewelry** – Women’s fine jewelry made of karat gold, platinum, silver, or other metals without gems.
- **Men’s Jewelry** – Items for men. The most popular forms are rings, necklaces, and bracelets.
- **Designer Jewelry** – Collections produced by recognized jewelry design artists. These can cut across other categories. For example, one designer might have bridal and fashion collections.
- **Watches** – This category most often includes different types and styles of wristwatches.

From a practical standpoint – for your work in jewelry sales – it’s important to understand product categories because they play a central role in the selling process. For example, if a male customer tells you he’s thinking about getting married, you probably need to direct him to your bridal jewelry. On the other hand, when a female customer says she’s looking for something for herself, possibilities could include diamond fashion, gemstone, or all-metal jewelry. You then have to find out more about her and her needs or desires in order to decide what she might like, and what you should show her.

Looking Ahead: You’ll learn more about jewelry in Lesson 5.

METALS

The classic precious metals used for fine jewelry are **gold**, **silver**, and **platinum**. Additional choices include palladium, stainless steel, titanium, and tungsten (which you'll learn about in Lesson 6).

- **Gold** – Gold has been a favorite jewelry metal for thousands of years. The form that's normally used for making modern jewelry is technically known as **karat gold**. This means that it's gold combined – or **alloyed** – with some other metal (or metals) to improve wearability and reduce cost. The karat rating is a fractional weight measurement based on 24ths. For example, 24K gold = 24/24 gold, or 100% pure gold (this is usually considered too soft and expensive to be used in jewelry). 18K gold = 18/24 gold (or 75% gold); 14K = 14/24 gold, etc. The lower the karat rating, the harder, stronger, and less expensive the alloy will be. Besides improving wearability, alloying can also give gold different colors, such as white, rose (pink), and green.



Photo courtesy Shutterstock Africa Studio.

- **Silver** – Silver is another ancient metal that's still popular today. It possesses a natural “white” color, is easy to fashion into jewelry, and has an attractively low cost. This combination makes silver appealing to many customers – and especially women buying for themselves. Like gold, silver is normally alloyed for use in jewelry. Most US manufacturers use sterling silver, which is 92.5% silver and 7.5% copper. This alloy is harder and tougher than pure silver.

GOLD KARATS AND CONTENT

This chart shows the gold karat ratings that are considered “standard” in the US, and also the amount of pure gold they contain as a percentage of weight.

| Karat | Gold% |
|-------|--------|
| 18K | 75.00% |
| 14K | 58.33% |
| 12K | 50.00% |
| 10K | 41.60% |

- **Platinum** – Platinum is a “white” precious metal that has been used in jewelry for a little more than 100 years. Besides being beautiful, it's exceptionally strong. Platinum's fineness is measured in parts per thousand. A stamp – or **quality mark** – of 950 Pt or 950Plat on a ring or other item means that the metal is 95% pure platinum.

Looking Ahead: You'll learn more about jewelry metals in Lesson 6.



DIAMONDS

Of all the gems used in jewelry, diamonds are most popular and most important. Possessing a unique beauty and meaning, they've been treasured throughout history, and are an integral part of modern culture. Most Americans would like to own or give diamonds. To many customers, diamonds are the ultimate symbols of love and success.

Every diamond is unique, but all diamonds have certain characteristics that affect their value. These are known as the **4Cs** – *carat weight, clarity, color, and cut*.

Diamonds are
the ultimate
symbols of love
and success.



Image courtesy Diamond Promotion Service.

