



# JIS Trade Shows Resume in October

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Jordan Tuchband, Vice President of Jewels International Showcase (JIS) said it best when discussing the cancellation of late winter and early spring gem and jewelry industry events: “We had a great opening day in early February, and the Tucson Gem Week had a lot of positive activity, but it was in early March when the landscape for trade and other mass gatherings began to rapidly shift based on information coming from medical experts.”

He should know. As the threat of COVID-19 intensified in early to mid-March, JIS show organizers made the difficult decision to cancel their April 2020 buying event in Miami. JIS attendees and exhibitors were pleased, however, that the JIS event held in early February (usually scheduled in January but was moved to the following month to work around Super Bowl Sunday) was a successful industry event just weeks before shut-

down regulations were enacted.

In some aspects, COVID-19 continues to be a bit of a moving target. Even with the promise of a vaccine in the fourth quarter of this year, more is known about the virus than is unknown – especially in terms of how people stay safe and healthy. Whether it’s a salon, big box retailer or corner grocery store, business owners and their customers have altered their retail behaviors to what many are calling the “new normal.”

The JIS and its customers are also adapting. Leaving as little as possible to chance, JIS organizers are relying on information and guidance to establish best practices and protocols for their October event from local public health officials, on up to Center for Disease Control (CDC) and even international standards coming from the World Health Organization (WHO).

“As part of this commitment, and to prioritize the health and

well-being of everyone at JIS, we have created a Health and Safety Task Force to develop and implement policies and best practices around COVID-19 response and prevention,” says Tuchband. “Our policies and best practices are being updated and adjusted as more information and guidance becomes available and we will regularly share the most up to date information with our customers.”

At press time (mid-June), Tuchband was unable to say exactly what these practices and protocols will entail as retailers and exhibitors get back to the busy of making and selling gems, jewelry, watches and industry equipment.

“Any official changes to rules or health and safety recommendations are still being finalized and we will communicate updates on these topics as soon as we can and with enough time for those attending or exhibiting at the show to plan accordingly,” says Tuchband. “We are also working on a number of new initiatives that we can’t announce just yet, but attendees can expect to see a lot of new exciting content overall.

Even with new best practices for health, safety and wellness in place the old saying applies: “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” The JIS October buying event is a fourth quarter staple in the industry, where buyers can source inventory just in time for the holiday season. Attendees have come to appreciate the buying event’s large variety of merchandise available across almost all product categories, to purchase on the show floor, and to safely ship and secure these items for retail sales.

“That core value and convenience that JIS shows provide will definitely remain the same,” says Tuchband. “And, attendees can expect to see the majority of their regular favorites as well as many new names that have looked to JIS October to provide a safe and practical environment for them to work with retailers since all their planned events in 2020 have not been able to run.”

Like the COVID-19 virus itself, there are the unknowns for event organizers. Still, Tuchband is bullish on the JIS October 2020 Show.

“Shows in the fall timing like JIS October, JIS San Diego, and others are likely to see an influx of new attendees and exhibitors due to the buildup of demand, immediate inventory, and the ideal timing,” says Tuchband. “JIS October is also likely to be the place where a lot of new designs will be seen that were originally set to be released at the other shows earlier in the year.”

Summer is already a slow time of the year. But this is no ordinary summer. In June, some retailers are still closed while others are just reopening after being shut down for months.



Jordan Tuchband

More than likely inventory that populates a retailer’s open-to-buy spread-sheet will be late breaking but will more than likely be a mixture of bread-and-butter goods with a little room left in the buying budget for new vendors and designers.

“I think most retailers will be splitting their time restocking their regular best sellers and then really focus on new inventory, of which I expect there to be a lot of at this JIS October based on current trends,” says Tuchband.

During uncertain times optimism has some caution sprinkled into the mix, especially when forecasting for next year’s gem and jewelry industry trade show events. Tuchband has no plans on cancelling any JIS events in 2021, but added that much will change at trade shows – perhaps for the better.

“I personally don’t believe things will ever return to exactly as they were prior to the pandemic,” says Tuchband. “But that does not have to be a negative. Many of the changes we are anticipating like innovative use of technology, enhanced health and safety measures, etc. will really enhance the whole trade show experience.”

