

Lights, Camera, Action!

Amelia Grant (Gemporia) Natalie Graham (JTV) and Lizi Glazebrook (QVC) chat to Gem-A about what it takes to sell gemstone jewellery on TV and Youtube, and how authenticity and education is key to building a strong and trusting relationship with their audiences.

AMELIA GRANT,
presenter, Gemporia



Amelia Grant highlights a necklace to her audience. Image Credit: Gemporia.

for hidden challenges, the air con! We have to keep the studio cool because of all the equipment but it can get pretty chilly. I have been known to sneak my feet into my slippers from time to time!

The internet is full of misinformation and people can be distrustful – how would you respond to those who question the quality of what you're selling and ask why such fantastic gems can be so reasonably priced?

Our reasonable pricing is down to our business model. Every step in the typical jewellery retail model increases the final price you pay. By bringing many of these steps in-house and carefully controlling the design and production of our jewellery Gemporia incurs much lower costs than our high street competitors. For this reason, we can offer our jewellery at significantly lower prices.

We control much of the process of making our jewellery, often right from the gemstones being mined through to the finished piece that you see on air. We source directly from the mines whenever possible. Rough gems are cut and polished, and we always cut for beauty, rather than higher carat weight.

When Amelia Grant heard that British television and online jewellery retailer, Gemporia was looking for on-air presenters, she jumped at the chance to follow her TV ambitions. Here she explains what makes selling gemstones on television such an exciting challenge.

What are the challenges of discussing gemstones on television to an audience who cannot touch or feel a piece?

One of the biggest challenges is describing the beautiful characteristics of gemstones that don't necessarily come across on screen. For example, the unique colour-play of opal or colour change properties of csarite are easier to see with the naked eye. I try to find as many ways to describe to our customers what they may not be able to see in all its glory through the screen.

How do you build the right level of trust with your audience so they feel confident to spend on a particular gem?

Time and authenticity are essential for building trust with our customers. You always have to tell the truth and represent the jewellery and gemstones as accurately as possible. With new customers, Gemporia's offer of a 30-day money back guarantee for all customers gives them the opportunity to order with no risk as they can just return if they don't like it.

What is your favourite thing about being a presenter and what are the hidden challenges or tricks of the trade that we might not know?

My favourite thing? The bond you build with the customers. I love being on air and getting messages to the studio from all our customers that are tuning in. As



Having an authentic and honest conversation with the audience is essential. Image Credit: Gemporia.



Natalie Graham prepares to film a YouTube video. Image Credit: JTV.

NATALIE GRAHAM, gemmologist and YouTube host for JTV

Having started her career in jewellery retail, Natalie Graham pursued her passion for gemstones at GIA before securing an internship with an international gem buyer in Brazil. This experience led her to a position at JTV, where she is now a member of the Gemstone Advancement and Education team.



Showcasing obsidian with the help of a dedicated cameraman. Image Credit: JTV.

What challenges do you face when communicating about gemstones on YouTube — how do you build that sense of trust and authenticity with your audience?

One of the surprising challenges I face when shooting YouTube videos is overcoming how impersonal the interaction with the viewer can feel because of the camera separating us. I am ultra-conscious of whether I am appearing inclusive and authentic to our audience because, ultimately, I want to create a lasting relationship with them. It is also challenging to show the viewers what I am excited about in a stone or what grabs my attention because the cameras cannot always pick up every little detail. As a result, building trust is crucial.

Demonstrating that you are

trustworthy goes beyond simply having gemmology credentials; it is equally important to be able to admit when you don't know something. The study of gemmology is so vast that it is impossible to know everything, and I think it is helpful for my viewers to see that I am learning things along with them.

There is so much inaccurate information out there on the internet, do you think YouTube is a good way of dispelling some of these myths and offering customers value added?

I think YouTube is a fantastic way of dispelling myths and offering value. It is incredibly convenient to view and subscribe to YouTube content making it a fantastic platform for accessing the masses.

Our videos are fun and casual making them very accessible to viewers of all types. Because of the connection we have with our audience, we have established credibility which allows us to address any existing misinformation and replace it with engaging, accurate information. Being supported by a community of experts, who often appear alongside me as guest hosts [including Gem-A CEO Alan Hart FGA DGA], adds to our credibility. There is an amazing team working diligently behind the scenes brainstorming, researching, and reviewing all the information that goes into each video.

