

**TIP SHEET (EXTRA)**  
SPECIAL FOR THE TUCSON SHOWS

AFTER TUCSON, you'll have a lot to talk about: new rubies from Madagascar, zultanite from Turkey, amethyst from Zambia. Most of your customers will never visit these places, but your new selection of gemstones will be better than the Travel Channel. Your reputation as a jeweler will be enhanced, and so will your bottom line. Here's what you need to know:



➔ There are about 40 separate shows happening in February, but retail jewelers are best served in the first two weeks. The AGTA and GJX shows are Feb. 6-11 and next to each other. You will find the most established firms there.

➔ The two best days to buy are opening day and the last day. Get your hands on the amazing stuff that goes fast. Always buy the best stone you see. These are the pieces that will sell the fastest in your store too. The last day is good for scooping up bargains, as many dealers have difficulty taking back goods out of the U.S.

➔ Bring some real cash in addition to your normal store checks. Many dealers here can't cash checks.

➔ Save a little money to buy fossils and mineral specimens. The best bets are along the I-10 service drive at the motels and the outdoor "African Village." These pieces make great display props, and you'll probably sell them before next year. Mention the country of origin, and talk about how these deposits



➔ **Buying tip: Bring cash to the show, not just store checks. Many Tucson dealers can't cash checks.**

occur. It all adds to your image.

➔ Buy a line that you've never seen before and may never see again. This could be sterling silver gemstone jewelry, gemstone globes, fountains, or just something weird that will have a good profit margin.

➔ Buy a quantity of cheap loose stones you can give away to promote your trip or just make sure every child who comes in your store leaves with a stone. Many of these will actually generate mounting sales.

➔ Attend as many of the AGTA seminars as possible. Most are free and very worthwhile.

➔ Visit [WWW.COLORED-STONE.COM/TSG/SHOW\\_INFO.CFM](http://WWW.COLORED-STONE.COM/TSG/SHOW_INFO.CFM) for schedules.

— JIM FIEBIG

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➔ See contributors' details on

page 12

ON SALES

**WALK HARD**



Don't let that 40-something leave, warns **Shane Decker**.

**[ ONE OF THE BIGGEST myths in jewelry retailing is that we win customers for life when they purchase their engagement rings. Sure, they may buy a wedding set and some pearl earrings. ]**

But the problem is, they're young, just starting out in life, and they have no discretionary income!

The *real* jewelry buying cycle begins when a customer is 45 years old or so. The house is paid for, the kids have moved out, the wife is bored and back at work, and the couple has extra money for the first time. These customers will become habit customers, coming into a jewelry store twice a year — once for a small pop, and once for a big pop.

This buying cycle will last about 20 years! With that in mind, consider this: If you walk that couple, you are walking about \$500,000 in business.

Let me explain: A gentleman walks in, he's about 50 years old, and he's got \$10,000 in his pocket. It's his 25th or 30th wedding anniversary and he wants to buy something really nice for his wife. For whatever reason, we don't greet him like we should, our presentation is not that great, and he walks. That's \$10,000 we've lost for now, but worse, we've lost him forever.

Why? We're creatures of habit. We like to go to the same doctor, the same grocery store, heck, we even drive the same routes on our way to familiar places. When this customer's in the market for more jewelry, he's going to go back to the place where he was closed.

Anyway, back to our story. So the man gives his wife a \$10,000 diamond bracelet from your competitor, and she loves it. She sees a friend at the golf course who asks her, "Where did you get that bracelet?"

"Oh, my husband bought it for me from H & H Jewelers. Isn't it spectacular?"

The next year, he buys his wife a pair of 2-carat diamond studs, and the friend thinks, "Wow, he really likes that store!" So she tells her husband, and he says, "You know, I've been thinking about try-

ing them out."

So the first couple tells 10 people, and then those people each tell 10 people, and now you've got 100 people walking around spreading the good news about your competitor. Over the next 20 years, you've just lost \$500,000 (give or take)!

All because you were "a little off" in your original presentation.

Remember, the customer at the beginning of their buying cycle may not look like anything special. In fact, if they're anything like me, they'll walk in wearing sandals, old socks, and a sweatshirt. It's their day off, and they want to be comfortable.

Despite their appearance, they're spending a good amount of money, and they want more attention. They're savvy customers. They want to know you really appreciate that they came in.

What closes the habit customer more than anything else is building the relationship. You have to get to know their spouse and family. How many kids do they have, what's their job, what are their interests? What are their past jewelry purchases? What are their likes and dislikes?

Remembering this information will make them feel that they know you personally, and you know them. The more you know, the more they'll brag about you to their friends. And accordingly, the more business they will refer your way.

After the customer makes his purchase from you, always tell them, "Your business is really important to us; we're glad you came in." If they shrug you off, reiterate it. They'll be impressed when they realize that you really mean it.

The cost of the walk is high. So treat every customer like they're worth a million bucks ... because they just might be.

— SHANE DECKER

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➔ See contributors' details on page 12