

Alice Combs Bio

In the 1970's I rose from a divorced mother on Food Stamps to a successful entrepreneur. After an employer stated, "you're not corporate material," my initial ignorance, and business mistakes, I founded a now healthy \$10 million annual sales corporation. My story begins when I leave my San Francisco Bay Area home-office to collect a customer's overdue \$5,000. I interrupt their board meeting and refuse to leave without payment. Their president drops me down the stairs. On top of my imminent financial disaster, I fear I will be called the bitch of the recycling industry. I flash back to the relinquishment of my about-to-be adopted baby, former jobs, divorce, humiliation of using food stamps, controlling mother, and the bizarre series of events that led me to become an entrepreneur in industrial baler wire, and my agony before and after I created a false IRS W-2 to acquire working capital—a felony. Eventually I receive the overdue payment and am phoned by a loyal customer who says all his fellow garbagemen are calling me "The Little Lady with Balls." And they want me to join their garbage association. This leads to increased sales with expansion to a rented office and a saleswoman to cover Southern California. Success in business followed and grew. Also, after many poor romantic choices, I found true love.

Our happy ending started over 30 years ago and just gets happier! I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1942, but lived in Tarzana, California, during my formative years. In 1962 I married my first husband. With pink collar work, I traded furthering my education for his education. In '71 we lived in Dublin, California, with our two pre-school daughters when we fostered a deserted and neglected baby boy. After the mother took him back, I decided to become a child's advocate attorney. In '72 I resumed my college education at California State College, Hayward. Due to financial difficulties of our divorce in '73 I abandoned law school plans—but acquired

my B.A. Plan B was to become a clothes buyer for Mervyn's Department store until I was told "You just aren't corporate material." Plan C was to help re-build my boyfriend's dead but supposedly formerly thriving business. I discovered his business had never been successful until I made it so. By 1977 I bought out my boyfriend's share and dumped him. After many failed romances, in 1989 I married Michael Combs. In 1998 we semi-retired to Gualala, California, among redwoods overlooking the ocean, and we travel extensively. My Hayward, California, business, Vulcan Wire, of which I own 26%, is still growing.