



Bridal Jewelry

 **Advanced Jewelry Sales**



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Progress Evaluation Reminder

If you have not yet completed Progress Evaluation 2, please do so before continuing further with your coursework.

The Advanced Jewelry Sales course includes four Progress Evaluations. They come after Lessons 2, 5, 8, and 11. Each one has three separate components – a Learning Evaluation, a Training Evaluation, and a Satisfaction Evaluation.

For more information about Progress Evaluations and how to complete them, see the Education Center FAQs page.

If you have other questions or need help, please contact us. You can use this website – just click on Help.

You can also email studenthelp@diamondcouncil.org or phone 615-385-5301 / toll free 877-283-5669.

Bridal Jewelry

In This Lesson:

- Getting Specific
- Gifts of Love
- Bridal Customers
- Buying Bridal Jewelry
- Selling Engagement Rings
- Selling Wedding Jewelry
- Selling Anniversary Gifts

GETTING SPECIFIC

In the first section of this course (Lessons 2 through 5) you examined critical variables in advanced jewelry sales – customers, the buying experience, branding, and dealing with changes. These variables affect the selling process for fine jewelry of any kind, but they come together in different ways with different types of merchandise.

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

Ring photo courtesy True Romance.

Couple photo courtesy Samuels Jewelers.



This section of the course starts with a look at bridal jewelry.

For each category you'll learn:

- What it includes – the types and styles of products that are available and popular.
- How important the category is to most “brick-and-mortar” jewelry retailers, and to the industry as a whole.
- Who the typical customers are in terms of gender, age, income, and other significant markers.
- Factors that affect the buying process, and distinctive behaviors that customers exhibit.
- Special approaches and techniques you can use in presentations.
- Unique aspects of follow-up and clienteling.

We'll start this section with the category that's most important to most stores – bridal jewelry.



Lesson Objectives

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

- Recommend choices for all types of bridal purchases.
- Identify today's engagement and anniversary customers.
- Explain steps and behaviors in buying bridal jewelry.
- Manage the complexities of engagement ring sales.
- Increase your sales of wedding and anniversary jewelry.



Photo courtesy JCK.

Editorial Note: In this lesson the terms “bride” and “groom” as well as “fiancé” and “fiancée” are often used instead of longer but more accurate constructions like “bride-to-be” or “prospective groom.” This is intended to make reading easier. Such distinctions are important to some customers, however. So, be aware of this issue in person-to-person dealings, and be careful not to offend. If you're in doubt about using one of the shorter forms, ask the customer if it's okay.

GIFTS OF LOVE

By strict traditional definition, bridal jewelry consists of engagement and wedding rings only. In most stores today, however, the bridal section also holds anniversary rings, and perhaps gifts for the bride. It's where the inventory of unset diamonds is kept as well.

This lesson will expand the category's scope to encompass all types of jewelry that are given and received to celebrate engagements, weddings, and anniversaries. As you'll see, this expanded definition includes most of the merchandise in your showcases.

Product-wise, the focus will be on women's "ready to wear." Men's bridal jewelry will be covered in Lesson 8, while custom jewelry of all kinds is the subject of Lesson 9. But you can apply much of what you learn in this lesson to selling any jewelry that will be given as a gift of love.



No matter what the form or style, bridal jewelry always sends a message of love.

Photo courtesy Diamond Promotion Service.

Bridal
jewelry
is the
cornerstone
of American
jewelry
retailing.

MEASURES OF IMPORTANCE

No matter how you define the category, bridal jewelry is the cornerstone of American jewelry retailing. This is also true regardless of which statistics you use to measure importance – *customer numbers, market share, contribution to store revenue, or potential for future growth.*

- **Customer Numbers** – Each year there are about 2½ million marriages and 56 million anniversaries in the US. More than 80% of brides receive an engagement ring, 95% of couples exchange wedding rings, and about 10% of husbands – or more than 5½ million – give fine jewelry for their anniversary. Thus, the bridal category is built on a solid foundation of tradition and demand.
- **Market Share** – The bridal category accounts for more than 3/4 of the value of all fine jewelry sold nationwide. For diamond jewelry sales, engagements and anniversaries are each as big as the year-end holidays.

