

Jewelry Designer Manager Pro

By Paul Klecka

Jewelry designers, myself included, are notorious for resisting rational organization and number crunching. We are much more interested in exploring and developing our latest visual inspirations rather than thinking about the hard numerical realities of our business. However, in today's highly dynamic and competitive market, none of us can afford to shun the critical numbers. Fortunately, there's some new technology out there to help. Jewelry Designer Manager Pro software by Bejeweled Software Co. in Poway, California, can help designers better manage their businesses. Whether you specialize in one-of-a-kinds, small-scale lines, or high volume production, in the fine or fashion jewelry sectors, this software can help you organize your business.

I approached this product testing like many of us do when acquiring a new toy: I didn't read the instructions. (A 51-page *User Guide and Instructions* comes with the program.) I am pleased to say that the software operates on a highly intuitive basis. I think most any jewelry designer could jump in and use it without having to do a lot of homework first. Jewelry Designer Manager Pro presents information in a rational, linear fashion. Starting from the very beginning, the software leads you through all the steps needed to document the creation of an individual piece of jewelry. You can create bills of materials as you order components from different vendors, keep an inventory of parts and finished pieces, price out materials and add labor markups, invoice, and track sales and customers. Additional features include the option to generate mailing labels and create a catalogue and price list.

When entering information in the Jewelry Parts and Jewelry Assembly components of the software, I encountered several default entries for vendors, inventory, and finished pieces. At first, I did not appreciate this feature. However, once I began inserting my own information, I found these entries helpful as examples, which enabled me to more rapidly learn the setup process of keying in each field. Options include both drop-down boxes with choices built into the software and text entry fields that enable you to manually type in an entry if it is missing from the list of choices.

And there is technical support built into the program: Hovering your pointer over a field prompts a "control-tip" to appear—a little box of text that provides more information about a particular field.

Other options include the ability to sort bills of materials by vendors and parts. There is also a filter option that will show only certain records. For example, you can search your Jewelry Parts inventory for all matches to "platinum", or all components purchased from a specific vendor.

In addition to keeping track of items through text entry, the software allows you to load pictures of parts or finished pieces. It's simple: A window opens and directs you to search your hard drive to locate the image file. Clicking on the file name and then on "open" inserts the image. A zoom option allows you to size the image to fit in the frame. (Just for fun, I loaded a party photo my daughter e-mailed me from college, and it looked great.) Whether you scan in a hand drawn sketch, copy a part image from a vendor's Web site, or generate digital renderings in CAD, you can load any image stored on your computer's drives into this software program.

Another area where Jewelry Designer Manager Pro excels is pricing. The Jewelry Assembly window features a list of all components used to create a piece of finished jewelry and how much each costs. Markup options allow you to assign an individual profit level for each inventory part or labor operation. This helps you breakdown your component and labor costs—and you can view them all on one screen. Additional markup options include three category choices: wholesale, direct, and retail. For those who participate in both wholesale and consumer trade events, or who have close family and friends asking to purchase jewelry, these options enable easy pricing at three different tiers.

Overall, I found the screen layout of the program particularly appealing. The consistent line-by-line layout of parts inventory, customer/vendor files, and invoices is easy to read and understand. Compared to the jewelry program that I currently use, which presents the fields of information in what I would term a highly disturbing visual format, the consistent layout in Jewelry Designer Manager Pro is rational, refreshing—even relaxing.

And I've saved the best news for last: At \$129.95, this software is truly a no-brainer, delivering value and performance that is on par with jewelry software costing thousands of dollars. It is a basic tool that serves the user rather than requiring the user to serve it. Whether you string beads on a part-time basis or produce thousands of finished items a year, Jewelry Designer Manager Pro will get you organized and provide all the reports and forms you need to run your jewelry business successfully.

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