- **Carat Weight** – Diamonds are weighed in carats. One carat equals 1/5 gram, and is divided into 100 *points*. Diamonds are weighed to an accuracy of 1/2 point or 5/1000 carat – in everyday terms, that's one 35 millionth of an ounce!
- **Clarity** – Clarity is a diamond's degree of freedom from *blemishes* and *inclusions*. Blemishes are surface irregularities such as scratches. Inclusions are internal features such as tiny crystals of other minerals. Both types are also known as *clarity* characteristics. Almost all diamonds have clarity characteristics. The fewer and less prominent these are, the higher the clarity grade will be. In most cases, however, clarity characteristics have little or no effect on a diamond's beauty.
- **Color** – Diamonds occur in a wide variety of colors, but most range from near colorless to light yellow, brown, or gray. Although absolutely colorless diamonds are very rare, they're considered part of the normal market range. Diamonds with natural colors outside the normal range are classified as *fancy color*. These include deeper yellows and browns, as well as all shades of other colors. Within the normal market range, the less color a diamond has, the higher its color grade will be.
- **Cut** – This can refer to the diamond's shape and cutting style; for example, round brilliant, princess cut, or marquise. It can also refer to how well the cut's design and execution show off the diamond's light performance and ensure its value and wearability.

Carat weight, clarity, and color reflect a diamond's natural rarity. The larger the diamond and the higher its color and clarity grades, the greater its rarity and value will be.

Cut is the human contribution to diamond value. The choice of cut shape and style is a matter of personal choice, but cut quality reflects the care and skill that were involved in transforming the rough crystal into a sparkling gem. Cut quality is usually the top factor in a diamond's beauty.

A diamond's value is determined by all of the 4Cs. Beauty is essential and rarity can have great meaning. Therefore, each C should be considered in a diamond purchase.

Looking Ahead: You'll learn more about diamonds in Lesson 7.



DIAMOND GRADES

This chart shows grade terms for diamond clarity, color, and cut. (Carat weight is measured rather than graded.) The terms were originally defined by the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), but they are now widely used throughout the gem and jewelry industry. You'll learn more about diamond grades as well as grading terms and how to use them in Lesson 7.

| Clarity | Color | Cut |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Flawless (FL) | D (colorless) | Excellent |
| Internally Flawless (IF) | through | Very Good |
| Very Very Slightly Included (VVS) | Z (light yellow, brown, or gray) | Good |
| Very Slightly Included (VS) | | Fair |
| Slightly Included (SI) | | Poor |
| Included (I) | | |

GEMSTONES

The category of gemstones – or *colored gemstones* – includes all gems other than diamond. These allow you to offer customers an incredible variety of beauty and appeal.

- **Top-Selling Gems** – For most customers, the best-known colored gemstones are sapphire, ruby, emerald, and cultured pearl. These are consistently among the top-selling gems as well. Others include amethyst, aquamarine, citrine, garnet, opal, peridot, tanzanite, topaz, and tourmaline.
- **Gem Value Factors** – The 4Cs (carat weight, clarity, color, and cut) apply to most colored gemstones, but each kind of gem has its own potential and must be judged accordingly. Color is almost always the most important factor in value and appeal.
- **Treated Gems** – Many gemstones are now treated – or enhanced – by dyeing, heating, irradiation, or other artificial processes. The purpose is usually to improve appearance and value. In most cases, legal and ethical guidelines require you to inform customers of any treatment a gem has undergone.



The world of colored gems is a cornucopia of beauty and diversity.

Photo courtesy Akiva-Gil.



A lab-created gem is essentially the same thing as the natural version, but it's manmade.

- **Lab-Created Gems** – There are laboratory-created versions of many gemstones, and in sales presentations, it's important to make a clear distinction between these and natural gems. Most natural gemstones were produced by the Earth's geologic (or rock-forming) processes. A lab-created gem is essentially the same thing as the natural version – it's composed of the same kinds and quantities of atoms crystallized in the same way – but it was manufactured in a laboratory.
- **Birthstones** – Many gemstone purchases are influenced by the birthstone tradition. This is the idea that specific gems are appropriate or lucky for individuals who are born in different months of the year. Customers expect jewelry professionals to know about birthstones, so be sure to memorize the official birthstone list.

