

# IJO – It's So Much More Than a Buying Group

6 Owning a jewelry store that is over 100 years old comes with its own unique set of challenges. When the great recession was winding up in 2008 I quickly realized things were no longer “business as usual” if we were going to survive – and thrive.

I did a great deal of research on jewelry programs and buying groups. At every turn, the Independent Jewelers Organization kept rising to the top of the list. I reached out to Penny Palmer at IJO and she quickly checked us out and reported that IJO and Arthur's were made for each other.

My initial thought after joining was, by properly leveraging my new buying group, I could possibly add about 4% to my bottom line and I'd be happy. Wow, was I in for a terrific surprise! When Penny called that spring to help me register for my first show, I was prepared to seek child care for our three children as we had done for years to attend other industry functions. Penny's reply was “Oh dear, no Jim. You bring your children with you to IJO activities. After all, we are a family and our children are our future!”

What an awesome introduction to this fine group. I now have about 800 stores that I can call to discuss anything at any time. We regularly use the online discussion channels to locate goods and services within the industry. (One daughter

refers to it as “Facebook for Jewelers”.) Twice a year we travel to fantastic destinations where we hear world class speakers, attend educational seminars and work with some of the finest vendors in the business. I never miss a chance to travel with IJO to Antwerp, Belgium to purchase diamonds from some of the world's premier diamond sources. My children now frequently accompany me on IJO diamond buying trips.

Do yourself a favor and call Penny Palmer today to find out if you are eligible to be a part of this amazing group. It will change the way you look at your business and I'm looking forward to introducing you to your new jewelry family at our next show.”

**Jim Messier, Arthur's Jewelry, Bedford, VA**

**Call Penny Palmer at 800.624.9252 with questions about membership.**



**The largest jewelry buying group in the world.**

**[www.ijo.com](http://www.ijo.com)**