



FORMLABS WHITE PAPER:

Selling Custom Jewelry with 3D Printing

Every retail jeweler is unique, and your store offers something special that your competitor does not. Read this guide to learn how to sell custom design work, using it alongside your established jewelry selling techniques and customer service standards. Adapt it for your store's policies and procedures, and use it to inspire dialogue between salespeople, designers, and clients.

[Request a Castable Sample >](#)

[Watch a Video About the Custom Jewelry Making Process >](#)

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Table of Contents

Selling Custom & Qualifying Your Client	3
Prepare Your Materials.	4
The Design Meeting	5
The Prototype Meeting	5
Complete The Piece	6
Presentation.	7
Follow Up	7
Conclusion	8



Objectives

1. Increase your closing ratio by improving client confidence.
2. Increase average retail sale (ARS) by presenting larger or more expensive options.
3. Decrease common fit and comfort issues by addressing client concerns with prototypes.

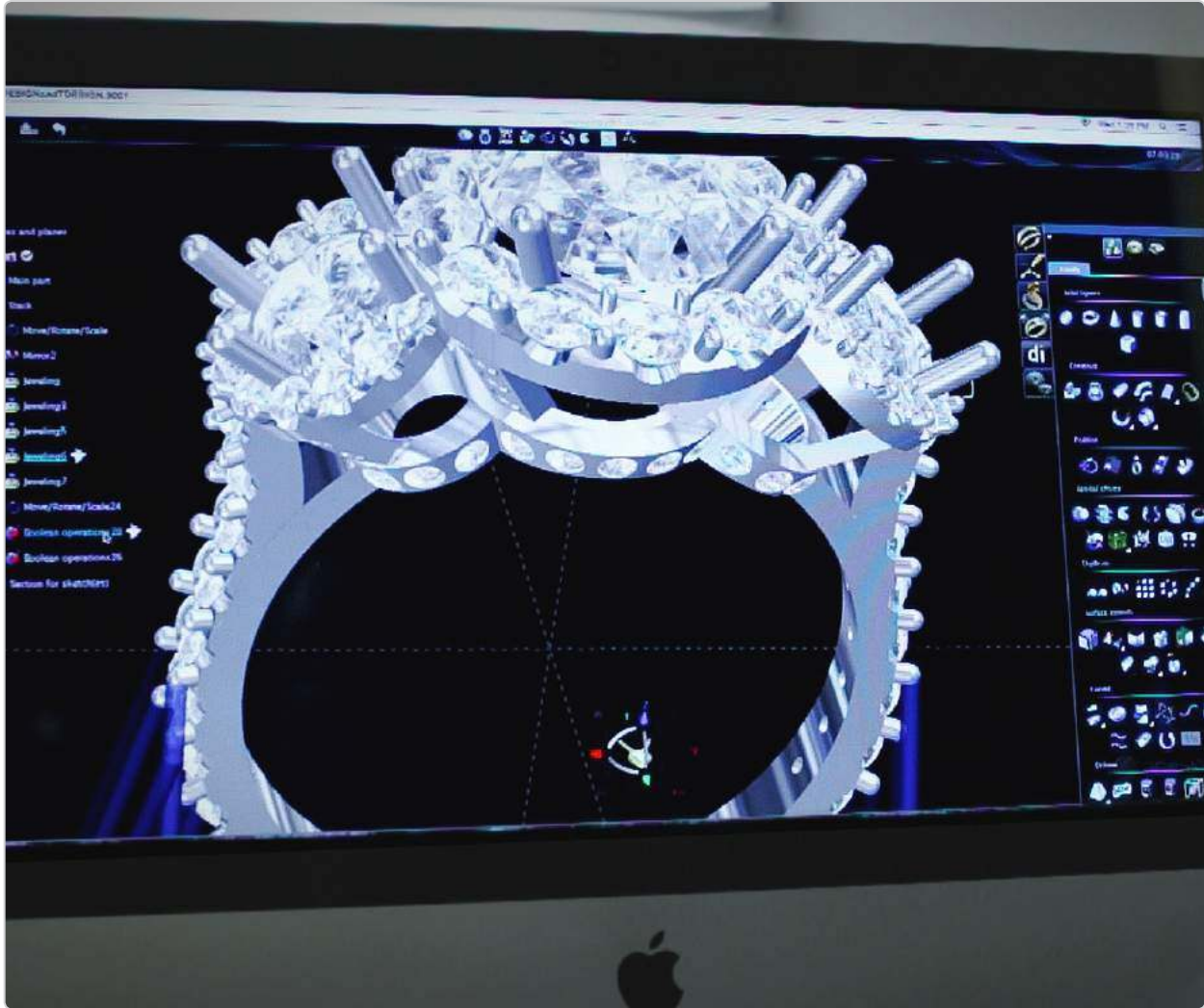
1. Selling Custom and Qualifying Your Client

- Qualify the client by discussing their timeframe, their budget, and why they want to create a one-of-a-kind piece.
- Explain the entire custom process step by step, emphasizing the places where the client has input.
- Assess the client's style and ideas, including jewelry type, metal preference, and overall design aesthetic (clean and modern, vintage, classic, etc.). Use finished pieces from the showcases as examples of likes and dislikes, taking notes to share with the designer.
- Size finger/wrist/neck if recipient is present; request exact sizing if not.
- Set up appointment with designer.



