

## JVC's Police Coalitions- the road to mutual trust and respect

The Law Enforcement community in Canada has always been a tightly closed door group and it is difficult for people or companies that were not part of law enforcement to cross that thin blue line. JVC learned that early on in their Crime Prevention Program.

JVC's crime analyst Janet Lamont, on many occasions, would try and contact officers in different parts of the country attempting to obtain information on jewellery crime or to offer our assistance in circulating information to the jewellery industry. She would be met with cold responses such as "I don't know you," or "I've never heard of your company," or on many occasions would never receive a return call to a message left. JVC quickly realized in order to build a community partnership with police this was an obstacle we had to overcome.

In order to make large numbers of police investigators aware of our Crime Prevention Program we focused on a major police conference that is held in the spring in Western Canada and in the fall in Eastern Canada. These were the Canadian Robbery Investigators seminars. JVC contacted the officer responsible for setting up the seminars and offered to act as a sponsor in return for an opportunity to make a presentation to the 150 or so officers attending, outlining our program and network and how it can help in police investigations of jewellery crime. After a few years the police began approaching JVC asking if we would help sponsor their seminar and of course we continued to do so. We also started to receive requests to help in some way in their investigations.

Once we had built this relationship with robbery investigators and, with the assistance of Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company (JM), our Board of Directors approved a Police Appreciation Award for officers that went above and beyond the call of duty when investigating a major jewellery crime. This award proved very useful in building a stronger relationship with police and in our last two presentations to Waterloo Regional Police and Durham Regional Police the awards were presented to the officers at their department police commission meeting which were attended not only by commission members but by senior officers and news media. A true recognition for the officers in front of their peers.

JVC continued to build its police relationship, and with financial assistance from Jewelers Mutual we made it possible for law enforcement officers from different parts of the country to attend jewellery related seminars in Canada as well as the USA. An effort which resulted in Canadian Police making personal contacts with law enforcement in the US. JVC felt this was very important as criminals do not recognize borders.

JVC next approached one of our strongest law enforcement supporters, York Regional Police and managed to get one of their investigators approved to act as a advisor to the JVC Board of Directors. Detective Doug Bedford has since participated in JVC Board meetings and provided excellent advice. One great idea which came from Det Bedford was to have JVC develop a police only database in which jewellery crime information can be posted and only police can

access the information. The general public may think the police have their own database and in fact they do, but jewellery crime is buried in with many other occurrences. As an example, jewellery robberies and thefts are combined in a category which encompasses all types of retail robberies and thefts. This database provides police with only jewellery crime. This database will prove to be valuable not only to investigators but to police crime analysts as well.

This brought JVC to the next stage in its plan to build community partnerships with Police. At the end of October JVC sent out an invitation to all the major police departments in the GTA to attend a Jewellery Crime Prevention Coalition. The response to say the least was fantastic. The departments accepted without any hesitation at all. In several cases they sent more than one officer. The program has come a long way from the days when our crime analyst received indifferent remarks from officers when she tried to explain who we were and what we were trying to do. We have now reached a point of mutual respect and trust and on the 28th October 2013 JVC's crime analyst along with the Director of Loss Prevention and head of security for a major jewellery chain sat in a board room with senior police investigators and police crime analysts and openly discussed jewellery crime in the GTA and JVC's Crime Prevention Program. The Southern Ontario Crime Prevention Coalition was formed. It was interesting to note that during these conversations the police themselves agreed that JVC has to be the catalyst for this program including the Police Only database as it would not survive if a police agency took it on.

We have two other Coalitions in the works, Vancouver and Calgary, and plans for many more.

When our Crime Prevention Program first started we were taking one step forward and two back. Now we are moving ahead in leaps and bounds and building a program that will serve our industry into the future.

John Lamont, JVC's Director of Crime Prevention