- **Store Revenue** – Sales of just the traditional bridal components – engagement and wedding rings – generate more than 1/3 of the average American jewelry store’s yearly revenue. For many stores the contribution is over 1/2, and for some it’s nearly 100%.
- **Future Growth** – Bridal sales are almost certain to grow in the future. The Millennial generation will produce a steady rise in the annual number of weddings over the next decade. The divorce rate is also declining and people are living longer, which means more couples will be celebrating bigger anniversaries. Further potential comes from the fact that many married women have never received fine jewelry for their anniversary.



The Millennial generation is going to create a marriage boom in coming years.

ENGAGEMENT RINGS

Rings have been given as tokens of love and commitment for thousands of years. At different times, they’ve been made of various metals as well as less durable materials like leather, wood, and even plant fiber.

History first records a diamond engagement ring in the 1400s. For centuries after that, diamond engagement rings belonged mainly to royal courtship. They began appearing in the US in the late 1800s, and became a mainstream American tradition by the 1950s.

Today about 84% of US brides receive a diamond engagement ring. By some estimates, diamond engagement rings account for more than 1/2 the total value of the entire bridal jewelry market.

When customers choose diamond engagement rings, the most important features are usually the *ring’s design and style*, the *center diamond’s shape and carat weight*, the *metal the ring is made from*, and the *ring’s price*.

RING DESIGN AND STYLE

The diamond engagement ring carries tremendous meaning, and its form is iconic. As a result, the engagement ring isn’t as strongly affected by fashion as other types of jewelry. However, there’s still room for distinctiveness and individuality. The basic form has also evolved over the years, and new styles have been added from time to time.



Rings have been given as tokens of love and commitment for thousands of years.

Much of this is due to designer creativity, industry initiatives, and shifts in consumer taste. Other changes have come from advances in technology. Some experts also say that engagement rings are growing more varied because of brides' increasing influence in purchase decisions.

Most engagement rings sold today can be divided into five design categories – *diamond solitaires*, *solitaires with accents*, *three-diamond rings*, *diamond cluster rings*, and *diamond bands*.

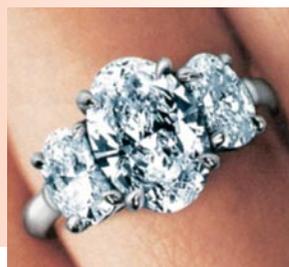
- **Diamond Solitaire** – The classic diamond solitaire ring is a single diamond with a prong setting in a simple band of precious metal. This remains the most popular version of the design. Modern variations may have different setting styles – bezel or tension, for example – but most don't stray far from the original concept. For many years diamond solitaires topped the charts in engagement sales. They're still purchased by customers of all ages, but today only about 1/3 of brides choose or receive them.



Brides today are influencing engagement ring designs as well as purchases.



The diamond solitaire with accents is now the favorite engagement ring design with most age groups.



Three-Diamond Rings appeal to many younger brides.

Photo courtesy Diamond Promotion Service.

- **Solitaire with Accents** – Essentially a solitaire embellished with smaller diamonds, this is now the favorite engagement design with most age groups. More than 1/2 of brides currently receive a diamond solitaire with accents. There are countless variations. In many, the center diamond is flanked by smaller diamonds of the same or complimentary shape. Other styles feature clusters or short rows of melee on either side of the center. Small diamond or colored gemstone melee may also be set partway or completely around the ring's shank.
- **Three-Diamond** – Originally created for anniversaries, three-diamond jewelry made its debut in 2000. The concept is defined by three diamonds of significant size representing the past, present, and future of a relationship. The concept has been applied to other jewelry forms, but the symbolism of the three-diamond ring appeals to many younger brides. As a result, about 1 in 10 diamond engagement rings fall in this category.