

***MONDERA PARTNER SELLING GUIDE***  
***DIAMONDS AND ENGAGEMENT RINGS***  
**VERSION 1.0**

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## THE CHALLENGE

Selling high end products by any merchant, be it Mondera.com or anyone else is a challenge, it needs a certain amount of dedication to get things rolling and the patience to give it time to kick off.

This guide focuses on helping you sell diamonds and custom engagement rings, Mondera's high ticket items -- items that we hope will make you some serious money in commissions. For now, I haven't focused on our jewelry selections, but much of what I write below can be used for jewelry as well as diamonds -- and as much of it is common sense, for books as well.

However, unlike books, CDs, videos and other consumer products, a diamond is not an easy to push impulse buy. It's not a "What the heck it's just \$15.00?" decision. In many cases, if not most, it is the result of hours (or weeks) of research on the part of the buyer...and of these buyers 95% are men. Yes, there are a few ladies who make the decisions when it comes to the ring, but on the whole it's the men. When appropriate, feel free to interchange "Guys guide to the right ring" with "Ladies guide to the right ring."

The buyer's research falls into a number of categories:

- Learning about diamonds
- Learning how to buy a diamond
- Finding where to buy a diamond
- Determining the best settings
- Comparing prices and offers
- Comparing online and offline prices
- Sorting fact from fiction and rumor from truth
- Learning about Internet credit card payments and security

And all this while thinking of the best way to present the finished engagement ring to the wife to be.... Heavy.

So any site designed to help a person buy diamonds needs to provide the answers to a certain amount of the above questions, if not all of them. These answers can be successfully presented in several ways ranging from "The Professional Diamond Guide" to the "My dad got stung and I want to make sure you don't" to the "Diamond Price Search."

All of these ideas have several key factors in common, **Theme, Focus and Trust.**

## THEME

Sticking a banner selling diamonds on a mall style site is a hard sell, sticking it on a site selling CDs is more so, and putting it on a personal homepage of your favorite links on the web... not going to happen. The highest converting clicks come from sites that have a theme around the products they are selling.

Keep in mind that diamonds and engagement rings are generally bought for very specific occasions – occasions which happen to make excellent themes for a web site:

- The Engagement
- The Wedding
- An Anniversary
- Christmas or Birthday Present
- Valentines Gift
- An Apology

To narrow down the themes even more:

- Engagements
  - Guys guide to popping the question
  - Guys guide to the right ring
  - 100 Ways to ask her to marry you
- Weddings
  - Wedding Guide
  - Tips for the Bride and Groom
  - Complete site of Wedding Requirements
  - Alternative weddings
- Anniversary
  - Anniversary Gift Site
  - Shopping Guide
- Christmas or Birthday Present
  - Shopping Guide
  - Best Gifts Guide
  - Shopping to a Budget Guides
- Valentines Gifts
  - Guys guide to Valentine Dates
  - Ultimate Valentines Gifts
- Apology
  - Romantic ways to say sorry
  - Ultimate Gifts for the Ultimate Apology

And so on.... The only limit here is what you can dream up for the theme. While thinking of the theme, bear in mind the need to be able to fit it easily into the numerous directories around the internet (especially DMOZ) and the availability and usage of targeted keywords. For example, while I have listed “Ultimate Gifts for the Ultimate Apology” it’s advisable you do research on key word search counts within that theme before building your web site..

# FOCUS

The focus or aim of your site is every bit as important as the Theme. While Mondera is rich in educational materials, tips, images, how to tidbits and so on, the focus of Mondera is to sell, pure and simple.