Looking Ahead: You'll learn more about the top-selling colored gemstones in Lesson 7. You can find information about other gems in the Glossary of Gems and Jewelry.

BIRTHSTONES

This is considered the current official list of birthstones for the US. Other lists have been used in different times and different countries. Due to history and tradition, some months have more than one choice.

| Month | Birthstone(s) |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| January..... | Garnet |
| February..... | Amethyst |
| March..... | Aquamarine or Bloodstone |
| April..... | Diamond |
| May..... | Emerald |
| June..... | Pearl, Moonstone, or Alexandrite |
| July..... | Ruby |
| August..... | Peridot or Sardonyx |
| September..... | Sapphire |
| October..... | Tourmaline or Opal |
| November..... | Topaz or Citrine |
| December..... | Tanzanite, Zircon, or Turquoise |



WATCHES

Watches are functional – they tell time – but they also embody style and status.

- **Forms and Styles** – Watches come in a variety of forms, but wristwatches are most popular. Most wristwatches sold in jewelry stores fall into three broad style categories – *dress*, *sport*, or *casual*.
- **Power** – In terms of how they work, there are two basic types of watches – *mechanical* and *quartz*. Mechanical watches are powered by a metal coil called the *mainspring*. This drives a set of clogged metal wheels that move the hands of the watch. Quartz watches are powered by electricity, which is usually produced by a small battery. The current flows through a tiny piece of synthetic quartz, causing it to vibrate, and a computer-type microchip decodes the vibrations into seconds, minutes, and hours.
- **Functions and Features** – Besides telling time, watches may have a number of additional technical functions. Two of the most popular are the calendar and chronograph (or stopwatch). Other features that are important to many customers include shock resistance and water resistance.

- **Quality and Value** -- The top factors in quality and value for most watches are design, labor, and precision manufacturing. Functions, features, and materials (like gold cases and diamond accents) also affect cost. Brand names are particularly important with watches.



Photo courtesy Shutterstock Sinisa Botas.

Looking Ahead: You'll learn more about watches in Lesson 8.

TURNING OVER SALES

When you first begin working as a jewelry sales professional, you may not have the product knowledge or selling skills you need to complete – or “close” – sales with many of the customers you serve. Instead of simply letting these customers walk out the door, however, it's much better to turn over the sale to a more knowledgeable and skilled coworker.

In Lesson 4, you'll learn more about turnover and other selling techniques. For now, here are some simple steps you can follow.

1. Decide to turn over the sale as soon as you realize you've hit a roadblock.
2. Identify a coworker who can take over. If possible, signal her that you're about to call on her.
3. Tell the customer what you're doing. For example, “Mr. Smith, I have a colleague who can answer the technical questions you have. If you don't mind, I'll ask her to step over.”
4. Keep the customer occupied while you leave. For example, direct his attention to items in the showcase. But **never leave customers unattended** with merchandise, and **be sure to put away jewelry and lock cases** before stepping away.
5. Brief your teammate on the situation. Don't go into detail. Just get her commitment to help, and briefly let her know what to expect.
6. Introduce your customer to your teammate. Emphasize the teammate's qualifications and her ability to meet the customer's needs.
7. Describe to your teammate what has happened so far. Provide all the information that's essential, but do this quickly and efficiently.
8. Make your exit. Tell the customer you're leaving, and express optimism about the outcome. “I'll leave you in Susan's capable hands, Mr. Smith. ... I'm sure she'll be able to answer all your questions and help you find exactly what you're looking for.”

