

Feature Friday – Harris Botnick



HARRIS BOTNICK
Worthmore Jewelers, Midtown, GA

I was a film major at University of Alabama. UA does have an excellent School of Communications, but I realized towards the end of my program that I was most likely ending where NYU would probably start. (On a side note, my major film project



happen to be a jewelry store robbery. I still can't believe the local jeweler in Tuscaloosa let me film this outside of his store!) At that time, I was not interested in starting over. So upon leaving school, my wife Geri suggested I try out retail. Geri had grown up in retail and was a fashion merchandising major at UA. After trying my hand in a couple of fields, I discovered jewelry. For me, the jewelry industry gave me the challenges I needed. I loved, and still love, how our industry is constantly evolving. Being able to constantly learn more and test new

ideas and products is extremely fulfilling for me.

We started out 23 years ago, and our business model was liquidations: buying out stores and manufacturers when they were overstocked. We wanted a name that conveyed value. At the time, warehouse, wholesale, and family names were commonly used for store names, and we wanted to further differentiate

ourselves as being different. And Worthmore Jewelers was born.

From the moment you walk in the door, I feel the Worthmore story is told. From our greeter, Snorkel Sam (my family boxer), approaching our customers to welcome them in, the artwork on the walls, the painted concrete floor, unique merchandise, and our fabulously eclectic 22-person crew, every aspect says Worthmore.

My job title is president. My job description is Chief Cook and Bottle Washer/therapist. Whatever needs to be done I do. By far, my favorite thing to do in the store is help customers, but much of my day is taken up with advertising, daily bookkeeping, buying, and employee and vendor communications.



I've been in the industry for 28 years, and one of my favorite memories was being able to pay rent the first month we were open. I love so many parts of our business. If I had to pick just one...well I'd still pick two. I love getting to work with customers and getting to help them with so many special life events. A great example of this: I remember eleven years ago when one of my regular customers brought in her 13-year old son so he could pick out a gift for his first "serious" girlfriend. I was so happy that she brought him to us for the milestone in his life. Then fast forward 11 years and this little guy (now 6 foot 3 inches) walks in with his mom to pick out his engagement ring. This is what this business is all about. My other number one part of our industry that I love is getting out at the trade shows and finding new designs and designers. It is always exciting to bring these new styles back and introduce them to our customers and see their excitement. It is very satisfying to know we picked out

something they had never seen, and they loved it just as much as we did.

When I first started in the industry, I worked at a store that kept inventory on note cards, not computers—need I say more! CAD design/CounterSketch® are easy enough for everyone in the store to use.



Through the years, I have had the opportunity to work on a custom belt buckle for George Strait, cuff links for Bon Jovi, and thousands of other custom pieces. I can't say one has been more fun than another. Any time you get to create a unique piece of jewelry for a customer or with a customer, it is extremely satisfying.

And although custom is a large part of our business, repairs are big as well. Not only are they a great revenue stream, but offering repairs gets customers in the store at least two times (drop off and pick up) which gives us the chance to WOW them with our unique jewelry and fun atmosphere. Our in-house repair shop stays busy year-round.

When did I first learn about Stuller? Well, I thought that the first vendor everyone who started in this industry learned

about Stuller. Years ago, I only looked at Stuller as a place to buy findings. As Stuller has grown and Worthmore has grown, they have become an integral part of our daily business. I always knew Stuller offered a huge range of products and services, but after getting to attend a Bridge conference and see Stuller in person, I was astounded at what Matt Stuller has built. It is a true American success story.



For parting thoughts, remember “amateurs built the ark, professionals built the Titanic.” Just because it has always been done one way or some highly paid “expert” says this is the way to do something, don’t be scared to try to do it a different way.

I live for my family and feel blessed that I get to do something I truly love each and every day. I think my favorite quote by Oscar Wilde sums me up pretty good. “Be yourself, everyone else is already taken.”