

# EAGA Business Builder

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## Today's speaker was John Mead—John Thomas Jewelers



Mr. Mead's presentation this morning was a request for input from the EAGA members about how he can overcome some of his business challenges. John is looking for suggestions, guidance or other advice that would help with his advertising and promotional activities. To provide some perspective on those challenges, Mr. Mead gave us a list of some positives and some of the possible negatives of John Thomas Jewelers' (JTJ) business. In the positives category are:

- JTJ is the only Certified Master IJO jeweler in Albuquerque. [IJO is The Independent Jewelers Organization. It is an elite group of retailers and only accepts Master Jewelers with the highest ethical standards and superior professional integrity].
- JTJ is the only Preferred Jeweler in New Mexico [Being a member of Preferred Jewelers International, JTJ can offer, at no additional cost, a Preferred Lifetime Nationwide Warranty that will be honored at any of their elite member businesses throughout the country].
- JTJ is the only store in New Mexico that has a program offering a 1 year, no penalty, exchange on any custom made item or engagement ring. [It doesn't matter if the customer is dissatisfied with the ring size, metal color, complete ring design, etc.]
- JTJ is the only Five Star Google rated jeweler in the state.
- John requires that his staff always operate with honesty and integrity. [If a small lie will make a sale, but the truth may kill the sale, John has instructed his staff to tell the truth and let the sale go].
- JTJ is hard to find. [The store is located on the 3rd floor of the Lewis University Building. Most area residents have a mindset of looking for a jewelry store in a free-standing building, so those that do make the effort to find their way to JTJ are engaged buyers. About 91% of the people that get to the store make a purchase. That is a conversion rate almost five times the 17% to 20% rate for the jewelry store industry].
- JTJ has 3,000 bridal rings to look at and try on. [JTJ can afford to have such a large selection on hand because the rings are replicas. When a customer selects the one they want, John will quickly have the actual ring custom made for them].
- JTJ has the only magnetic try-on kit in Albuquerque. [This kit is basically a 'ring-builder' where John and his team are able to create over 5,000 rings and diamond combinations that the customer can try on and know exactly how it will look on their finger].
- JTJ has the equipment and knowledge to provide many other related services as well. They have CAD software to generate 3D designs of a customer's vision to bring the thoughts to life. Then JTJ can use their 3D wax printer to create a wax replica that the customer can try on right there in the store. [This saves so much trouble compared to the process of having the customer approve a drawn, or rendered, version only to be not so happy with the final product after it has been manufactured]. JTJ also has a 3D capable laser engraver they use for a wide variety of things. [Making business cards; creating etchings and symbols on jewelry; and engraving messages on the inside and/or outside of rings are only a small sample of what the engraver can do].
- Custom creation and repairs are done on site. [This allows JTJ to keep the customers precious items and jewels on site so there is not a chance of them being lost in transit by the post office or UPS. JTJ even does the 'custom in-house' work for 18 other jewelers in the area].
- JTJ has excellent pricing. [John has established a business model with relatively low overhead and he manages all the activities in a very efficient manner. That allows him to deliver a great product at an even better price. Even with the low pricing, JTJ has the highest net profit of any of the 1500, or so, members in his Independent Jewelry Organization group].

As you can see, there are a substantial number of positives in the way that John Thomas Jewelers operates. Often, though, those positives can actually work to create possible negatives for the business too. Such as:

- JTJ is hard to find. [Being hard to find was noted as a positive because a very large percentage of those that made the effort to find the business were there because they were ready to buy something. The other side of that coin is that, in our part of the country, the location in an upper level of an office type building actually inhibits heavy walk-in traffic. In big cities like New York, higher quality jewelry stores are almost always on the higher floors of the building, but in New Mexico, potential customers aren't accustomed to that. Here, customers look for jewelry stores to be in free-standing buildings, and as a result, many potential customers aren't getting in the door. Additional shoppers would be beneficial, even if only 17% to 20% of them bought something].
- JTJ has a plethora of services to offer and figuring out what/how to advertise it all has proven to be an incredible challenge. [Trying to present everything to new customers as they walk in would be like using a firehose to spray them with options. It is hard to concentrate on any one thing and most of the information just flies by without the observer having a chance to grasp the message].
- Price. As noted on the positive section above, JTJ has excellent pricing, but the problem is trying to convey value without the customer getting a perception that the products are cheap. [In today's world, customers have become accustomed to thinking that an item's price is lower because the product quality is lower. The customers have been 'trained' to think that businesses will always make as much money as they can, so if the price tag is low, it is because the product is made from lower quality materials and workmanship. Mr. Mead doesn't operate his businesses that way. He sets JTJ prices with his low overhead and efficient operations in mind. He is able to generate a very comfortable net profit while keeping prices well below those of his competitors. Reputation, honesty and integrity govern John's entire operation, including the pricing strategy, but figuring out how to convey that to the potential customers (that already have a tainted way of thinking about it) is a big challenge].

Mr. Mead already has a great business reputation, and he is involved in many activities and associations that have a positive effect on our community, but he is always interested in becoming better. If you have thoughts, advice or suggestions for how John can approach any of his business challenges, he would very much like to know. His email address is [SheSaidYes@johnthomasjewelers.com](mailto:SheSaidYes@johnthomasjewelers.com).

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◆ **First announcement for a prospective new member:**

**LBP Capital Management**  
**Representative: Brad B. Allen**  
**Category: Hospitality**  
**Sponsor: John Rockwell**

**Second announcement for a prospective new member:**

**The Floor Store**  
**Representative: Randy Johnson**  
**Category: Floor covering sales and installation**  
**Sponsor: John Woods**

If you have an objection to either of these companies becoming a member, or if you have information that you feel should be considered during the review process, please contact our Membership Committee Chairman, Jack Zipper (via telephone number 505-259-5959 or email at [jdzipper@comcast.net](mailto:jdzipper@comcast.net)) as soon as possible.

- ◆ We send our prayers and well wishes to John Campbell as he recovers from quadruple bypass surgery. Jack Zipper reports that John is in good spirits and recovering slowly. John will be in rehab for a few days before going home to finish the recovery process. We hope to see a well healed and re-energized Mr. Campbell at our meetings again in a few weeks.

## Badge Board Greeters

**Mar 21<sup>st</sup> Lance Darnell \_Darnell Cable & Fasteners**  
**Mar 28<sup>th</sup> Chase Wilson—Essential Pest Management**  
**Apr 04<sup>th</sup> Rich Rosley—ATEC Security**  
**Apr 11<sup>th</sup> Nestor Romero—The Payroll Company**  
**Apr 18<sup>th</sup> Michal Kocurek—Atmosphere Commercial Interiors**  
**Apr 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**May 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**May 9<sup>th</sup>**

## Upcoming Speakers

**Mar 21<sup>st</sup> Hass Aslami—Pizza 9 Franchise System**  
**Mar 28<sup>th</sup> Ben Hoffman—Kinney Brick**  
**Apr 04<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker—Kurt Roth - 505 Sport Venture**  
**Apr 11<sup>th</sup> Kit Turpen—Berger Briggs Insurance**  
**Apr 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Apr 25<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker—Herman Leproski - Delancey Street Foundation**  
**May 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**May 9<sup>th</sup> Nestor Romero—The Payroll Company**

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