

The Power of Membership

Three questions for MJSA's new chair, Steven A. Cipolla



IN OCTOBER, THE MJSA BOARD OF directors elected Steven A. Cipolla, the president of National Chain Group in Warwick, Rhode Island, as its new chair. Under his leadership, National Chain Group has grown from its origins as a supplier of pendant and fashion chain into a full-service, fully integrated contract manufacturer and supplier. Today the company has a combined total of 200,000 square feet of manufacturing space in six locations, and its divisions include James A. Murphy & Son, Standard Chain, National Fabricated Products, National Research & Development, and Colorado Casting.

How do you see MJSA's role in the industry?

MJSA promotes and supports jewelry manufacturing in America. It unites manufacturers, designers, and trade suppliers into a community that exchanges valuable technical and business expertise, achieves cost savings from the group's negotiated benefits, and is better able to compete in today's dynamic marketplace. It's important for MJSA not only to continue to help companies thrive in this way, but also to encourage and attract individuals to enter the jewelry industry at all levels. That is the future.

Why is it important to join MJSA?

Manufacturers and designers face many challenges: a global market, changes in consumer buying habits, the pace of technological change. To succeed today, companies must create appealing new designs and manufacture high-quality products at competitive prices. MJSA can help with this, not just by providing access to cost savings, but through a wealth of information on all aspects of jewelry manufacturing and design. It also offers optimum sourcing opportunities and enables companies to navigate regulatory and compliance issues. And that strength doesn't just benefit makers and designers; it also provides confidence to retailers and, ultimately, consumers, which benefits the industry at large.

Which of MJSA's activities do you see as most vital?

One of its most important initiatives is the annual MJSA Expo. [The 2017 Expo will take place March 12-14 at the Javits Center in New York City.] The show brings together so much of what makes MJSA special: the latest tools and technologies; a broad range of supplies and services; educational seminars and live demonstrations with renowned experts; and unparalleled networking opportunities. We often hear that virtually everything needed to operate a successful jewelry business can be found at Expo.



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—Steven A. Cipolla, Chair, MJSA Board of Directors

MJSA's educational initiatives are also very important to the industry. Thanks to its community of experts, MJSA offers unmatched expertise through its print and online publications (including the award-winning *MJSA Journal*) and its seminars and educational conferences. These experts willingly share helpful advice and inspire by example, and that is so important if we want to pass on crucial knowledge to the next generation. The current workforce of jewelry artisans is aging; if we're going to begin replacing them, we need to develop and properly train that new generation now. MJSA is well positioned to do this: Its BEaJEWELER program not only helps to bring "new blood" into the industry, but connects those new workers to mentors, apprenticeships, and professional opportunities. MJSA really does ensure that U.S. jewelry manufacturing and design remains vital. ♦