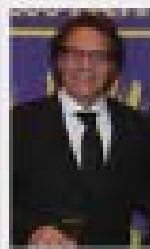


5 QUESTIONS

with **Rino Armeni**,
Chairman and Founder, Las Vegas Business Academy



Rino Armeni's journey in Las Vegas began following a successful career with Marriott and the Walt Disney Corp., when he was named vice president of food and beverage for Caesars Palace. In 1994, he became executive director of marketing for Southern Wine & Spirits, the leading liquor distributor in Nevada. Today, as president of Armeni Enterprises, he remains active in several food-and-beverage-related developments. But Armeni is most proud of his role as founder and chairman of the board of the Las Vegas Business Academy (LVBA), a charitable organization that provides funding for worthy individuals to earn their advanced degrees in Las Vegas. To hear a full podcast of this interview, visit GGGMagazine.com.

Tell us about LVBA and how it got started.

Someone once asked me if this was a dream of mine. I told him it wasn't a dream, it was an obligation on my part to improve the education in a city that has been very welcoming to my family and me. There are a lot of brilliant young people who are interested in earning their MBA, MPA or JD, who could not afford it or had to leave town to do it. My take was, I'd rather keep these brilliant people here than see them leave to go elsewhere.

How does it work?

We offer up to \$75,000 for the candidates to advance their education in hospitality, law, business, and other related engineering areas, too. The great part about this program is the mentorship. The money is important, but we're blessed with more than 30 board members who are leaders in big companies like Golden Gaming, MGM Resorts, Coca Cola, Ecolab, Las Vegas Sands, Southern Wine & Spirits, and many other companies who spend their time educating students on how to become business professionals.

The students have to sign a five-year contract and work with a different company every month throughout their time in our program. Our companies work to understand how these companies operate, so that by the end of the two years of the program, the depth of their knowledge will be attractive to any company looking for talent. And we also offer, to the employer, the opportunity to hire someone who is very well-rounded, very well-educated.

How do you identify the candidates?

Most of them are referrals from previous students. They also come from leaders in the industry who have identified people in their organizations they believe are worthy.

The students follow parallel curriculums, one with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and one with LVBA, which includes working in the individual companies.

Do they work in all different departments?

Yes. For example, if you go to work for Southern Wine & Spirits, your first days may be doing with a delivery person at 3 o'clock in the morning. Then you'll be in accounting, sales, marketing, legal... Each student will end up with a basic knowledge of what happens in each of these departments.

What kind of reaction have you gotten from both the students and the companies?

We're a young organization—we've only had three classes of scholarship recipients so far—but so far the feedback we have received has been fantastic. One of our students has already been promoted twice, another works for a federal judge. They are already brilliant individuals, so this education gives them a quick boost to get ahead in their chosen careers. And the companies couldn't be happier to be able to hire such talented executives.

"They Said It"

"Our tribes have called this land home long before it was named Connecticut, and we refuse to sit back and watch a casino company from Las Vegas take our jobs and revenues."

—Kevin Brown, chairman of the Mohegan Tribe, explaining the effects of the Mohegan and Pequot tribes to build a third, private casino in Connecticut to mitigate competition from the planned MGM casino resort in Springfield, Massachusetts.

"They invested in DraftKings, but it's not gambling! What the hell is it?"

—Baseball legend Pete Rose to the Las Vegas Review-Journal, attacking what he called the hypocrisy of Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred after Manfred rejected his application for reinstatement from a lifetime ban from baseball imposed because Rose gambled on his own team.

CALENDAR

June 7-10: Gaming Super Show 2016, RA Amsterdam, Netherlands. Produced by Claxon Events. For more information, visit GamingSuperShow.com.

June 20-22: Northwest Indian Gaming Conference & Expo 2016, Tulalip Resort Casino, Tulalip, Washington. Produced by the Washington Indian Gaming Association (WIGA). For more information, visit washingtonindiangaming.org.

July 25-27: Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association (OIGA) 2016 Conference, Cox Business Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Produced by the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association. For more information, visit oicindiangaming.org.

August 9-11: Australian Gaming Expo (AGE) 2016, Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Produced by the Gaming Technologies Association. For more information, visit austgamingexpo.com.

September 28-29: Global Gaming Expo (G2E) 2016, Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas. Produced by The American Gaming Association and Reed Exhibitions. For more information, visit GlobalGamingExpo.com.

October 18-20: EG - Excellence in Gaming 2016, Arena Berlin, Berlin, Germany. Produced by Claxon Events. For more information, visit egexpo.com.