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60pc of consumers cite clarity on natural, lab-grown diamond differences after in-store visit: report

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The report shows that consumers feel like they are not being given enough on-site education to make purchases, staggering natural diamonds sales growth. Image courtesy of Natural Diamonds Council

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

The Natural Diamond Council's latest commission outlines the true value of client education in the natural diamond market.

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According to the findings, sales advisors who provide substantial education and insights about the diamonds to their clients tend to drive significant sales conversions. Analysis from the diamond authority reflects the findings of millennial store evaluators who visited 89 non-exclusive retail channels from December 2022 through January 2023 55 of which were conducted in national stores in the United States and 34 of which were done so in regional stores.

In the evaluations, they were to ask about an engagement ring priced around \$6,000 and determine the quality of the environment and interactions.

Au naturale

Teaming up with Dubai customer experience research firm CXG, Natural Diamond Council sought to determine not only the perception of natural diamonds among consumers, but to assess what actions can enhance their sales performance.

It was found that not only are customer interactions with sales advisors key determinants of whether or not the sales will be made, but that educated advisors tend to make more natural diamond sales. When consumers felt like they were educated by the advisors on the natural diamonds, 93 percent of them reported feeling confident about purchasing them.



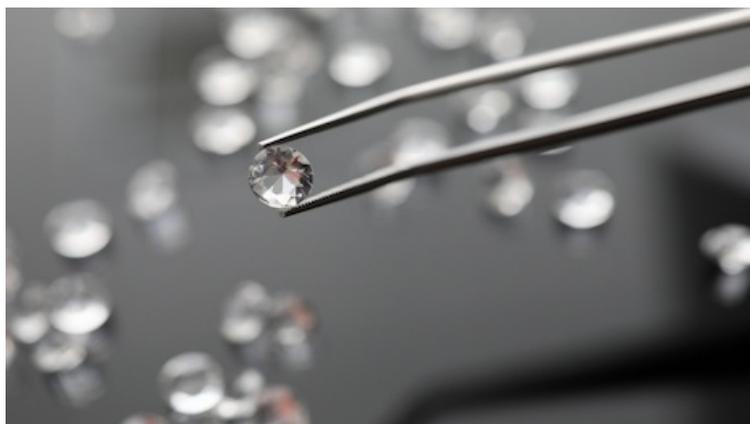
Customers felt overall educated and clearer on the differences between NDs and LGDs after their visit at the store and interaction with Sales Advisors

Education is proving to not be a strong suit of diamond retailers, keeping many consumers from going forward with purchases. Image courtesy of Natural Diamonds Council

Only 16 percent of those without education felt confident enough to purchase the diamonds, and as 40 percent of the experiences studied lacked "proactive education," it is clear that the true value of informed purchasing is not understood or being prioritized enough.

Not even the difference between natural diamonds and lab-grown diamonds was made clear enough for customers, with only 36 percent of evaluators reporting being able to distinguish between them according to the signage and resources provided.

This inability to give insights about the natural diamonds being shown reveals a weak point in the industry, keeping sales conversions from being as high as they could be with more focused messaging.



Diamonds no longer sell as effortlessly on their own, forcing retailers to push harder to make sales through educational pitches and new narratives. Image courtesy of Natural Diamonds Council

"The research confirms that the role of the sales advisors in educating customers is paramount," said Kristina Buckley Kayel, managing director of Natural Diamond Council, in a statement.

"However, the content of that education is far from complete, especially in conveying the facts and storytelling around natural diamonds beyond the 4Cs, from provenance and positive impact to rarity and being a revered luxury for centuries."

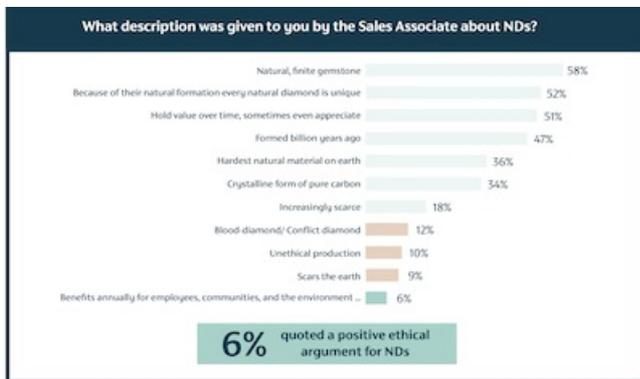
Today's consumer is an informed one, as researching before buying is the norm for most people. When buying affluent purchases such as natural diamonds, these consumers expect to have access to education on them, with advisors acting as a medium for them to make informed purchasing decisions.



With consumers spending increasing time researching before going to retailers, they expect sales advisors to be even more insightful. Image courtesy of Natural Diamonds Council

With research being so key for most consumers, many are looking into ethical considerations as well, resulting in a rising demand for vegan, cruelty-free, fair trade and organic products. The diamond market is no exception ([see story](#)).

Young purchases especially want to make purchases that accurately reflect their value system, working to avoid what they view as unethical products or labor systems.



Positive Ethical Arguments are only very rarely discussed for NDs

Despite the fact that the current consumer is an ethically-minded one, few professionals are incorporating points of ethics into sales pitches. Image courtesy of Natural Diamonds Council

As only 6 percent of evaluators reported that "ethical considerations" were used as selling points for the diamonds, this keeps many millennial buyers from purchasing natural diamonds ([see story](#)). Despite asking about the traceability and provenance of the gems, the majority of advisors were not able to give specific information about the sourcing at all, with only 30 percent even giving accurate information about the topic.

For natural diamonds to outpace lab-grown diamonds a gem that is considered to be far more sustainable industry figures will have to incorporate much more conversations of ethics and efforts being made in consumer touchpoints.

Learn and grow

Natural Diamonds Council is responding to this dearth of on-site diamond education with the release of a new program.

Armed with the knowledge that learning leads to growth, as consumers who received education and accurate insights from advisors were more likely to make purchases, the diamond authority is providing resources for retailers and professionals to bulk up their knowledge base.



The report proves that educational resources for retailers and sales advisors are worth the investment, sure to result in high return. Image courtesy of Natural Diamonds Council

"We are offering a solution to retailers and anyone in the industry looking to complement their technical diamond knowledge and gain confidence in conveying it in an impactful and memorable way," said Ms. Kayel, in a statement.

"The Education Partner Program and platform was designed with the frontline sales advisor in mind," she said. "Engaging succinct and self-paced e-modules, each of which have accompanying materials and social media assets to bring turn-key value beyond completion of the module.

"Participants receive certification upon completion and, most importantly, then have the tools and sound bites to immediately deliver compelling information with confidence to customers, augmenting their trust and desire to purchase."

The education program will be available **online** starting on April 3.

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