



## ATC Spotlight

### ATC graduate travels to China for local company



Athens Technical College graduate Tabitha Crawford travels to China twice a year as an international product manager for Bogart-based burton+Burton, a global supplier of balloons and gift products.

Crawford accompanies burton+Burton Chief Executive Officer Bob Burton and other representatives from the company to visit manufacturers that produce specialty items for the company and to attend the Canton Fair – the equivalent of the Trade Mart in Atlanta.

“We shop (at the Canton trade market) and see what products have the best quality and designs,” said Crawford, who spent 11 days in China in October. “We also visit our factories and pick out new products.”

Crawford proved to be a good product manager, showing keen judgment and intelligence, said Burton.

She’s bright and not just a yes person; she adds a lot to the job and can help make decisions,” Burton said. “She got a good set of skills when she went to school at Athens Tech, and I think she utilizes those well.”

Crawford completed her associate’s degree in marketing management in 2005 after three years at ATC. She started in radiology, but quickly decided she was better at numbers and felt like the business field suited her more. While she was in school she held a part-time job in the burton+Burton warehouse, but at one point was let go due to the economy. Later, after being called back, she moved to the show pack area and worked as an assistant to the burton+Burton show coordinator, who oversaw the company’s booth and product presentations at trade shows. When a position in the imports division came available she applied for and won that job, all the while continuing her studies. When she graduated in 2005, the company promoted her to an assistant product manager job, a training position that led to her role as an international product manager.

Athens Technical College provided an important role in Crawford’s career path she said. Besides being near her home, ATC’s evening schedule made it possible for her to continue working to cover tuition.

“I had moved out (from my parents home) and put myself through college,” Crawford said. “I took night classes, which were very helpful to keeping my job. Night classes were awesome and probably the reason I went to business.”

Her ATC adviser, Sandy Denero Weaver, also helped her with her decision to switch from radiology to marketing and guided her on what courses to take.

“I found marketing classes very useful for the field I’m in,” Crawford said. “I not only buy, but I sell our products at trade shows. Having all that background helped me to be cross-trained in different areas of this company.”

Crawford’s success has taught her another crucial lesson.

“I’ve learned you have to work hard to make it,” she said.

Photo caption: Athens Technical College graduate Tabitha Crawford, who works as an international product manager at Bogart-based burton+Burton, recently visited China and posed with one of the glassmakers who create gift products for burton+Burton.

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