

The world of lingerie was given a boost in 1977 when the Victoria's Secret Company hit the stores. The lingerie and beauty products needed the right people to promote the merchandise and the company decided to hire the most beautiful models, calling them Victoria Secret Angels. In addition to stores, the merchandise is sold through mail order catalogs and the models became familiar faces in them. They also appeared in the company fashion shows, always a high profile media event.

There are around 1,000 lingerie stores and 100 beauty stores in America and the company was the most successful lingerie supplier by the beginning of the 1990s. Stores are usually located in shopping malls. The catalog has eight issues a year and the product line has expanded to include shoes, perfumes, sleepwear and evening wear. The lingerie line includes bras, hosiery and panties.

During the 1990s, supermodels were brought in to promote the goods in advertising campaigns and on the runway. The Victoria Secret Angels first appeared in 1999 at the 4th Annual Victoria Secret Fashion Show. The Angels are seen to be spokeswomen for the company and not just models. They are chosen for their personality as well as their good looks.

The original Angels included Maria Ines Rivero, Adriana Lima, Heidi Klum, Rebecca Romijn and Tyra Banks. Currently, the Angels consist of Selita Ebanks, Alessandra Ambrosio, Izabel Goulart, Karolina Kurkova and Miranda Kerr. Adriana Lima also continues as one of the Victoria Secret Angels. People Magazine selected the Angels to be in their 2007 list of the 100 Most Beautiful People in the World award.

The prestige of the models was recognized in November 2007 when they were invited to be a part of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. They are the first commercial representatives to be awarded a star. Victoria Secret Angels are on a par with the world's models in terms of pay as well as status. They have also lent a showbiz glamour to lingerie and made it a desirable but respectable commodity.

One of the Angels has even appeared as herself in the hit comedy, Friends in an episode in 1994. Called The One with the Blackout, Chandler is delighted to find himself trapped in an ATM vestibule with Jill Goodacre, during a power cut. Goodacre was a familiar presence in Victoria Secret catalogs during the 1990s. The scene is very funny as Chandler is crippled with shyness and nerves when confronted with this fashion icon.