

IJO Is Part Of My DNA!

We've been a member of IJO for so long that I really can't recall what our business was like without it. Since I started working here in high school, I think it's fair to say that I pretty much grew up at Jack Lewis Jewelers.

I stayed through college and left for about five years to rep a watch line, but my retail home was always calling to me. In 2002, I came back with an idea and a plan to buy the store in ten years. I did it in eight and half!

IJO played a part in that. Two shows a year since 2002 has helped me to build a network of industry peers who are not only my friends, but also, my mentors and advisors. The time I spend with them on and off the show floor has proven to be a commodity impossible for me to measure or put into words.

What I CAN say about it is that many of the ideas I've gleaned from my fellow IJO members have led to seismic



shifts in my business and our bottom line. From introductions to new vendors to the special events that succeeded for other people, I've found and implemented so many things from so many.

The time between meetings is the hardest part as I consider many of these folks to be among my best friends. I genuinely enjoy my time with them and the laughs we have made all the hard work seem like vacation.

These friends and IJO are part of my DNA and I cannot imagine being in business without them. If I had to sum up my membership in a sentence it would be this: IJO has made me a better retailer and it will make you better too.

John Carter, Jack Lewis Jewelers, Bloomington, IL

**IJO will be at the Houston Marriott Marquis March 10-13.
Call Penny Palmer at 800.624.9252 to see if you're eligible to attend.**



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