

VENDOR **spotlight**

W.R. Cobb Company: A Union of Tradition and Technology

Despite celebrating its 135th birthday this year, W.R. Cobb Company is far from showing its age. One of America's leading manufacturers of jewelry findings, castings and precious metals for the jewelry industry internationally, the company has embraced new technology and the internet to help redefine a wide range of jewelry industry practices.

"We have never been more relevant to the industry than we have been the last three years," says Roderick Lichtenfels, W.R. Cobb Company CEO. "We have incredible services and programs that help our retail partners affordably go to market. If retailers have not looked at our products or services for the last few years we encourage them to look at us with new eyes and let us share what's new and possible."

Lichtenfels says the privately held, family-owned company got its start in 1877. Its global headquarters is in East Providence, Rhode Island, with international offices in Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Vietnam and Canada. The Rhode Island headquarters features a modern 104,000-square foot, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility.

"As a leading internet jewelry solutions company," says Lichtenfels, "we provide regional, independent jewelers with a pathway to internet success. Through W.R. Cobb Online, jewelers can compete on the internet. Launched in 2004, W.R. Cobb's Precise White Gold is the industry's only true white gold. Precise White Gold has been one of the greatest innovations in jewelry in the past 70 years."

"Building on the momentum of superior products we offer," he continues, "W.R. Cobb introduced Cobb Bridal, an exclusive collection of wedding bands and engagement rings with more than 5,000 unique design options. Every day at W.R. Cobb, we leverage our depth of experience and the talent of our team of metallurgists and designers to ensure that we offer the industry the finest line and the industry's most important innovation."

"We have evolved over the last three years and have grown to be a full-service marketing model that helps retailers (independent and majors) achieve their own go-to-market aspirations," says Lichtenfels. "W.R. Cobb Online, our retail services division, offers programs ranging from inventory management solutions, web site/e-commerce software-as-a-service, diamond memo and diamond build-your-own jewelry solutions. These

solutions—white labeled as internet widgets—offer more than 60,000 certified stones, social media education and management services, and pay-per-click advertising campaigns. Our competencies and offerings to independent jewelry retailers have not only gained tremendous recognition and traction in the jewelry industry, but is also garnering attention as a best-in-class approach by other industries and associations."

This past year W.R. Cobb Online received an American Design Award by GD USA for its educational program entitled, "Social Media 101: How Jewelers can Engage and Interact More Effectively Online."

This effort to lead industry innovations has made W.R. Cobb's relationship with RJO that much more effective.

"RJO was founded by independent jewelers essentially looking, at the time, to increase their buying power, which was the biggest operating expense in their budget" says Lichtenfels. "W.R. Cobb Company also seeks to matter to independent jewelers (and the entire jewelry value chain), by bringing quality products and services to the market. RJO Buying Shows give us another opportunity to have a fabulous touch point to understand the needs and desires of the independent jeweler."

W.R. Cobb Company is located at 800 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI. Phone: 401-467-7400. Website: www.wrcobb.com