The focus of your site is what you want to accomplish with the site – is your primary goal education or direct selling? Examples of site focus are

- **Review Site**  
Your site is totally dedicated to reviewing the sites that sell the same products as Mondera.com, you don't focus on selling individual products, you focus on the package as a whole, how does Company X rate when compared to Mondera.com, what features does the site have, how easy is it to use, how good is the product selection.
- **Diamond Price Search Engine**  
Your site is a one big search engine, you grab all the diamond feeds you can from around the net, feed them into your database and then have a front end that allows visitors to search for diamonds across a number of sites. Adding to that, you may want the ability to flag "best buys" to nudge your site users towards certain products and Mondera.
- **Feedback and Reviews**  
Buyer Reviews are always resources for people looking to buy. Harvesting these reviews is of course another problem (see reviews below), but a site based totally around buyer and user reviews is an excellent strategy for promoting trust and the "personal" touch. Be careful of blatantly biased reviews that go for or against a site when no proof of purchase has been offered with the review
- **Tools Site**  
Forget who has the best prices and the best site, this is all about the tools, the diamond search, the ring builder, the diamond appraisal tools, anything that you can plug a search directly into from your site.
- **Best Buys**  
Your opinion, the best buys on the net. Where they are and how they compare to other options, maybe a ranking of the best buys, at the end of the day it's all about your opinion and how you present it.
- **The Mall**  
The focus here is on products, lots of products, allowing visitors to search the products from around the internet in one location and then click through to the Merchant site to make the purchase or learn more about a product. Possibly having sections dedicated to specific merchants.
- **Coupon Sites**  
Although diamonds are high end products we still do put out coupons to tempt those bargain hunters to come to Mondera. Coupon sites present the latest and best coupons on a daily basis. Possibly having sections broken down by product type or by Merchant. Or by date of expiry and freshness.
- **The Guide**  
Last but not least the guide site, focus is on education of the visitor, the aim being that by the time the visitor has learnt all they can from their site they have grown to trust you and your opinion, therefore when you tell them, "You can trust Mondera", they trust you.

Think about what your focus is going to be with equal importance as you do your Theme.

# TRUST

When a customer clicks from your site to the Mondera site you, want to have inspired two kinds of trust

1. Trust in your site.
2. Trusts in the Mondera site.

## *Your Site*

Your site is not going to inspire trust if it is messy, poorly put together and badly laid out with errors, huge images that need too long to download, and flash animations that serve no purpose other than to get in the way. You won't inspire trust if you have one page full of random links, banners and logo buttons, nor will you inspire trust if on the same page you are promoting violence, hate or other forms of non-trust based activities. If you want a visitor to trust your site, you must demonstrate at least some of the following

- Clean Design (doesn't need to be a graphical master piece, clean is good)  
No one wants to stumble through a web site that is so poorly designed just visiting is hard work Never mind trusting the site they won't even stay long enough to find any content you've added.
- Clear Navigation  
Make it easy for people to get to your content, put it in a logical order and make the navigation easy to use. Sure DHTML can do some cool stuff with navigation, but are all your visitors using the particular flavor of web browser that reads DHTML? And do they have the 5 MB download you installed to make the navigation work?
- Well Organized Content  
If you go to any jewelry site that has information on diamonds or other jewelry and colored stones you will see that the information is nearly always displayed in a very similar order. Make sure your content follows that presented order. These people generally know more than you about diamonds and their structure is based on their education, don't re-invent the wheel.
- Strong Layout  
Don't splatter your site with heavy graphics, scrolling text and other fancy items for no reason. Your ultimate check point for any little gizmo you want to add to your site should be "does Amazon do it?" If they do, where do they do it, and if they don't, then your best bet is not to either.
- Avoid Pop Ups and Pop Unders  
The great debate on which is more effective (and less irritating) rages on every day. No one likes them except the advertisers who are trying to sell them, don't use them unless it's for a good reason, there are very few good reasons.
- Some form of "personal approach" (less important with coupon sites)  
People trust People -- more than they trust businesses. They want to confirm that other customers have happily selected Mondera for their diamond and engagement ring purchases. It doesn't have to be "hard sell" statements such as "Buy only at Mondera," but maybe a soft one such as "Our research of numerous diamond sellers has led us to believe that Mondera offers the best selection and prices for diamonds."

