

WJA Debuts Mentorship Guide and Workbook

The association's mentorship program assists WJA members in the jewelry industry, many of whom work for small companies and may not have access to mentors

The Women's Jewelry Association has introduced new materials for its WJA Mentorship Program, to guide and structure the mentor-mentee relationship. Included in the new materials is a WJA Mentorship Guide, a WJA Mentee Meeting Preparation Workbook, and an online form that makes it easy for WJA members to request a mentor from the list of industry experts who have made themselves available to members for this purpose.

The WJA Mentorship Guide contains advice for both mentors and mentees.

For mentors, it provides information they may need to be good partners for their mentees. It also encourages mentors to help mentees grapple with gender equality issues, if these are a concern, and to ask the kinds of questions that bring out such aspects of work life.

For mentees, the membership guide includes information on how to look for a mentor, how a mentorship relationship is structured, the ground rules of such relationships, and other general advice.

Mentees can also avail themselves of the WJA Mentee Meeting Preparation Workbook to write down their goals for the mentoring process, prepare questions to ask, list desired outcomes and action items, and more. There's also an online form that mentees can fill out to request a mentor.

"Women who are mentored by others feel supported and more satisfied in their careers. We also know that mentors can have an impact at all stages of a mentee's career," says Jenny Luker, president of WJA. "Helping women to become more confident and sure of their talents is one of WJA's key goals in our mentorship program."

The WJA Mentorship Program is available exclusively as a benefit to WJA members, with the mission to help them build skills to become leaders in the fine jewelry and timepiece industries. It offers the chance for WJA members to connect with mentors for a 3-month time period, with the option to renew for another 3-month interval, at the discretion of the mentor. Mentor and mentee decide on the time commitment and means of communication they will employ.

"Since most companies do not offer formal mentoring programs, and many who work in the jewelry trade are self-employed, WJA's program offers a unique opportunity for WJA members to find and connect with other members who are mentors," says WJA Executive Director Bernadette McGovern Mack. "Our goal as an association is to keep more talented women in the jewelry industry, and we know that the more women are mentored, the more success they will have."

Mentors for the WJA program span the range of careers to which WJA members may aspire, and they are listed by the categories in which they have expertise. They include: appraisals, business development/career strategy, consultancy, corporate social responsibility, diamonds and gemstones, e-commerce retailer, education, financial planning, independent retailing, jewelry design and development, jewelry photography, jewelry manufacturing, marketing, media, non-profits/trade associations, social media, and sustainable sourcing.

WJA Leadership Development Co-Chairs, Debbie Hiss of Pure Grown Diamonds, and Liz Brehmer of the Gemological Institute of America, manage the WJA Mentorship Program, along with WJA Membership Coordinator Rachel Jurisz. “The WJA Mentorship Program provides the opportunity for mentors to apply real-life wisdom, and the benefit of their unique points-of-view, to workplace situations,” state Hiss and Bremer. “Regardless of age or career tenure, WJA believes that all members have something to offer to one another.”

Women or men who would like to become WJA mentors should contact dhiss@puregrowndiamonds.com or ebrehmer@gia.edu for further information.

For more information on the WJA Mentorship Program, visit <https://www.womensjewelryassociation.com/leadershipdevelopment>.

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About the Women’s Jewelry Association (WJA)

WJA’s mission is to help women in the jewelry and watch industries advance and develop professionally through networking, education, leadership development, and the provision of member services.

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