RECAP OF KEY POINTS

- Professional jewelry sales is a challenging but enjoyable and rewarding career that requires knowledge, skills, and continued learning in a number of areas. In addition to knowing about the products you offer, you have to be able to interact with customers. You must also do your part to keep your store operating efficiently and securely.
- In one way or another, most of your job responsibilities probably involve serving customers, selling merchandise, supporting the store's operation, protecting its assets, or working as part of its professional team. Selling merchandise is your primary focus, but customer service is an overriding priority. Many things you do are aimed at helping your store run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Due to the nature of the jewelry business, security is another top responsibility. Participating in your store's team effort is critical to its success and yours.
- To sell jewelry at a professional level, you need to help customers understand the factors that affect the beauty, value, quality, and appeal of products they consider buying. It's also necessary to highlight the ways in which items you offer can contribute to the meaning and enjoyment of customers' lives.
- Jewelry merchandise is organized in ways that support a store's marketing efforts and make it easier to track sales. For a sales professional, it's important to understand these categories because they play a central role in the selling process. For many stores, key categories include diamond bridal jewelry, diamond fashion jewelry, gemstone jewelry, all-metal jewelry, men's jewelry, designer jewelry, and watches.
- The classic jewelry metals are gold, silver, and platinum. Gold has been a favorite for thousands of years. Today, it's usually alloyed to make karat gold. Silver is another ancient metal that's still popular due to its white color, easy workability, and low cost. Most US manufacturers use sterling silver, which is an alloy of silver and copper. Platinum is a "white" precious metal that has been used in jewelry for a little more than 100 years. Its fineness is measured in parts per thousand.

- Diamonds are the most popular and important gemstones. To many customers, they symbolize love and success. The 4Cs of diamond value are carat weight, clarity, color, and cut. The unit used to measure weight is the carat, which equals 1/5 gram and is divided into 100 points. Clarity is a diamond's degree of freedom from blemishes and inclusions. In most cases, diamond color is judged on a scale that runs from colorless to light yellow, brown or gray. Cut can refer to a diamond's shape and cutting style, but it also means how well the cut's design and execution show off the diamond's light performance and ensure its value and wearability. Carat weight, clarity, and color reflect a diamond's natural rarity. Cut is the human contribution to diamond value, and cut quality is usually the top factor in a diamond's beauty.
- The category of colored gemstones includes all gems other than diamond. The best-known of these are sapphire, ruby, emerald, and cultured pearl. The 4Cs apply to most colored gemstones, but each kind of gem must be judged by its own potential. Color is almost always most important. Gems may be treated to improve appearance and value, and there are lab-created versions of many gems. Many gemstone purchases are influenced by the birthstone tradition.
- Watches are functional, but they also embody style and status. Wristwatches are the most popular form, and most of these fall into three style categories – dress, sport, or casual. In terms of how they work, there are two basic types of watches – mechanical and quartz. Besides telling time, watches may have additional functions and features. Watch quality and value factors include design, labor, and precision manufacturing; functions, features, and materials; and the status of the brand name.

LESSON 1 FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

- _____ Sometime in the next week, review your job responsibilities with your store's owner or manager. Make sure you have a basic but clear understanding of what each task or responsibility involves, what you're expected to do, and how your performance will be measured or judged. Also talk about how each job responsibility contributes to the store's success – and to yours as well.
- _____ Familiarize yourself with your store's layout, how your merchandise is organized in showcases and displays, and where all the different product categories are located. If you have questions about why things are done a certain way, ask a senior coworker or your store's owner or manager.
- _____ Ask a senior coworker to give you an up-close and personal guided tour of your store's inventory. Talk about the forms and styles as well as the ranges of quality and cost you offer.
- _____ Practice the following:
 1. Giving simple explanations of karat rating and gold content. For example: "This ring is made of fourteen karat gold. That means it's about fifty-eight percent gold."
 2. Giving simple explanations of diamond clarity and color grades. For example: "Diamond color is graded on a scale that runs from D to Z. D is colorless and Z is light yellow, brown or gray. This diamond's color grade is J."
 3. Using the birthstone concept in suggesting a gemstone purchase. For example: "Since your granddaughter was born in January, her birthstone is garnet. We have a garnet pendant that would make a great gift for her birthday."
 4. Turning over a sale when you don't have the knowledge or skill to complete it.

Congratulations!

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