- About You/Us

That personal touch again, have a page about who you are, a picture maybe that fits in with the theme and focus of your site. Show them that you are “in touch” with what you are talking about with a picture of your wedding, your engagement ring, your honeymoon, and so on.

### ***The Mondera Site***

When a person arrives at Mondera you want that person to already trust Mondera. You want them to trust that:

- Mondera is not a trick
- Mondera offers quality products
- Mondera offers value for their money
- Mondera values them as customers
- Mondera has extensive protection for them as a customer
- You trust Mondera.

The above can be done in a vast array of ways, from product reviews, to store reviews, from posting of customer experiences or simple rating pages. A banner backed up by this support has far more chance of a click through than a banner with no context. A click through from a person who trusts you and trusts Mondera is no longer a click through, it's a Quality Click Through and conversion is at least five times higher.

### ***Your Trust In Mondera***

It is equally as important that you, our partner, trust us, not just that we will pay you on time and credit you with all your sales, but that you trust Mondera as a Merchant of outstanding quality and style, if you don't trust Mondera then it will be very hard for you to honestly present Mondera to your visitors.

If you have questions about Mondera CR or other concerns about how Mondera operates then do not hesitate to ask us, so we can clear up any concerns and ensure we have a partnership built on trust and mutual respect.

### ***Your Trust In Chris***

On top of that, it is pretty important that you trust me, after all I'm the person who will be your point of contact on all matters concerning Mondera and our partnership. Again email me your concerns, if what I tell you doesn't smooth out the problems I am very happy to escalate contact as high as it needs to go for you to believe that I and Mondera want nothing more than to make you all as much money as possible.

## NUDGE

Okay, so Theme, Focus and Trust form the base of your site, but after all that you want to make sure your visitors go where you want them to go. How do you get them to click through to Mondera?

First, trying to force them with automatic page redirects, hidden pop ups and other under hand methods, won't work -- it undermines the trust you've just worked to build..

So you need to “nudge” them in the right direction and nudging is done with soft messages. “Soft messages” can vary greatly in tone and style -- just like web sites. Be sure to match the tone and style of your soft message to the overall feel of your web site. If your site is very personal then nothing works better than the “I” statement, such as “I bought my ring at Mondera and it was fantastic!” For less personal sites then things like product and feature comparison articles and charts are good for the nudge when backed up with statements such as “Based on the below we found Mondera.com to be the best option.”

A lot of people need a nudge in the right direction, they are about to decide to spend maybe \$4000 on a diamond ring, they want to feel that the decision they make is one that is also backed up by the site they are using as a reference point.

Finally, references from people who bought at Mondera from your site are great to have, let your users know that you want their feedback on their Mondera buying experience.

## **DIVERSIFY : PRODUCTS**

Why do companies diversify, for the same reason you should, because many products, even diamonds, are seasonal and if a person can only buy one product from you then they can never come back even if they want to. Secondly, if a person trusts you enough to buy their \$4000 diamond ring on your advice and content then they have a very good chance of buying their honeymoon, wedding dress, bridesmaids gifts, photography service and anything else in the sector from your site, too.

Not to mention that this makes your site far easier to submit multiple times to search engine and directories as your site as focus specific sections.

However, make sure that what you diversify in is comparable in quality and price Don't promote high end products and then throw in some whoopee cushions and lava lamps. It doesn't help and the trust factor of your site and if a person is buying a ring for \$4000 US why give them the opportunity to buy a \$5 gift for the best man... guide them to products of a similar status and relevant price point.

## **DIVERSIFY : MERCHANTS**

Yes the objective of this guide is to help you sell Mondera products and hopefully drive our competition from your pages...but wait.... unless your site is mall site with "Store Specific" Sections, you need to diversify your merchant selection within the same product sector.

All though it pains me to say do it...you gotta do it. Why?

Well, it speaks to the trust component. If you are constantly and only promoting Mondera and make no mention of any other store on the Net, then bias will be rather obvious and trust goes out the window. There a couple of ways of handling this, and you'll have to excuse my blatant bias for Mondera here.

