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jewelers should catch on.

MORIARTY: In color, you have to own it, unlike a diamond. You can't call and get that killer stone. It is all about inventory, and having salespeople with enough knowledge that they can sell it confidently. If you have the knowledge, you can inspire confidence in your customers.

HUCKER: To use what seems to be the catchphrase of the last decade, it is a matter of branding. Jewelers need to constantly communicate a message to their clientele that they are a source for colored gemstone jewelry. This could encompass building a stronger inventory, strengthening relationships with suppliers and making a stronger color statement in the store with visuals. This visual statement should be carried over into local and regional advertising, dressing up the website with colored gemstone photography and content, and developing direct mail outreach with a colored gemstone message. Educating the sales staff is also critical but needn't be complex or expensive.

KAPADIA: In whatever price range the retailer works, I believe the first ingredient in promoting color is enthusiasm of the sales staff. The staff should be well-versed in colored stones and will need to make an effort to introduce colored stone jewelry to customers. The second ingredient is to display colored stone jewelry attractively and prominently.

DRUCKER: Savvy retailers have already embraced colored stone designs. Other retailers choosing to join this group should consider starting with a selection that offers a range of quality and price points for a few gem varieties. Build a relationship with a few well-positioned colored stone suppliers as opposed to buying by price alone from numerous sources.

EISEN: In my stores, we love to associate the stone with some kind of meaning. We recently conducted a lot of fun training for the staff and have had discussions on stories of the mystical powers of gemstones. We have told our cus-

tomers about this, and they really love it. It changes the stone from a commodity to a treasure.

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD WAYS FOR A RETAILER TO DISPLAY COLOR IN THE STORE TO DRAW MORE ATTENTION TO HIS SELECTION?

FIEBIG: The retailer needs to take a good look at his lighting, which is generally set up only for diamonds. There is nobody who understands this. The typical retailer is probably blowing all of the color out of the pastels and making all of the dark stones look too dark. Unfortunately all of the lighting companies are focused on diamonds.

MORIARTY: If a retailer has CAD technology in the store like we do, they can offer something spectacular. You can take the unusual colored stone shapes and put them into beautiful designs. It is amazing. The pictures look just like the stone. In fact, all my advertising is pictures coming off the computer.

HUCKER: Strong visuals such as photography and informational brochures, statement stuffers, etc., around the store can encourage interest. Grouping color in a concentrated area to maximize a statement can also help. Displaying gemstone reports alongside important gemstone pieces can promote interest as well as increase consumer confidence in the colored gemstones in your cases.

KAPADIA: Colored stone jewelry should be displayed with as much prominence and care as any other jewelry. I personally like it when colored stone jewelry is grouped in the same colors. Jewelry grouped in one style such as bangles, showing different combinations of colored stones set in the same design also looks very nice and noticeable. A retailer may want to announce a "stone of the month" and set up a display around it each month. This way, they are feeding important information about various types of stones throughout the year.

DRUCKER: If you want your clients to understand that colored stones are important products that embody a long history of romance and beauty, they must be displayed in a manner that

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conveys this. Pieces should be prominently placed in the case. Incorporate unusual props as displays. Drape a bracelet over a rough crystal of the same or contrasting varieties. Use subtle images from the country of origin incorporated into the display to help the consumer make a connection. Staff should be encouraged to wear bold, expressive pieces in the store.

EISEN: We carry a lot of designer jewelry that has color, so we like to display the designers together, and then within the designer collections we put the color pieces together. For the color items that are not designer, we put them with diamond jewelry, to give it a contrast to the even color of the diamond jewelry. That way, the color jumps out at you.

"The retailer needs to take a good look at his lighting, which is generally set up only for diamonds." JIM FIEBIG

IN ADDITION TO RUBY, SAPPHIRE AND EMERALD, WHAT ARE SOME OTHER GOOD GEMSTONES FOR A RETAILER TO GET INTO THAT ARE CONSUMER-FRIENDLY AND CAN HELP EXPAND THE CATEGORY IN A RETAIL STORE?

FIEBIG: The garnet group, which includes so many colors now: 28 varieties that are known. It is completely natural and untreated. Amethyst is always going to have an audience. Tanzanite, as long as it is of better quality. Any of the beryls, especially aquamarine, have been very strong. All of these stones will move across the counter quickest.

MORIARTY: My best seller in 2006 was aquamarine. It has been a great seller for me for years. Also blue zircon, which looks like an enhanced blue diamond. Sapphire is very strong, as is Mandarin garnet. Tanzanite, although it is a little weaker than it has been, is my No. 1 in terms of volume. I have sold up to a 100-carat tanzanite.

HUCKER: Based upon the results of our consumer research and the results of our AGTA Spectrum Awards competition, blue, green

and pink again emerge as the strongest choices for color this season. Aside from sapphire and emerald, there is a wealth of blue (tanzanite, aquamarine, blue topaz remain strong sellers) and green (tourmaline, peridot and green garnet were the top entrants to our competition). Pink sapphires, pink quartz and pink tourmaline were again the prominent sellers in that color category.

KAPADIA: One phenomenon that is happening today is that the line between "precious" and "semi-precious" stones is blurring. There are colored stones such as Paraiba tourmaline, rubellite tourmaline and tsavorites — just to name a few — that are sometimes more expensive than rubies, emerald or sapphires. Good quality stones are stunning in color. There are so many beautiful colored stones available in every price range.

Depending on the price range, the availability of colored stones is very wide. Easy to start with are citrine, amethyst and rose quartz, which are widely known and comparatively less expensive.

DRUCKER: Television shopping shows are largely responsible for the growth that has been seen for products like andesine and moonstone. Moonstone prices rose about 30 percent last year due to TV awareness. Nigerian cuprian tourmalines, spessartite garnet and Chinese freshwater pearls are other products that have been heavily promoted by television venues and experienced explosive growth as a result. Retailers can and should capitalize on this.

EISEN: Amethyst, blue topaz and citrine, and some interesting new stones like evergreen topaz, white topaz, onyx and lapis. It really depends on your area and colors and stones that are indigenous to your area. Turquoise is very popular here in the Southwest. I like to pick unique things in Tucson, like simulated opal. Every year in Tucson, I see more colors and shapes. It is a designer's paradise.