



**Name in English:** Jenny Ming  
**Name in Chinese:** 明珍妮  
**Name in Pinyin:** Míng Zhēnnī  
**Gender:** Female  
**Birth Year:** 1955  
**Birth Place:** Guangdong, China  
**Current Location:** Boston, Massachusetts

### **Retail Executive who built Old Navy**

**Profession:** Retail Executive

**Education:** B.A., Clothing Merchandising, 1978, San Jose State University

**Awards:** 2000, Nation's Top 25 Managers, Business Week; 2003, 42<sup>nd</sup> on the list, Fortune Magazine's list of the 50 most powerful women in business; 2004, 47<sup>th</sup> on the list, Fortune Magazine's list of the 50 most powerful women in business; 2006, Award for Leadership in Business and Community Service, Merage Foundation

### **Contribution (s):**

Her mother wanted her to be a pharmacist, but Jenny Ming had other ideas in clothes and fashion. As a teenager, she was so talented in sewing she took out an ad in a newspaper offering seamstress services.

After graduating from San Jose State University, Ming started her first job as an assistant manager at Mervyn's department store. In 1986, Ming was personally recruited by Gap CEO Millard S. Drexler and started as a merchandise manager for active-wear. Ming's stellar performance enabled her to quickly rise up the management ranks, becoming a vice president after just three years on the job. In 1994, when Gap established its spin-off, Old Navy, Drexler named Ming as a member of the executive team. Ming first served as Old Navy's senior vice president of merchandising, was later promoted in 1996 to executive vice president of merchandising, and was then the President of Old Navy from 1999 to 2006.

Old Navy under Ming's leadership became the world's fastest-growing retail brand and the first retailer to reach \$1 billion in annual sales by 1999, less than four years later. Her winning formula was appealing, fashionable clothes at affordable prices to teens and families. Ming drew her innovations from a wide range of inspirations. In one instance, Ming noticed her teenage daughter was wearing pajama bottoms paired with a tank top to school one day, joining a popular trend among teenage girls. Pajama sets had not been selling well at Old Navy, so Ming dumped the pajama top and introduced a line of pajama bottoms and tank tops of different colors that became an instant bestseller.

From a spin-off company that started out with 11 employees and one location, Ming established Old Navy into one of the world's biggest and most recognizable multi-billionaire retail brands with over 900 stores, hundreds of thousands of employees, and annual sales that outpaced even its parent company at times.

In recognition of Ming's success, the Merage Foundation for the American Dream has made the film "Jenny Ming: Blazing Her Own Trail to Success" as part of its "American Dream DVD Series" distributed to over 36,000 classrooms across the nation to provide youth with positive role models.

**External Links:**

<http://www.meragefoundations.com/pdf/JMingGuide.pdf>

<http://www.notablebiographies.com/news/Li-Ou/Ming-Jenny.html>

<http://www.marshall.usc.edu/news/all-articles/ming-retraces-steps-to-success.htm>

<http://wilconference.org/2003/keynote.html>