1. Take a selection of merchants show comparisons , leaving Mondera on top for the majority but then allowing Mondera to drop a few points on something slightly unrelated but still in the core focus (such as " Gifts for the Best Man")
2. Only display other merchants you know aren't in the same league as Mondera. Be sure to give them top marks or comments on factors like "nice choice of colors.""
3. Be the heartless critic, state clearly why Company X is not at all up to par with Mondera.

## EFFECTS OF TIME

How long does it take a person to buy a book after they click on a link from your site...1 hour, a couple of days, the occasional 2-3 weeks if they are anything like me and add to the shopping bag and then get that “Hmmm can I afford it” thought, followed 2 weeks later by the “What the heck...click” thought. And that’s for a \$10 to \$20 item purchase so imagine how much time and thought goes into buying diamond engagement ring with a price tag of \$2,000 and up...

What does this mean to you? Well first off it means the first month or two visible conversions will be low as buyers hum and ha over the purchase do more research, shop around and finally go and add the product they want to a shopping cart.

There is what I like to call “Research Overwrite”, only one trace is in place at one time, as a user travels around looking at different sites and trying to learn more they may click on a Mondera link more than once, and more than once that code might belong to another partner, as per the LinkShare (and most other network system) last click gets the sale. This is all very even at the end of the day as it can happen on an equal basis...but not always. The buyer is going to remember the site that made the strongest impression on them in terms of up to date content and advise they are very likely to return to that site for “one last check” before they click that Mondera button. So it’s important that any visitor to your site leaves with a strong impression. You’ll also want to make sure your domain name, as well as being search engine friendly, is also “user memory friendly” yes “custom-made-diamond-engagement-rings.com” might be good for searches but for your average buyer it’s a little bit hard to swallow. So make use of every chance to tell that buyer to “BOOKMARK THIS PAGE” every page!

Another way to make sure your buyers come back frequently to your site during the buying processes is to provide updated info on a constant basis. For example a diamond comparison chart that compares the ‘Best deals for the ideal diamond’, prices do change on a daily basis as the market competes and diamond sellers jostle for the best supplier price.

Though I’ve not tried it nor seen it done, I’ve often wondered if putting sports scores on a diamond info site will bring back buyers (remember the 80% guys note), it’d be different that’s for sure.

## REVIEW / BUYER FEEDBACK

Having real reviews from buyers who bought from Mondera on your site goes along way towards establishing trust and creditability. Many people who buy diamonds from Mondera will be referred by friends, but they'll still want to do their own research, and if you can provide them with real world reports from other buyers then you're one step ahead of others who don't.

Getting the reviews is another matter all together...you might want to ask the people who visit your site to mail you back with feedback when they get their product, you may just ask them to send you the specs of the diamond they buy to add to a list of "Real Prices". You may ask them to mail you back after the diamond is appraised so you can show buyers how much of a bargain they are getting from Mondera on the diamonds they buy.

It's not easy to get a review list running, it may need bump starting, but once running it is a great tool to have in driving conversions. However remember reviews can be double edged, it's great to be honest, but you'll never have a 100% satisfied customer base and you will occasionally get negative reviews...at the end of the day you want to drive sales not stop them so what to do with those reviews is a little bit of a dilemma.

Another option is to do site reviews of the main diamond selling sites and compare them based upon your own criteria. For example these could be

- Quality of Shopping Experience
- Product Selection
- Product Image Quality
- Customer Service
- Customer Education
- Value for Money
- And so forth

In general you're not trying to drive the lowest sale so I would avoid ratings such as "Cheapest Prices", the bigger the buy the bigger the commission.

Ratings can use numbers, letters, stars what ever you fancy, but when you do ratings DO make sure you have checked the site you are rating....else trust goes out the window when you say "Eddies Diamond Shop : Navigation : 0 Stars" when in reality it's awesome....don't forget sites update all the time, check frequently to make sure your not behind on the latest changes. For example Mondera adds new tools on a monthly to bi-monthly basis, some of these are not obvious.