2. Prepare Materials

- If the client is purchasing loose gemstones, offer options that will meet and exceed the client's requests. Bring in 3-5 options for center stones, allowing for at least 1 "reach" option for the budget.
- Take a deposit on the stones in order to hold for use in the design.
- Unmount all stones from pre-existing jewelry to be used. Determine whether the client wishes to scrap or keep any leftover metal. Clean and grade the stones as necessary.
- Confirm the design appointment. The salesperson should meet with the designer to discuss client information ahead of time, using examples from the showcase and any loose gems to be included in the final piece.



3. Design Meeting

- Introduce the client and the designer, summarizing the meeting goals.
- Facilitate communication by asking the client questions while the designer prepares their examples (a hand sketch or computer-generated image).
- Take notes. The salesperson should focus on meeting the client's needs and translating the designer's concerns so that the client has full confidence in the final design.
- Soft close: discuss the presentation, engraving options, and coordinating pieces (ex: a wedding band).
- Optional close: determine a timeline and take the deposit.



4. Prototype Meeting

- Invite the client to view the CAD rendering and show them the resin prototype.
- Encourage the client to touch and try on the prototype, set with feature stones when possible to give the client a realistic experience. Handle the prototype with the same level of care as a finished piece of jewelry to convey value.
- Follow up with questions about fit, comfort, style, and proportion.
- When applicable, offer alternative styles to enhance the client's decision-making process: a larger center stone, a more detailed shank, etc.
- Request that the designer is present to ensure that all details are finalized.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss changes, if necessary.
- Close the sale, take the deposit, and finalize the timeline.



4.1. Complete the Piece

- The designer reprints the model using Castable Resin.
- Follow the Formlabs recommended burnout process, or work with an approved casting house to cast the resin model in metal.
- Finish the piece as normal.

NOTE: Depending on your store's process, the 3D printed resin model will either be cast in-house or sent out for casting. It is no longer possible to make design changes at this point.

5. Presentation

- When the custom piece is complete, try to present it to the client in person. Invite the designer, gem-cutter, and any other relevant people to meet and thank the client.
- Check the fit if the recipient is present, or request a return visit to meet the recipient.
- Explain upkeep recommendations and store policies.
- If policy allows, present additional materials from the design process such as photos, renderings/sketches, resin prototypes, etc.
- Present any appraisals or certifications at the time of presentation when possible.

6. Follow Up

- Keep track of the special occasion date or presentation plans—no spoilers!
- Contact the client when appropriate to recommend a complimentary cleaning and/or polish. This is the surest way to provide the best service to your client and to encourage repeat business.
- Request permission to share the jewelry piece on social media when appropriate.
- Thank your client!

GENERAL TIPS FOR SELLING CUSTOM JEWELRY:

- Use the same ownership language you would normally use with pieces from the showcase: your ring, when you wear your necklace, she looks great in yellow gold, etc. Just because the piece isn't tangibly real yet doesn't mean the client should feel that way!
- Convey the value of a one-of-a-kind piece of jewelry: it is unique, designed for you, and intended to last for generations.
- Relate the design to the client and incorporate meaningful design elements: symbols, flowers, hidden details, initials, and even colors and gemstone types can all hold special meaning.
- Be as transparent about the process as your store allows. If a client would like to learn more about any aspect of the custom process, educate them as much as possible. Unknowns are roadblocks to establishing trust.

Conclusion

Selling custom requires a tremendous focus on attention to detail, development and maintenance of your relationship with your client, and the highest level of service. It takes time to build the skills—both selling and social—necessary to work with custom clients, so practice is crucial to success. With discretion, allow trainees to be silent observers or assistants to your best salespeople so that they can see the process in action and develop an interest in the time and care it takes to navigate custom sales. Your bottom line will reap the rewards, and your clients will continue to sing your praises and accept compliments on their beautiful jewelry for years to come.

To learn more about Formlabs printers and creating 3D printed jewelry, speak with a member of our team: formlabs@eacpds.com