

Social media campaign, online catalog and live chat open up e-commerce

**ZACHARY'S,
ANNAPOLIS, MD**

Zachary's ad campaign, #TheStoryOfYes, was developed late in 2017 as an effort to boost visibility on social media.

The team created TV commercials starring their customers telling the stories of their engagements or other important occasions (saying “yes” to having a family or celebrating a 50th anniversary, for example). The print ads feature local spots where customers became engaged. The campaign is also illustrated in floor-to-ceiling window displays, seen by literally millions of passersby visiting Annapolis each year, says Evangeline Ross, director of sales and marketing.

Zachary's got serious about social media when they hired an expert, Constance Polamalu, as director of development in 2015. She spent the first year understanding how shoppers used the website and learned that most people were looking at engagement rings. Surprisingly, perhaps, that's what sells on the website — high-ticket, 2-carat diamond engagement rings.

Based on that discovery, they started blogging about #TheStoryOfUs, and customers sent in proposal and wedding stories. The campaign continues to evolve. This year, they're running a contest for a Forevermark diamond pendant.

“Our whole focus now is to make our website create a new revenue stream,” says owner Steve Samara. “What if we stop looking at our website as a page on the Internet and start looking at it as a third location?”

A major change was taking full



What if we stop looking at our website as a page on the Internet and start looking at it as a third location?

STEVE SAMARA

control of the website and landing pages and using tools common to other industries that aren't being used by many independent jewelers. They want the website to look different while being as user-friendly as possible.

“The most monetizing factor is our live chat, so customers can chat with me directly, 24 hours a day,” Polamalu says. “That helps because we have a big military clientele, who end up overseas or all over the country.”

For Christmas 2017, they created a digital edition of their annual magazine, previously available only in print form. It was shoppable online, and Zachary's sold 85 percent of the featured jewelry either online or by luring people to the store. Shoppers could tell in real time by clicking on a piece if it was still available.

“Our social media strategy right now is focusing on the customers so they can tag us and

share with us,” Polamalu says. “A lot of our brands give us social media creative, but what we found was we were posting what every other jeweler was posting. When we post something unique and authentic, we receive better results, more traffic, more direct messages.” In particular, people love voting and they love seeing what goes on behind the scenes in the store.

Acquiring followers is more organic than forced, she says. “We focus on the quality of followers rather than quantity; we look for our customers and then we see what other things they like and reach out to those potential customers who share their interests. It's tedious, but it's really the best way.”

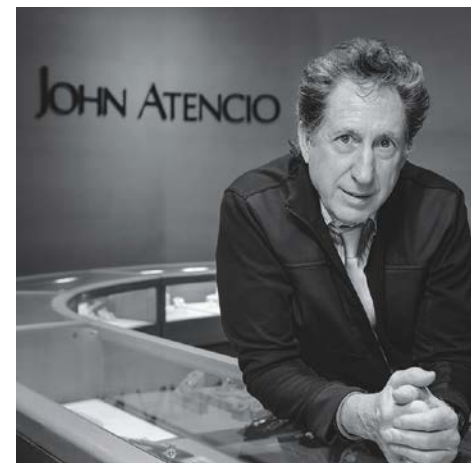
Keeping it simple leads to more engagement and online sales

**JOHN ATENCIO,
BOULDER, CO**

Although e-commerce is a small part of the business currently, designer and retailer John Atencio believes it's important to offer it as a service for out-of-state customers who want to buy something quickly, particularly for holidays, as well as for pre-shopping. E-commerce is supported by a customer service employee who is available via live chat or phone call six days a week.

Initially, online sales tended to occur for pieces selling for less than \$1,000. Atencio has seen that price point rise, though, and is now selling more jewelry in the \$2,000 to \$12,000 range. Because he sells both retail and wholesale, Atencio and his team attempt to redirect out of state customers to retailers whenever possible.

Editing what's available for purchase online has led to more sales. “At first we were putting a lot of product online,” Atencio says, but he found that they sold more when they streamlined their offerings. Now they're concentrating on best sellers and storytelling.





John Atencio's shoppable website sells more when the offerings are carefully curated and edited.

"People buying online want to get in and out, and people who are pre-shopping want to go in and read about things, so that seems to be the places where people spend time. We continue to clean house and make it a simple experience."

Atencio says attracting people to the website and having them linger is critical. "More and more, we are telling stories and trying to create an experience that's parallel to what we are creating in the store," Atencio says. "We're telling stories about me and how I come up with things, or about the names of collections, or about events or charities we support."



Early adapter credits intuition and personal shopping habits

GREENWICH ST. JEWELERS, NEW YORK

Jennifer Gandia enjoyed shopping online, so as early as 2009, she started making jewelry at Greenwich St. Jewelers available for e-commerce. "Because I was an online shopper and I wanted to see how much things cost, I wanted to demystify it. Also, we were beginning to sell designer jewelry and this was a way of differentiating ourselves as well. It was something we thought there was no harm in trying."

Then and now, e-commerce itself represents a small part of the overall business. For Gandia, showing beautifully photographed jewelry with pricing on social media and the website is primarily a way to entice customers into the store. "We haven't yet put the time or attention into making it a main revenue source, but it's something that we talk about all the time. It's a matter of having the bandwidth and the support, internally and externally, to do that."

Gandia is on her fourth iteration of the website and is planning another update. "This particular

website was an evolution from the last one, but I think we could have done a better job of asking questions of the developer up front. It's important to ask questions, like, "What happens if it doesn't perform like you want it to?"

"We always want to do things like the big boys, and sometimes it's hard because you don't have a big-boy budget or big-boy support necessarily." Still, she puts effort into keeping social media fresh and photos and videos beautiful, well lighted, and crystal clear. "It's about doing simple things right and doing them well," she says.

Social media and e-commerce offer a window on the world

WEXFORD JEWELERS, CADILLAC, MI

Julie Terwilliger of Wexford Jewelers in Cadillac, MI, runs both an Etsy store and an e-commerce website with her husband, Keith, and her sisters, who co-own the business.

"I think the best thing anyone can do for social media content is to be consistent," Keith says. "When you're consistently putting out content it keeps people coming back. If someone's not