If you need a list of Mondera features and "what's new" do drop us a mail.

## EDUCATE

How many times in his life does the average guy buy an expensive diamond ring...not very often. For most it's a once in a life time job...and I call it a job because when I bought mine it felt like hard work (Bought from Mondera). I did more learning in a one month period about geology and the formation of diamonds than I ever did at school, more about geography and more about the refraction of light in an object too. And after all that my fiancé opted for a 3 Sapphire main setting...with a Pave Diamonds around them.

Diamonds are sold to set specifications, every tiny thing about a diamond is name, labeled and calculated, each calculation goes into the pricing of a diamond and deciding what the best setting should be, and how that setting will effect how the stone looks under natural light.

I'm pretty sure after buying a diamond most guys could pass a GIA Gemologists course with out too much trouble. But, first they have to learn and this is another area where your site can help the buyer, stick in his mind and inspire trust...as long as you get it right. There is a lot of information on the Internet about diamonds, not all of it is accurate and the content that is, usually has a copyright on it so you can't use it word for word...and really that's what you need to do, use it "word for word".

To this end we are very open to allowing our partners to use Mondera Learning Center content on their sites. **HOWEVER** there are restrictions on the use, the main ones being

- You must mail me before you use it to discuss
- You must declare all pages that you are using it on
- You must clearly label it as the copyrighted content of Mondera.com
- You can not edit the content in anyway though you may pick key phrases from it to create more "Search Engine" friendly opening paragraphs
- You must have at least three links to Mondera on any page using Mondera content
- You may copy and host educational images for use on your site.
- And Mondera content can only be used to promote Mondera products

Sounds harsh on the surface but it really isn't when you think about it. Anyway mail me first to discuss and you'll find we're very agreeable to most suggestions and counter ideas you may have.

Another area of Education worth considering and providing a lot of updates is news on diamonds, especially conflict diamonds and fashion. With weekly if not daily news from around the Internet you can build up a nice library of relevant and interesting articles

## INTERACT

5 years ago the Internet was about static sites and people accepted it, but nowadays people want more, they want to Interact with sites, and they will remember and come back to sites that give them the best interaction with valuable results.

The best example of an Interactive tool for selling diamonds is a Diamond Search Engine so that buyers can search on your site first for diamond across maybe a number of sites. This gives them price points and specs to compare as well as links directly too the diamonds in question on the sites.

Other examples are the same with Jewelry, Pearls or Gifts.

Other examples are simple forums where people can easily leave notes and feedback, both on your site and the research they did.

Or if possible grab information and data from sites such as Diamonds.net, this is a B2B diamond site and provides most of the diamond buying US retailers with THEIR pricing info, of course you'll need some nice person with a password to let you in or share the info. Other sources of useful info include Polygon and range of other diamond pricing sites and books which are all listed here <http://www.virtualcampus.gia.edu/giavc/pricing.cfm> .

Any information that can be manipulated or searched and help a buyer is always going to be useful tool.

# NEWS LETTERS

I was never a great believer in Email marketing, mainly because I filter my mail and put anything I'm not interested in straight in the trash...and that's the key "interested in". People will read or glance at an email that they "opted-in" for and are interested in.

For me that's my Clickz Bulletins, ABW Bulletins and any mail from the competition. I don't always have time to read it and sometimes it goes in a dedicated folder to be read later. The Mondera newsletter is no different, and neither should yours be IF people have requested it. We once had an order that had the tracking code of an email we send 8 months previously come through.

Newsletters must focus on a few core things

- Be Short
- Be To the Point
- Offer incentive to click through
- Offer opportunities to click through

To me if any email is bigger than a piece of A4 paper...then I will never read it, and neither will 95% of other Internet users unless it is 120% focused on something they are doing right at that time... like research.

Talking of research, sign up for emails, everyone's emails that are in the diamond area, get to know the other sites, their offers and so on, so that you have details on everything that is going on AND if Mondera seems to be lagging behind you can let us know so we can rectify the situation.

