

Associates as Brand Ambassadors

Store Meeting & Training Guide

Getting your entire store and staff aligned to support and promote your USP should be part of your training and development plan. This Guide provides you with the components for a training session to help you enlist associate support and help in promoting your store and aligning every aspect of your brand. The purpose of the session is to move your sales associates from their sales and product orientation to a broader focus on communication and USP/brand promotion.

This Training Guide includes a four-page worksheet for your associates to use during the meeting. Research has shown that people learn more and remember better if they are actively participating in a training session, and if they write down answers and ideas. To make it easy for you to prepare and deliver this meeting, this guide takes you through a step-by-step process to help you make the meeting effective and useful.

Prepare for the Meeting

Before preparing for the meeting, you will want to look at and download any of the tools on the website that will help you in creating and clarifying your USP. You will also want to read any of the materials regarding diamonds, disclosure, ethics, treatments, detection and differentiation. Be sure your policies and procedures are in place before holding the meeting, and be ready to discuss the importance of each topic.

Some stores may want to hold a separate meeting prior to this meeting to focus directly on creating or enhancing their USP. If your store has lost sight of its mission, or has never felt the need to align its message, take time to do that first.

Prep 1: Be prepared to share and discuss your USP. Your associates need to understand how to align themselves with the store's brand promise. Whether you choose to involve them in creating the USP, or simply want them to support it, you will find tools on the website to help you create and maintain your USP.

Prep 2: Schedule the meeting. Plan approximately 35-45 minutes to discuss the material. Make copies of the Store Meeting Learning Worksheet for each participant and hand them out in advance of the meeting so associates can complete the first page.

Prep 3: Prepare your presentation. Using your own copy of the meeting worksheet, jot some notes so you are sure to cover the important points. Gather materials to support your presentation, such as return policies and information about current consumer issues. If you have other people in your organization who are knowledgeable about some or all of the topics, think about how they can actively participate in the training with you.



Conduct the Meeting

Meeting Part 1: Discuss your USP and how *Brand Ambassadors are critical*

Begin the meeting by asking associates to share their questions from page one. You may want to simply write them down, and cover them during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, you can address any questions that were not completely answered.

Next, share and discuss your USP, then talk a bit about how associates view their roles as Brand Ambassadors. Brainstorm how to better communicate your USP, both verbally and non-verbally, to every customer. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Identify our USP? (have associates write down the answer)
- Ask Associates → What makes our shopping experience special? How are we *not* average?
- Discuss the differences between a professional sales associate and a brand ambassador? Explain why your store needs brand ambassadors.
- Discuss how you can communicate your USP to our customers everyday (have associates list the ways they communicate your USP to customers in their worksheet)

Meeting Part 2: Explain your Commitment to Responsible Business Practices

This is an opportunity to position your brand as anchored with ethical practices that are central to consumer comfort and loyalty. For example, discuss your policy/practices regarding detection, disclosure, diamond sourcing and treatments in a way that is positive and supportive of your USP. Encourage questions. Remind associates to write down the information re: the following:

- Review your store policy and practice regarding ethical diamond sourcing.
- Review your store policy regarding disclosure and treatments.
- Explain how your store handles detection of diamonds, simulants and synthetics.
- Reiterate how you differentiate diamond from alternative products (e.g. simulants/synthetics).

DIAMOND PROMOTION SERVICE

Meeting Part 3 Use Storytelling. Stories help sales associates make important points in memorable ways. Think about some of the great stories you already know: the Diamond Journey, your own diamond moments, the best “pop the question” ideas, experiences of past customers etc. Start by sharing some of the stories you and your staff already tell, and then think about how to use stories to convey your USP ...and enhance your shopping experiences. Remember, storytelling allows you to be conversational vs. coldly factual

- Share some of the stories associates already tell customers.
- Identify at least 2 stories that help make a diamond purchase more romantic.
- How do we want customers to feel about your return policy? Discuss how you can tell a story about a previous customer to help them feel that way.
- How can you weave information about the Kimberly Process & SoW in a story-like conversation during a presentation ...that reiterates our responsible business practices and policies.
- Identify stories that would prompt someone new to visit your store.

Meeting Part 4: Discuss how to improve in your Farewell and Finish. Many stores can benefit from a memorable farewell, yet few think about it. Challenge your *Brand Ambassadors* to brainstorm 10 or more ways to change either your current finish or other procedures in a way that will better support your USP. Keep the ideas realistic and upbeat, and focus on things you can do immediately.

Conclude the meeting with a challenge to your Brand Ambassadors to be the best they can be in representing the brand and engaging customers with it. Most importantly, encourage new ideas and continued thinking/discussions

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Store Meeting Learning Worksheets

READ THIS BEFORE YOUR STORE MEETING

Competition for the jewelry customer has never been greater! You know that consumers can shop anytime, in thousands of places, compare prices and find just about whatever they want. Customers are becoming more demanding, too. They want endless selection, great quality, great prices, and liberal return policies. They want fun, exciting, shopping experiences worthy of the trip to the store. Consumers also respond differently to sales people who are fashionable, smart, well-informed, and personable. And they are getting everything they want from innovative retailers!

The good news is: Customers love diamonds and jewelry; they have an emotional connection to diamonds because they represent love, romance, elegance, sophistication, style and fashion. The bad news? Customers only rate the diamond jewelry shopping experiences as “average.”

Diamond Jewelry shoppers today can literally look all over the world for the item they want. What does this mean to you? This means that your store has to work hard to offer customers something unique and special. This means that your role as a Sales Associate is changing.

Think about these questions:

- Why are your customers loyal?
- Why is your store special?
- If a customer can shop anywhere, why choose you?
- How would you rate your skill, your demeanor, your brand support?

The answers to these questions are all part of your store’s *Unique Selling Proposition*. (USP) A USP is a consistent, clear, compelling message that differentiates you from all others. It’s how your store stands out by being fun or different or unusual in a positive and exciting way. As a salesperson, you are a vital part of that unique proposition. This meeting will help you learn how to communicate and support your store’s USP

WRITE DOWN YOUR QUESTION (S)

After reading this portion, you will probably have at least one question. Write your question(s) here and bring this to the store meeting.

Store Meeting Learning Worksheets

Step 1: Discuss your store's USP. Write it down here and ask questions to ensure you understand. This is the time to also ask your question(s) from your pre-meeting read.

Discuss the difference between Professional Sales Associates and Brand Ambassadors.

- Professional Sales Associates have a loyal clientele, increase sales, and deliver services while increasing their product knowledge and enhancing their selling skills.
- A Brand Ambassador is a professional that gracefully and skillfully communicates the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of a brand ...appropriately in conversation, in manner, in service and appearance.

What is your role? ...Why?

Step 2: List all of the ways that you can communicate your USP to customers:

Consider: how you greet and treat customers, how you look, how you act, what you do, etc.

Step 3: Identify the Responsible Business Practices that are the foundation of your store and/or company.
