

# JEWELRY

*Showcase*



SAMUEL SYLVIO  
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# Jewelry Showcase Study: Successful Businesses

RETAIL



Susan Eisen poses behind three display cases at her jewelry and watch store in El Paso, Texas.

## Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry & Watches

Another major success story for decades and still going strong is a store in El Paso Texas—Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry & Watches. Owner Susan Eisen knew early on that she had to tell a story, be it surrounding her own designs or the iconic brands she represents in her jewelry cases and online. Despite her success, Eisen doesn't rest on her laurels, but keeps reinventing herself and thus keeps unlocking new doors of opportunity.

She is no stranger to eyewear, but doesn't sell it. Instead, she fixes it. Is it a great way to build trust and have your customer linger in the store? Yes, indeed. But Eisen also offers other services that are not the norm for most independent jewelers. She has positioned her-

self as an expert witness in court. She has testified in many cases dealing with the valuation of jewelry for bankruptcy, divorce and fraud. Among her recent appearances was as an expert witness for jewelry patent and trademark infringement issues. Her clients include a national expert witness search firm and attorneys in the United States who specialize in litigation requiring expert witness testimony.

Of course, she also offers approvals, and her clients in this area include national banks, government agencies, estate professionals and insurance companies. These activities not only position Eisen as the industry expert that she is, but she is also called upon in situations to help others.

Speaking at various functions is also a way to generate attention to her store brand, while reinforcing her specialized stature in the local—and even national—market. "I have been involved in speaking events from day one. While it takes marketing and persistence, this is a fabulous way to meet new groups of people and expand your customer base. I especially enjoy being invited to speak about the three books I have written (the third will be released shortly) and to learn from questions posed by the audience. Each engagement has positive results in one way or another."

As with most retailers, bridal jewelry plays an important role. "I have always sold engagement rings, but for the last several years I have really put an emphasis on



Susan Eisen understands the power of the media and how to get her store recognized and written about. Shown here are a few of the many articles involving her activities.



Susan Eisen helps customers in her store, Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry & Watches, located in El Paso, Texas.

the bridal and diamond departments. I continue to see it grow and have dedicated a good portion of my inventory and advertising dollars to it."

As a trained gemologist and goldsmith, Eisen's expertise is very camera friendly and she uses clever marketing when it comes to popular celebrity events. These campaigns include *Eisen at the Emmys* and *Ten Years of Bling* as well as her partnerships with Screen Actors Guild and the Academy Awards.

"My involvement in *Eisen at the Emmy's* has been a thrilling adventure for me as a designer. It has allowed me to design with no strings attached and to be accepted by those who can borrow jewels from any designer they wish. It has cemented my reputation as a celebrity designer and has enabled me to share my designs with my local customers."

***Speaking at various functions is a good way to attract attention to your store brand.***

The custom jewelry part of Eisen's business has grown as a result of these activities and so has her dedication to designing what she wants to create, as opposed to what will sell. "It is a designer's dream to have total creative freedom and have it accepted and admired." She recently assembled a team to create the type of jewelry that she loves to design and showcase.

"While custom has certain limitations," she admits, "learning how to turn those limitations into creations

that both my customers and I are happy with has been a real joy for me."

What advice does she offer to a jeweler who might be struggling, with a tight budget, who knows nothing about attracting A-list talent? "Self-promote as much as you can," she advises. "Call your local newspaper when you have an interesting thing to say. Learn about PR and then send information to those who would find what you have to say interesting. Join other non-competitive companies in doing promotions, and, very importantly, keep learning every single day."

***Despite her success, Susan Eisen doesn't rest on her laurels, but keeps reinventing herself and thus keeps unlocking new doors of opportunity.***

"Never take anything for granted and attend as many industry events as you can. Attracting the right customers is still a challenge, and continues to be because of the Internet and all the avenues to get the word out."

She also recommends that jewelers use Google to learn about what everyone else is doing. "That's the way I have grown, and it has been so valuable to me in my quest to continue to produce the most precious jewelry I can make for my customers!" ❁

*To reach Dan Scott and discuss your retail issues or successes, or for answers to your marketing questions, please call him at 201.294.3697 or email [info@danscott.com](mailto:info@danscott.com).*