

ANDREW RIMMER, CEO, OPSYDIA



Being part of a community like **ORIGINALLUXURY** is proof that technology-enabled transparency and traceability is achievable for the diamond and precious gemstone industries - not as a nebulous concept but as an achievable present day operational process. The challenge remains, however, in packaging these advancements in ways that are tangible and engaging for the consumer.

New generations of customers are increasingly interested in knowing the origin of their jewellery and want to engage with a piece's story. This includes the benefits brought to mining communities and the CSR principles followed throughout the manufacturing process. Industries across the board, not limited to precious jewellery, gemstones, and premium timepieces, are in the process of sharing these stories with varying degrees of success. In today's market, traceability and branding are interconnected and studies have revealed that consumers are willing to spend more on products with socially responsible qualities. There is marketing power in informing shoppers about the benefits of responsible supply chains and offering products with genuine provenance.

Businesses committed to well-evidenced transparency initiatives have a huge advantage - they limit reputational risk whilst simultaneously generating consumer trust and loyalty. While communicating traceability to consumers is still in its infancy, we have reached a critical tipping point in the diamond industry. Sophisticated brands are increasingly sharing ethical, sustainable and traceable messages to meet consumer expectations for transparent supply chains.

The solution to building trust and ensuring differentiation is physical proof, something tangible which discerning luxury consumers can see with their own eyes. There is precedent for this type of consumer protection. An example in the UK domestic market is the law governing the independent application of precious metal hallmarks applied by national Assay Offices. Consumers don't need to blindly assume that the necklace they are purchasing is 18k gold - it has been independently tested and physically stamped as evidence of its purity.

Since the inception of Opsydia, our ultra-precision laser technology has provided this physical 'missing link' in the form of Sub-Surface Nano ID inscriptions. These are permanent identity features placed within diamonds and precious gemstones that connect a specific stone to its blockchain record, grading report or branded origins. We have recently expanded the repertoire of our technology to inscribe Nano IDs in sapphire crystal glass and are developing a system to inscribe *melée* diamonds at scale. It has also been inspiring to see our clients explore non-conventional applications, too, including bespoke identifiers, precision sub-surface images and limited edition runs of inscribed gems. A future filled with personalised diamonds and precious gemstones is entirely possible with this innovative mind-set.

Furthermore, we are also preparing to launch the Opsydia Jewellery Viewer - an internet-enabled device allowing consumers to see our microscopic identifiers in the luxury retail environment. As each Nano ID is indicative of a wider initiative - a trail of evidence - they can quickly build trust and showcase the wider story behind a stone as part of the sales experience. With the Jewellery Viewer, luxury retailers and brands no longer have to rely on words but can showcase their credentials in-store as part of an elevated experience.

For brands, the benefits of tamper-proof inscriptions don't end at the primary point of sale. The secondary market is an ever-evolving landscape of digital resellers and auction houses, with even the likes of eBay introducing an 'Authenticity Guarantee' for second-hand luxury goods. Maintaining brand integrity and achieving reliable authentication is critical for protecting shoppers and tackling counterfeit goods. We are committed to creating enduring value that remains with a gemstone throughout its lifespan.

The luxury industry differentiates itself by its heritage, craft, innovation and above all, aspirational storytelling. To be truly timeless and appealing, these stories should be meaningful, authentic and evidence based. Physical inscriptions are a real-world representation of practising what you preach. Without this, from the consumer perspective, your hard-won traceability achievements could seem like nothing more than words on a page.

"There is a need for precise, tamper-proof evidence of supply chain integrity in a way that is straightforward for the consumer,"

Andrew Rimmer, CEO, Opsydia.