
Where Are They Now?

Shantavia Webb graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with a Business Management degree. Shantavia started her Kroger journey as an intern in 2003. Read our interview below to see where she is now, 17 years later.

B: Brandon Sandlin (Interviewer) S: Shantavia Webb

B: Hello Shantavia! Thank you for joining me today! How has working from home been for you?

S: No problem! Working from home has been both good and challenging at times. My husband and I both have very different careers, so finding a balance between our individual work needs has been a learning experience.

B: Oh, I am sure! So, I hear that you actually started your career at Kroger as an intern in 2003? What was your role back then?

S: Yes, I did! I started as a management intern where I worked in stores learning our business from the ground up. I would spend weeks at a time in each department and with store leaders learning everything from the proper way to bag groceries to how to handle labor disputes.

B: Wow! That sounds like a great learning experience! Is there 1 thing you learned as an intern that really stands out to you today that has helped you get to where you are now?

S: There are so many things I learned while being an intern, but the one thing that has helped me the most is approaching every situation with a willingness to learn, no matter where the source of that wisdom comes from. Over my 17 years I have learned from both courtesy clerks and senior executives, because they all have unique insights to our company that I can learn from. This keeps me grounded and humble which helps me gain respect from others. As a young store manager, I had my own unique set of challenges with trying to gain respect from associates and leaders who were not afraid to let me know that they had been with Kroger longer than I had even been alive. You learn to respect their experiences, thoughts, and opinions. Eventually you will earn their respect too.

B: I love that! Humility is certainly a virtue. I'm sure spending 17 years with Kroger has allowed you to see many perspectives. Can you talk about "life after being an intern"? For some, I know it can be a scary thought. How did you stay connected with Kroger after your internship ended?

S: Life after being an intern was definitely a transition. As you make the change from a peer to a leader of others, it can be very intimidating. There were people that I see today who remember me as the 19 y/o girl they had to teach the basics to, who also made a lot of mistakes along the way. Through those experiences, you hope you've made the type of impression on them where they look at your success today and take pride in the fact that they helped you get to where you are. I had a lot of department leaders, store leaders, and district and division staff who kept me encouraged and helped me to navigate my transition after college. Things like



understanding how my pay and benefits would change (hourly to salary), how to find balance between work and life, and how to work with people to achieve results. I would advise any intern nearing the end of their experience to find a few people to stay connected with and engage with them often until you gain more confidence.

B: Great advice! I'm looking forward to that transition, but I am nervous about it too! Speaking of having people to stay connected with, is there 1 person that you met early in your career that has acted as a mentor for you? Can you tell us more about that relationship?

S: Michelle Phanthavongsa is currently the Senior Director of Operations for the Nashville Division. When I first became an intern, someone recommended I connect with her. During one of our intern visits to one of the offices, I saw her working in advertising at the time and immediately was impressed by her level of professionalism and how highly regarded she was. Since then, we have remained connected and have worked together in several capacities. She has always been someone that I have felt comfortable reaching out to for advice no matter what role or level of the organization I'm in. She is the one that encouraged me to be a Store Manager and who also helped me to navigate my transitions between divisions when I was unsure of how the relocation process worked.

B: That is fantastic! That kind of relationship and support system can really be impactful. So, here we are almost 17 years since you began as an intern. Where are you now? Can you tell us more about your current role and what you do?

S: Over the past 17 years, I have been an intern, Assistant Store Manager, Store Manager, District Coordinator, on special assignment, a Division Talent Manager and now, the Kroger Leadership Academy Manager. In my current role I report to our Director of Talent Development in GO and am responsible for leading the curriculum design and selection process for our High-Volume Store Leader and District Manager development programs. This includes establishing content and key deliverables, ensuring messages align with company priorities, and engaging divisions around the selection, support and follow-up of its participants. The role is continuing to evolve, so I am beginning to take a more active role in developing development programs for those leaders and others from a learning and development perspective, with a focus on top and emerging talent.

B: I love hearing about your progress in the company and the many roles you have held! Kroger Leadership Academy Manager is a role I was unaware of prior to meeting you! For the interns that are looking for roles to move up in the company after their internship, what would you say to them?

S: There are so many opportunities within our organization. My degree was in business management. I never knew that my passion for people would lead me to the opportunities I've had in HR. The great thing about Kroger is that if you consistently deliver on or exceed performance expectations and show an active interest in a different part of the organization, you can get that experience. It is all about your PIE (performance, image and exposure). If you perform at a high level, present yourself professionally, and take advantage of opportunities to create exposure for yourself, your opportunities are limitless.

B: Thank you so much, Shantavia! Thanks for sharing a little bit of your story today. Would you mind sharing your contact information for any of our interns reading this?

S: You are very welcome! Absolutely. My contact information is: Shantavia Webb - Kroger Leadership Academy Manager Cell: 859-475-2474 Email: shantavia.webb@kroger.com