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## Retail Kings

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Choosing a Top 10 list is always a risky proposition. Invariably there are omissions and everyone has an opinion, right or wrong. The purpose of our 10 Leading Retailers list is not to create controversy. It was designed to recognize major players from the business who have significantly influenced the adult industry's retail sector — and, just as important, to inspire debate.

When selecting our list, we took a number of factors into consideration. Longevity, reputation, innovation, originality and product diversity were key, while square footage, staff size, number of locations and revenue were less of an influence.

Our list of 10 Leading Retailers resembles a diverse cross-section of adult retailing — from couples-friendly boutiques, to upscale specialty stores, to mega-sized adult emporiums. The companies included on this list serve a wide demographic of sexually adventurous consumers from across the U.S. Most importantly, these businesses are ahead of the curve in store design, visual merchandising, in-store marketing and community involvement.

The adult retail landscape has changed dramatically in recent times, and never before has it been so crucial to understand where the brick-and-mortar business is headed, what the consumer wants, how to display it and how to close a sale.

XBIZ Video's 10 Leading Retailers have a proven track record of gaining — and retaining — loyal customers. While our selections might not be the biggest or the richest store chains, they are some of the best at what they do.

### **Adam & Eve**

Founded in 1970, Adam & Eve operates from a 10-acre site in Hillsborough, N.C., which includes a 110,000-square-foot warehouse and three-story office building — making the company (literally) one of the largest in the adult entertainment industry. With a staff of more than 350 people, Adam & Eve also is among the largest private employers in Orange County, N.C. As a frequent advertiser in mainstream publications like *Cosmopolitan*, Adam & Eve is one of the more successful companies in the adult industry in terms of leveraging its business model into markets not traditionally thought of as adult-friendly. Boasting a total of more than 10 million customers served, Adam & Eve offers everything from dietary supplements designed to spur greater sexual performance to the latest in high-tech sex toy gadgetry and nearly every sex-related product in-between. Also a highly regarded and award-winning video production company, Adam & Eve is among the most diversified companies operating in the adult industry today. For more information, visit [AdamEve.com](http://AdamEve.com).

### **Babeland**

Babeland, formerly known as Toys in Babeland, is a women-owned sex toy boutique offering erotic toys, books and videos. Babeland has an online store and four retail stores (in Los Angeles, Seattle and two in New York). Claire Cavanah and Rachel Venning founded Toys in Babeland in 1993 in response to the lack of women-friendly sex shops. Committed to offering information and encouragement to women who wanted to explore their sexuality, the owners focused on selling quality sex toys in a boutique-like setting. In 2005, Toys in Babeland officially shortened its name to Babeland and modernized its look.

### **Castle Megastores**

Castle Megastores, a leading retailer of adult merchandise, first opened its doors in 1987. After 19 years in the adult retail market, today its 16 stores located in Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington and Alaska are some of the best-stocked stores in the nation. Ranging in size from 5,000 to 15,000 square feet and designed with the customer in mind, the well-lit and safe environment has allowed the company to create a fun, friendly and upscale shopping experience, which attracts more couples and women everyday, CEO Mark Franks told XBIZ. Castle's products include novelties, massage oils, personal stimulators, lingerie, sex toys, condoms, performance enhancers, videos, books and magazines. Each store, which is designed with a striking castle exterior, includes up to 97,000 items displayed on the shelves. For more information, visit [CastleMegastore.com](http://CastleMegastore.com).

### **Goalie Entertainment/ Romantix Adult Superstores**

Goalie Entertainment, founded by one of the most formerly powerful men in porn, Edward Wendlestedt, was sold to an investment group for an undisclosed sum in November 2005. Goalie Entertainment is made up of 68 adult video and novelty stores offering a variety of sexually explicit magazines and videos, as well as the latest in adult toys, multi-channel video arcades and private preview rooms. The company has stores in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming. Even though he no longer runs his adult empire, Wendlestedt still looms large over the adult industry. Eddie W, as he was affectionately known, is well known in the Denver community for his philanthropic activities, especially for generously donating to children's charities. For more information, visit [RomantixOnline.com](http://RomantixOnline.com).

**Good Vibrations**

In 1977, sex therapist Joani Blank opened the first Good Vibrations retail store in San Francisco's Mission District. The rest is history. Good Vibrations is world-renowned as a premiere and proven source of women-focused adult retail goods and sex-positive information and education. All of their products are available online, including the usual array of erotic paraphernalia: vibrators, dildos, and anal, fetish and bondage toys. Good Vibrations is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, and is currently developing new programs, including Women Like Me, a public education campaign. Women Like Me provides up-to-date and accurate information about issues and concerns related to sexuality and sexual expression faced by women. Good Vibrations operates three retail stores in the San Francisco Bay Area, one in Brookline, Mass., a mail-order business, a website and three publishing companies. Comedienne Margaret Cho sits on the company's board of directors. For more information, visit [GoodVibrations.com](http://GoodVibrations.com).

**Hustler Hollywood**

Hustler Hollywood was the brainchild of Hustler founder Larry Flynt and his daughter Theresa Flynt, Hustler's vice president of licensing. Since opening its doors for the first time in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1997, Hustler Hollywood has expanded to include locations across the country in cities such as South Beach, Fla., Lexington, Ky., Nashville, Tenn., San Diego and Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The company's signature store is on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood, Calif. Hustler Hollywood's cache is a modern-looking, upscale retail location that sells Hustler-branded products, adult DVDs, magazines, games, clothing and other sex products. For more information, visit [HustlerHollywood.com](http://HustlerHollywood.com).

**Movie Gallery**

While not necessarily considered an adult retailer, Movie Gallery is the second-largest North American movie and video game rental chain. The company owns approximately 4,700 retail stores in primarily small towns and rural areas. Movie Gallery orders a large number of adult videos to stock in more than 100 stores, and the sheer volume of its purchases makes its influence on the adult retail landscape undeniable. However, Movie Gallery is in a bleak financial situation and might have to declare bankruptcy and close numerous stores, which would be a blow to the adult industry. For more information, visit [MovieGallery.com](http://MovieGallery.com).

**Peekay**

Phyllis Heppenstall and her daughter Kris Butt started Peekay Inc. in 1980 with a \$600 investment. Originally an in-home party plan program, the first retail store was opened in 1981. Since that time the company has grown to more than 30 retail outlets, with the majority of them in the Puget Sound region of Washington under the name Lover's Package and several in the Los Angeles market called A Touch of Romance. For more information, visit [Peekay.com](http://Peekay.com).

**TLA Video**

TLA Entertainment Group, based in Philadelphia, is a rapidly growing, privately held, 26-year-old corporation. TLA operates two of the largest and most successful direct-mail DVD catalogs in the U.S., and the [TLAvideo.com](http://TLAvideo.com) and [TLAraw.com](http://TLAraw.com) catalogs serve more than 4 million consumers annually. Catering to the gay audience, the [TLAvideo.com](http://TLAvideo.com) catalog is synonymous with diverse, quality, sexy DVDs, books and adult novelties. For more information, visit [TLAVideo.com](http://TLAVideo.com).

**The Lion's Den**

The Lion's Den Adult Superstores are dedicated to providing the very best in adult videos, periodicals, novelties and intimate apparel. Its first retail facility was founded in 1971 in Columbus, Ohio. Since then, the company has expanded to more than 40 locations throughout the country. For more information, visit [LionsDenAdult.com](http://LionsDenAdult.com).

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