What are your top tips for presenting and public speaking in this context — what would be your advice to anyone wanting to follow in your footsteps?

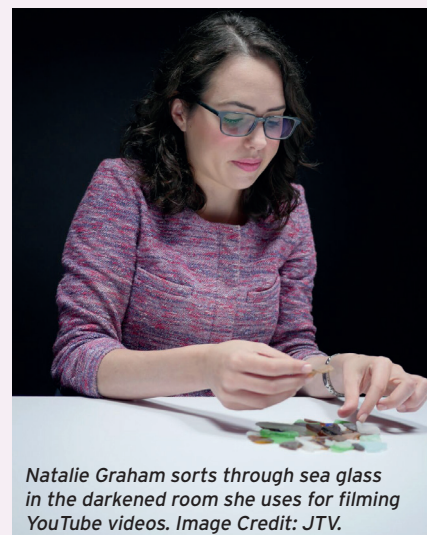
The best thing you can do to prepare for public speaking is to practice! Also, never be afraid to sound funny or strange. I realised immediately that for me to do my best work I had to relax and be myself. As for advice to fellow gemmologists who wish to follow in my footsteps, I will share with you what a dear friend in the business once told me “when the cookie tray comes around, take the cookie. You never know when it will come back.”

Take whatever opportunities come your way. Before we started our work, we had no idea the channel would be so successful, so I am sure glad I took that cookie!

Can you share with us some of the highlights of your career to date and any memorable gem moments

The YouTube channel has certainly been a highlight. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to share my passion for jewellery and gemstones with the YouTube community. I love hearing from viewers who have a newfound interest in our industry. Another highlight was an internship I had in Brazil after I graduated GIA.

It was an adventure during which I experienced the business from the ground up. The amazing food, music and 2016 World Cup were added perks! I can't wait until I have another opportunity to return. As for memorable gem moments, I will never forget my first day walking through the AGTA gem show as a GIA student. I was floored at the amount of beautiful, quality stones.



Natalie Graham sorts through sea glass in the darkened room she uses for filming YouTube videos. Image Credit: JTV.

LIZI GLAZEBROOK, gem-set jewellery expert and gold buyer, QVC UK



QVC UK buyer Lizi Glazebrook.
Image Credit: QVC UK.

At QVC we use our expert guests to educate and engage the customers with the story, history and technical details...

As one of the world's largest multimedia retailers, QVC broadcasts to 230 million homes, 24-hours a day, and 365-days per year. QVC was founded in 1986, but found its way to the UK in 1993. We spoke to QVC UK buyer, Lizi Glazebrook, to find out what goes on behind-the-scenes of a broadcasting powerhouse.

As a buyer, what do you perceive as the biggest challenge when it comes to selling via the television?

The audience cannot touch or feel the piece. At QVC we use our expert guests to educate and engage the customers with the story, history and technical details behind the items, use the studio cameras and FMV technology to show 360 degree close up views of the detailing, models wearing the pieces to show scale and our presenters to bring it all to life.

Today's online retailers have the same challenge in that respect and, with QVC seeing big growth in our online business, we feature clips from the live show on the product page to allow customers to re-watch and make an informed purchase.

Customers are vocal and honest

with us via our customer reviews, calls to the call centre and social media with what they think and want from their jewellery. We do our best to work on that feedback and satisfy their requests. For jewellery specifically, building the customers' product knowledge by providing as much information/education as possible via our on-air discussions also empowers them and gives the customer more confidence to buy.

How do you respond to those who question the quality of products or show distrust in the QVC brand?

I'd suggest those who question the quality try it for themselves first. QVC works hard to deliver quality at great prices and those in doubt have the ability to buy the item and see it for themselves while knowing they can return it if they are not satisfied in any way.

We work directly with the countries where the stones are mined and the jewellery produced, and have built strong relationships there over the years to be able to deliver the best prices for customers. For additional assurance, many of our higher value items come with independent certification. ■



A jewellery presentation in action. Image Credit: QVC UK.