

Feature Friday – David Konkle



DAVID KONKLE
Peter Franklin Jewelers
Fort Wayne, Indiana



At my work area

The owner of [Peter Franklin](#), Peter F. Ball, had been good friends with my dad growing up. Around May 2010, I heard he needed help with CAD drawings to meet the demand for more custom pieces. Having prior CAD experience, I helped out and quickly realized how comfortable I was with the system. Over the next three months, I did extensive training with our [Matrix](#) design program and also received the A.J.P through GIA. I now have over seven years in the jewelry industry.

I do all the custom CAD/CAM designs for [Peter Franklin Jewelers'](#) three stores. I put together estimates of the work and give the quote to customers. Once our estimate is approved, we create a 3D drawing using the newest CAD technology so our customer can see a computer picture of their piece. Next, we create a wax model with our 4-axis Revo mill or our Perfactory 3D Micro Printer, so the customer sees the

jewelry to scale. (We use the model for our lost wax casting method.) The 3D printer, which we've had since 2012, has changed the way we create pieces and has given us an incredible edge in the local industry. Along with the CAD work, I share responsibilities in our quality control department, checking jobs before they are filed for delivery to our customers.



Our Master Goldsmith Jerry

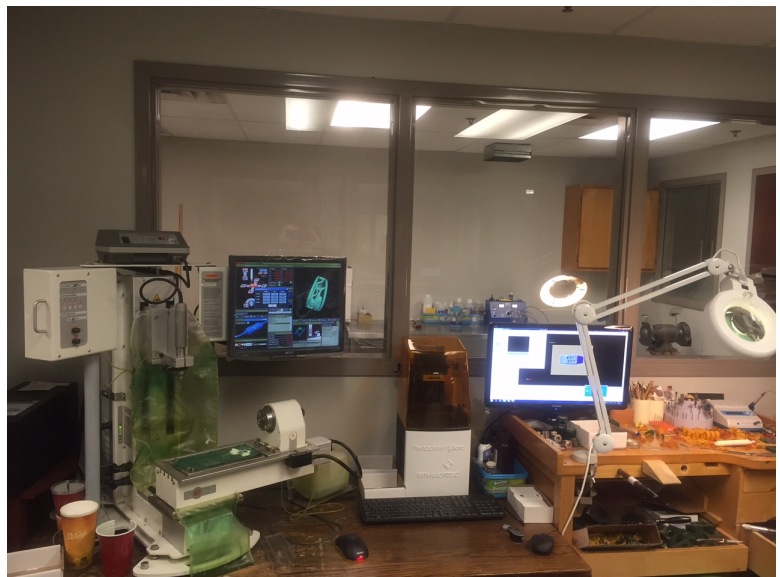
Anyone who works in a small business knows that responsibilities are often shared. I mostly enjoy working in our shop area. The thrill of watching something come together captivates me and piques my interest daily. But I also enjoy working with our customers when needed to fully understand their vision for a finished piece. We also do a lot of trade shows and fundraisers, and I enjoy working those events too.

Once, we had a guest come in who wanted something special made for her daughter from her late father who passed away the previous year. We took a card he had written to her on her 18th birthday and put it into our CAD matrix program to trace his actual handwriting. Her mother chose to give her the message, "you always will be my proudest moment. Love Dad." We put it onto a bracelet for her to wear every day. Needless to

say, she cherishes that bracelet. You can't really put a price on something like that. It makes what we do worth all the effort.

My favorite part of working in the business is that every day I have a new experience with something more to learn. One of my favorite memories is when a guy picking out an engagement ring and suddenly realized he was actually making one of life's most important decisions. To be a part of such a powerful moment time after time is very exciting!

When I am not at work, I enjoy sharing time with my wife Darbi and our three beautiful daughters Daelyn, Deslyn, and Dellah. Before Peter Franklin, I was in healthcare and real estate. I still hold a building contractor's license and am almost always working on a project, whether it's building a house or remodeling. I've always had a creative side and love working with my hands, which is probably why CAD design came so naturally. I also hold a private pilot's license and often fly around our area with family and friends.



Our CAD area in the shop

I feel that our shop sets us apart from others. Before we built our newest store about 13 years ago, our owners actually took a tour of Stuller's shop area. We based our 6,000 sq ft

shop on how they had theirs laid out. This has helped tremendously with how closely we can work with one another. We have five full-time goldsmiths on staff and the ability to do almost anything while a customer waits. If it's the last-minute Valentine's Day guy or the guy who wants a diamond set while he waits so he can propose that same evening, we can do it! I think it's valuable having our shop available to complete repairs, and as a resource to our sales staff. We can answer questions customers have. Is it possible to repair a piece? Is it worth it?

Our state-of-the-art shop includes a laser machine, five fully equipped work benches, our mill and 3D printer, our wax injector, two furnaces and a vacuum caster. We have the ability to cast platinum with our induction spin casting machine and a whole lot more. We are continually updating our ability to fully service our customers and ALMOST NEVER have to say, "no, we can't do that." Plus, if we don't have it in our shop, we can have it in as little as one day with the help of vendors like [Stuller](#)!

One of the primary challenges in our current jewelry climate is internet sales. The internet means many customers have the ability to inform themselves. So sales associate needs proper training to stay up to date on the current trends. To ensure a millennial customer feels secure in their purchase, we give them a lot of information and answer every single question they ask. We have many customers come in and wonder why the G, SI1 diamond without a grading report they saw on the internet is priced significantly less than the G, SI1 diamond with a GIA grading report in our case. When you're well equipped to answer this question, tackling those closing hurdles becomes fun.



Above all, the most important thing is our customers. The adage *"the customer's always right"* has a lot of truth to it. Our customers essentially sign our checks and the happier they are, the more successful we will be. You'd be surprised to see how many people appreciate small gestures like a simple thank you card after a significant sale or a follow-up phone call after a repair. Those little gestures speak volumes to a customer. If I could sum up one tip or suggestion to my fellow jewelers, I'd say maintain the highest integrity.

Share your successes with Matrix® and CAD design in the comments below. Then, check out last week's [Feature Friday participant, Candace Ledet](#).