



# BLING IT ON

Learn the basics of  
fashion jewelry

Sparkle sells. Even better, the endless variety of jewelry options out there — from Swarovski to synthetics — is malleable enough for practically every budget and every taste. For retailers, they're a sure-fire way to ring up sales. In the fast-moving world of fashion, it's a good idea to revisit the basics — the faux materials most commonly used with a look at the timeless and the trendy.

### **BAUBLE BASICS**

Sure, diamonds might be a girl's best friend but Swarovski gets plenty of love too. For true sparkle connoisseurs, Swarovski crystals make the cut. Jewelry designer Lorren Bell of Deluxe by Lorren Bell, says the quality is assured and that the crystals can be incorporated into both high-end timeless pieces and everyday fashions.

Agate, opal and other precious minerals and stones are popular with pearls and tortoise shell equally big for his company, Bell says. "We use the large cotton ball pearls that are made from silk. They are lightweight and make a bold statement." Spring collections use white freshwater pearls as well, while fall usually blends in touches of faux horn.

Also look for glass crystals, semi-precious stones and synthetic cabochons, says Rose Fritch, lead jewelry designer at Sorrelli who adds that the possibilities with a large set of materials in various colors are endless.

Cubic zirconia is another popular option for sparkle, says Liza Kim of Designs by Liza Kim. "Colored zirconia stones, red, purple, a huge variety of cubic zirconia can work to accommodate styles and base materials," Kim says.

### **HEAVY METAL?**

All that dazzle needs a firm base on which to rest and a variety of metals coated to look like the real thing (think gold and silver) do just that. Popular materials here include copper whose malleability makes it easy to shape. While copper is usually resistant to corrosion, it does develop a green patina, which, depending on the artist's design, might be desirable — or not.

Edgard Nieves at Sassy South Jewelry says rhodium is another popular metal base option for jewelry. "You can coat it with white gold or silver, and it's inexpensive and doesn't tarnish," he says.

Rhodium is also popular at Lorren Bell along with sterling silver. Jewelry designers and manufacturers give the base a finish (that can vary in thickness) to complete the look. "We use different base metals including brass and rhodium and complete with a variety of finishes from an antique gold look to 18 karat gold and even a matte gold finish on sterling silver." Sorrelli too uses brass and copper findings plated in antique gold and silver tones or 10K gold finish to match the styles they want. ♦

## TRENDY AND TIMELESS

Exactly what styles are trending? The word across the board: tassels.

Mixed everything also is in. “Don’t be afraid to mix plating finishes to achieve a mixed metal look,” advises Fritch. “Look for chains and cords together, mixing colors in terms of black and gold and silver together. The key is in mixing it all up,” says Kim, who also sees the trend of big bling fading slowly. “The Bohemian soft and clean lines are taking over,” she says.

The classics, hoop earrings, stacked bracelets, rings, are always in fashion. Just look for new versions with a twist, say hoop earrings in tortoise shell. No matter what styles you run with, the best thing about jewelry is that it elevates style and adds a touch of glamor, says Helene Choi, Southeast regional sales manager for Sorrelli. “We all have an inner sparkle; jewelry is simply an accessory that brings it out for the world to see.”



For more information: Designs by Liza Kim, [designsbylizakim.com](http://designsbylizakim.com), 866.673.4844; Lorren Bell::Deluxe by Lorren Bell, [lorrenbell.com](http://lorrenbell.com), 214.651.0110; Sassy South Jewelry, [sassysouth.com](http://sassysouth.com), 404.586.0045; Sorrelli, [sorrelli.com](http://sorrelli.com), 877.659.4374

Images courtesy of: Deluxe by Lorren Bell and Sorrelli.

## How to Make Jewelry Sales Sparkle

Here are some simple ideas:

- Complete the look. If you’re a boutique store, add jewelry and shoes to every ensemble display to show how it all works.
- Become a walking advertisement. Don’t just wear the jewelry in the store, wear it on grocery store errands, at appointments. That’s marketing at its best.
- Go beyond the usual white leather hands for displays. Use uncommon materials such as pipe fittings used for displays.
- White displays are often too stark and unnatural, while black displays tend to swallow light. Your best bet is to go with a cream linen or beige suede.
- Straightening up the case and tucking in tags makes a huge difference.
- Use top-of-counter fixtures to encourage customers to interact with the jewelry and feel the quality firsthand. Sometimes retail customers are uncomfortable asking a sales associate for assistance with an in-case item; having some priced-to-sell jewelry on top of the counter will encourage customers to try it on.