The Mondera newsletters are as follows

1. The Mondera News Letter.

This is sent on a biweekly basis to our registered members, it is opt in and offers buying tips, bargains, sales (coupons) and seasonal jewelry details. At present it is not available as a pre-coded email for our partners to send to their mail lists. It will be available after number 2 below is done

2. Mondera Partner News Letter.

This is presently in development but will be a opt-in pre-coded newsletter that will send our partners all the latest link codes, especially coupon and sale codes with your LinkShare code already in the Links so that you can copy and paste direct to your site. This email will also include tips, competitions and other notes from Mondera

3. Mondera Partner News Letter. Part 2

If the links newsletter gets to crowded with links we'll then send an opt-in second email that has the include tips, competitions and other notes from Mondera

## CONCLUSION

In closing, I hope that the above information is not only useful to you in the development of your site to sell Mondera products, but also inspires you to do more than you initially planned and maybe also helps you to sell products for your other Merchant partners. A lot of what is above could just as easily be applied to selling wine for example.

It will take time for your Mondera focused sites to kick off, but once it does then I can guarantee few sales will please you more than the one that is a \$12,000 US diamond... who needs a \$25 Threshold .

Mondera's top affiliate invest in their sites, they put back money from their sales into PFP marketing and paid listings. When Mondera first moved directly into PFP marketing on Google and Overture, a couple of our partners very politely told us "No, it doesn't work!!", and in some ways they were right, Mondera only offers one range of products and anything we write is considered biased by the users, so we've scaled down PFP because we realized that our Partners PFP marketing was more effective then our own and all we were doing was driving the price up.

And Finally. Special thanks to my guinea pig partners who were forced to read this guide in it's many drafts, Vicki, Nick and Cedric. Especially Cedric who took it upon himself to edit the whole thing, correct my awful grammar and move things around.... And also told me one of the section totally sucked so I had to rewrite it.

Any errors corrects and comments can be sent direct to me at [chris.sanderson@mondera.com](mailto:chris.sanderson@mondera.com)

## USEFUL LINKS

- **ClickZ** ( [www.clickz.com](http://www.clickz.com) ) :  
The ClickZ Network provides fresh information, viewpoints and experiences every business day from the people in the trenches of the Internet marketing and advertising industry.
- **“A Best Web” (ABW) Affiliate Forums** ([www.abestweb.com](http://www.abestweb.com) )  
The best place on the Internet for meeting other Affiliate partners, the affiliate networks and discussing news that directly effects you and how you make money. Mondera has an open discussion Forum here.
- **TH Media Hosting** ( [www.thmedia.net](http://www.thmedia.net) )  
Excellent UNIX hosting for web sites focused on Affiliate marketing, great prices offering a discount for ABW Members
- **WebStudio-1 Solutions** ( [www.webstudio-1.com](http://www.webstudio-1.com) )  
Internet Solutions providers for Internet Development and Marketing, providing excellent solutions to suit all budgets as well as Turn Key Affiliate Partner Management solutions and web site development for affiliates.
- **DMOZ** ([www.dmoz.org](http://www.dmoz.org) )  
Don't launch a web site without it, in fact you might go as far as saying you can't launch without it. With such a huge reach DMOZ is the best place to list for free when you launch your site, it takes patience to get listed at times.
- **ZEAL** ( [www.zeal.com](http://www.zeal.com) )  
The little known source site for LookSmart and MSN, this site only publishes non-commercial sites, so E-Commerce and Mall style sites won't get in, info sites can and they have no policy against affiliate sites
- **BCENTRAL** ( [www.bcentral.com](http://www.bcentral.com) )  
Not the cheapest submission option but as it is MS managed and you do the foot work at least you know the submissions are getting done. Covers many of the main search engines and indexes including Inktomi.
- **Google Dance** ( [www.fm-transmitter.com/google-dance/](http://www.fm-transmitter.com/google-dance/) )  
Presents a look into the future as to what the Google search results are likely to look like in the upcoming months by referencing the 5 Google data sources. Search and compare across all data sources..