



Jane Johnson

RM Johnson & Sons Jewelers

Salem, Virginia



What do you sell?

We specialize in unique, one-of-kind jewelry designs. We design, create, remodel and repair jewelry in-house. Our store is one of the few ones left where you can actually talk to our craftspeople about your needs.

How long have you been in business?

R.M. Johnson & Sons Jewelers of Salem began in 1978 as a jewelry repair service. Over the past 36 years it has evolved into jewelry repair and retail, with a special focus on creative, custom pieces.

How many employees do you have?

We have three full-time and three part-time employees (myself included).

What is your favorite part of owning a business?

What I like best about owning my business is that, to a large degree, I am able to control my own success. I am successful as long as I am willing to work hard. And, because I love what I do, it is not really like work to me.

How are you engaged in the community?

We strongly believe in giving back to our community and we strive to do this in as many ways as we can. We raised \$25,000 in donations to support renovations for the Salem Museum, and have established a scholarship that's awarded to a Salem High School student each year. As a community business, we try to support causes as they are presented to us – for example, we recently sponsored the “Go Red for Women” luncheon in our community to support the American Heart Association. In addition to the charitable contributions my company makes, I am personally engaged in the community through my membership in the Rotary Club of Salem and as a board member of the Roanoke Symphony. I am also an eleven-year member of Salem City Council and currently serve as Chair of the Roanoke Valley-Allegheny Regional Commission.

How has the online sale tax loophole impacted your business?

The online sales tax loophole has absolutely impacted many small retail businesses, including my own. People definitely compare my prices to those found online. I am sure I have lost some sales to the high-volume Internet sellers who have prices that I just can't compete with given that I have to charge sales tax and they do not. Fortunately, we also do repair work and custom work that can't be found online. However, it does cost me money when I spend time with people who are just using my store as a showroom. I would appreciate a level playing field.

