



"THE SWEET STRATEGIST"

about your business: The Candy Factory was started in 1974 in Columbia, Mo., and my parents purchased it in 1986. We are one of the few old-fashioned candy makers in the Midwest and specialize in making mouth-watering chocolate delights for families that stop in our 2,000 square-foot retail shop, and also in customizing larger gifts for corporate clientele.

how you got started: I started working as a taste tester at The Candy Factory when I was 5. As I grew older, I completed illustrious jobs such as: hauling out the trash and recycling, stemming strawberries, breaking up the 50-pound boxes of chocolate, shoveling the snow off the sidewalks, and pretty much any job that nobody else wanted to do.

family ties: When I chose to attend Baylor, I did not have my sights set on rejoining The Candy Factory. However, in 2005, my parents received some offers for the business, and found themselves too attached to sell it. So my wife Amy (Benedetto) Atkinson (Baylor BS '03) and I decided to join the business in August 2005. Amy manages the retail operations and human resources; I manage candy production and sales; my dad, Sam, manages accounting; and my mom, Donna, manages advertising and giftware purchasing.

favorite candy at the shop: Chocolate Covered Potato Chips; Forbidden Fruit Artisan Chocolate, which is a truffle with a 50 percent dark chocolate shell and a 63 percent dark chocolate ganache flavored with extracts of blueberry, raspberry, cranberry and pomegranate; and Pink Grapefruit Jelly Beans.

best moment: Developing a special gift box of high-end chocolates for a University of Missouri event. This led me to develop our Artisan Chocolates; 12 flavors from scratch. I enjoy being creative and coming up with new products.

words of wisdom: Don't pay people to do jobs that you can do yourself. Be very selective on the people you hire, because they represent you when you are not around to represent yourself.



www.baylor.edu/bbr/atkinson