



RETAIL STAR



## Wendy Albert: Marketing Miracle Mile on the Las Vegas Strip

[By Surajit Sen Sharma]

Wendy Albert has been in the shopping center industry for the last 16 years and has earned the market savvy that makes her a star retailer. In 2004, when the dollar had plunged almost as much as it has this year, the Desert Passage Shopping Center, headed by Albert, stepped up its efforts to woo European tourists. Her marketing strategy, she said, had nothing to do with the change in the dollar's value, but when the Desert Passage Shopping Center was torn down to build the Miracle Mile shopping mall, almost everything about the retail location changed except the head of marketing.

Albert's journey in retailing started in her college days, when she worked for a shopping center under the mentorship of Bob Sorensen. She interned for more than a year with the shopping center's marketing department. After graduating from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, she was hired as the assistant marketing director for another shopping center under her previous employer. Since then, she has worked in the marketing departments of nine different shopping centers and held a regional position overseeing 10 shopping centers.

Even in her college days, Albert loved community work and social networking. She involved herself in college student-group activities like feeding the homeless and at the same time worked to build peer and mentor relationships in the workplace. In fact, when asked about notable projects she had worked on, the first thing that came to her mind was that they "all involved community organizations." She said what matters to her is "how we, as shopping center owners and managers, have been able to impact the community in which we exist." Albert has personally worked on projects that have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for various community organizations and charities.

Retailing on The Strip is no picnic; it takes solid expertise. As University of Nevada

professor William Eadington concluded in a 2004 paper, "the Las Vegas Strip is a place to 'see' and be 'seen' for major retailers." Albert's job is not simple, but it has made her stronger.

"My job entails so many different elements (marketing, advertising, PR, promotions, merchant relations, etc.) that I have learned to be able to juggle multiple projects at once," she said.

**Q. What do you do for fun?**

**A.** Go shopping! [It's] the best way to stay current on the shopping center industry. I also enjoy going to museums, theater, watching movies, and enjoying the city of Las Vegas, where I live.

**Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?**

**A.** Fergie, Jamiroquai, Maroon 5, Donna Summer, Madonna, John Legend.

**Q. What is the last magazine you read?**

**A.** *In Style*.

**Q. What is your favorite TV show?**

**A.** I can't narrow it down to one, but I like a lot of shows on Bravo right now.

**Q. Who is your role model?**

**A.** I seek inspiration from different people for different aspects of my life.

In 2004, Albert received professional recognition and a MAXI Award for sales from the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) while heading the marketing department at Desert Passage. She has also been a member of the CMD Admissions and Governing Committee for the CMD (certified marketing director) course offered by the ICSC. She feels that contributing to shopping center industry education forums gives her opportunities to pass on her knowledge to the next generation in the industry.

For those just starting out in retail, her advice is as follows:

"Get involved in as many different aspects of the industry that you can, and don't stop learning about shopping centers, whether it be through mentors or ICSC...Be passionate about what you do, and enjoy your work!"

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