

Responsible Jewellery Council

CASE STUDY



RETAILER

Hamilton Jewelers

Jewellery Retailer

The Business

Hamilton Jewelers was founded in 1912 in Trenton, New Jersey. Since the beginning, the company has aimed to combine the characteristics of an international jeweller and the hospitality of a regional family business. Hamilton has been a long-time supporter of many important efforts to sustain social responsibility in its business as well as the fine jewellery industry. Hamilton expresses their commitment to the environment, human rights, and the planet by partnering with many different organisations and is also a member in good standing of The Fair Labor Association (FLA).



The Story

Hamilton Jewelers became a Certified Member of the RJC in December 2011 and views their certification as a long term strategic decision. As an advocate for ethical business practices in their industry, Hamilton believed it was important to be able to demonstrate to their colleagues around the world that a family owned jeweller is capable of achieving RJC Certification, and the designation does not have to be reserved only for global companies.

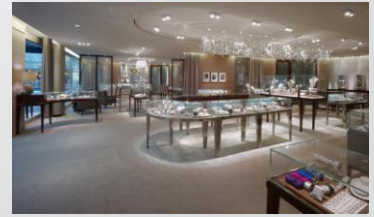
One of the main benefits of achieving RJC Certification for Hamilton Jewelers is that they found their staff has an extra level of comfort and authority behind the sales counter when they interact with clients. Employees can be sure that their company strives to uphold the highest levels of ethical behaviour and social responsibility in product sourcing. An internal Health and Safety committee has been established. The company has also amended their supplier – vendor arrangements to include their representations of being advocates of the Kimberly Process, and a declaration that they abide by the Patriot Act in sourcing and delivery of merchandise. The RJC Certification Process has thus positively impacted the business by building a stronger framework and culture for internal compliance.

It is deeply satisfying knowing that we were prepared and do have the best practices in place that allowed us to achieve RJC Certification for our company and our ownership family.'

– Hank B. Siegel, President

Following their successful RJC Member Certification, Hamilton Jewellers has a few tips for smaller businesses who are looking for RJC certification. Firstly, meet as a team to review the full scope of RJC Certification to make sure you're ready to tackle it in a systematic way. Work out who will need to be involved, the best timing for the business, and how it will be co-ordinated. Second, make sure your company has strong internal controls and defined employee policies and procedures. In particular, Hamilton recommends simplifying and standardizing your documentation at each of your locations. For example, if information is indexed identically, auditors are able to refer to the same information and validate it quickly and easily at each location. The self assessment process should highlight the specific information that the auditor will be seeking to validate so that it is easy for them to find

Finally, Hank Siegel, President of Hamilton Jewellers, states that achieving RJC Certification 'was one of the most comprehensive projects of its kind that I have been involved in throughout my career but deeply satisfying knowing that we were prepared and do have the best practices in place that allowed us to achieve Certification for our company and our ownership family'.



Hamilton shop, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

Lessons learned

- A great exercise to better understand, from an outside perspective, the standards which are being established by the leaders in our industry
- An introspective look at how a small company like ours functions in a similar professional environment such as many of our global peers
- The audit gave us a renewed focus and attention to the company standards

Benefits from obtaining RJC Member Certification

- The preparation for the audit and audit itself are an excellent team building situation

Impacts

- Long term strategic decision of the company
- Feelings of extra comfort and authority by sales staff
- Stronger framework for internal compliance

