BFN Tours Spanx Headquarters

From the moment BFN members stepped into the red and pink lobby and were greeted by a 1920’s era robotic gypsy fortune teller, they knew that Spanx was not the typical Fortune 500 Company. Located in the Buckhead community of Atlanta, the corporate headquarters of Spanx houses administrative offices as well as the creative departments of Product Development, Graphic Design, and Marketing.

Spanx, Inc. was founded in 2000 by Georgian, Sara Blakely, after determining a need for footless hosiery. The product line has since expanded to include body-shaping intimate apparel, swimwear, and shapewear for men. What began as a 1-woman operation in the back of Ms. Blakely’s apartment has grown into a multi-million dollar international company. In 2012 Sara Blakely had the honor of becoming the youngest self-made business woman ever to be placed on the Forbes World’s Billionaires list.

The Spanx tour, conducted by Technical Design Director, Michelle Perrucci, provided insight into the many processes required in the development and merchandising of Spanx products. The tour concluded with presentations by Vice President of Product Development, Kathy Reynolds (Brenau class of 2007), and Jadideah Yarbrough, Director of Customer Product Insight. With goodie bags of Spanx products in hand, members left with a better understanding of why Spanx is a leader in its industry and why women love all things Spanx!

Rachel Collar Offers Tips to Becoming a Successful Stylist

While speaking at a BFN Lunch & Learn, Rachel Collar described her role as a professional stylist as “an artist who uses fashion as my medium in creating a feeling, a style or an impression”. Rachel believes no woman should be exempt from the joy of fashion and discovering her personal style. She went on to say “a woman’s outward appearance is a reflection of her inner beauty”. In order to guide women in perfecting their appearance, Rachel shops, researches, tests and consults. When advising women on their ideal wardrobes, she begins by culling and organizing their closets. Often Rachel can find a “new trick” to get the most out of items in the client’s closet. Although Rachel believes in quality and investment dressing, she also believes in recycling, re-purposing and the thrill of finding a good deal!

Rachel concluded her presentation by saying that although being a successful stylist often requires long hours and dedication to detail, she is living her dream of building confidence through fashion.
Last summer, Brenau Fashion majors, Vanessa Sanchez and Kaitlin Fleming experienced what they refer to as "an internship of a lifetime". After being introduced to Initials, Inc. through Brenau Fashion Network events, each decided to apply for an internship with the Product Development Department of Initials, Inc.

Initials, Inc. is a fashion accessories company that specializes in personalized handbags, totes, luggage and home accessories. Products are sold directly to consumers through company representatives known as their "Creative Partners".

As part of the Product Development team, Vanessa and Kaitlin worked closely with Product Development Director, Katherine Kloster, in conducting trend research and developing the product line for the next collection. "The best part is when we sent off our product sheets to the factories and got the samples back to see and test drive!" stated Vanessa.

Another important part of the internship involved assisting with the Initials, Inc. National Conference and fashion show that was held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. Kaitlin and Vanessa's duties included organizing the product and models backstage, assisting with fashion show rehearsals, and arranging merchandise displays for the Spring 2013 Product Reveal.

Kaitlin summed up her internship experience by saying, "My summer was full of irreplaceable lessons and memories. I was knee-deep in the industry and my love for the industry grew tremendously thanks to my time at Initials, Inc."

For most girls, prom is one of the most memorable events of high school, but with the average cost of a prom dress in 2013 at $170, BFN members realized that not every girl would be able to go. With the goal of making prom affordable for any girl, BFN members organized a "Donate Your Dress" campaign spring semester.

More than 25 new and gently used prom dresses were collected and made available to deserving girls at Gainesville High School. With assistance from GHS Principal LaCrisia Larkin, BFN members were able to distribute the dresses, help with the fittings, and provide styling tips.
Wonderful Events & Celebrations was started by mother and daughter team, Crevolyn Wiley and Emily Williams in 2009. Having grown up in Illinois, Crevolyn earned both a Marketing degree and MBA from Southern Illinois University. After working for several years in the business sector, while at the same time serving as “unofficial party planner” for numerous philanthropies, school functions, fundraisers and church events, Crevolyn approached Emily with the idea of starting their own event planning business. Armed with a Bachelors in Business Administration and years of planning social events and fundraisers for her sorority, Emily was eager to join her mother in the venture.

During a BFN Lunch & Learn presentation, Crevolyn and Emily shared their thoughts on why their business has enjoyed continued success. “Our passion is to make your dream event become a reality. We consider it an honor anytime we are chosen to participate in a corporate or personal event, however big or small.” Crevolyn explained that the company’s philosophy is to provide the very best service possible by listening carefully to the client’s ideas and then applying their knowledge, design and innovation to create an unforgettable event.

Plato’s Closet
A Trendy Resale Shop That Offers Valuable Opportunities

Last summer I had the opportunity to participate in a work practicum at Plato’s Closet in Gainesville. Plato’s Closet is a retail franchise that buys and sells gently used teen and young adult clothing. For several months I had been looking for a position in a clothing store to gain retail experience and complete my Fashion Practicum course requirement. Another Brenau Fashion Merchandising student, who was working for Plato’s Closet, told me how much she enjoyed working there and suggested I apply. After interviewing with one of the owners, she not only offered me a position, but agreed to supervise my practicum.

During the practicum I learned many of the basic aspects of retailing such as sales, customer service, visual merchandising, trend research, and inventory control. I also was given the opportunity to complete the company’s Buyers Training Modules. I am now certified as a Plato’s Closet Buyer!

The Plato’s Closet practicum provided me with an excellent learning experience in an excellent retail environment. I would strongly recommend it to anyone interested in fashion retailing.

- By Jessica McClure
BFN Holds Annual Clothing Drive

Each October brings an opportunity for Brenau students, faculty and staff to clean out their closets while supporting a very worthy cause. For the past 6 years, Brenau Fashion Network has held its annual clothing drive to benefit the Gateway House of Gainesville, Georgia. Gateway House is a private, non-profit organization that provides safe accommodations, food, medicine, clothing, personal care items, and support services to female victims of domestic abuse. The primary source of revenue for Gateway House is through sales of merchandise at its two thrift stores.

As a result of the generosity of the Brenau community, BFN has been able to donate an immeasurable amount of clothing and accessories to the residents of the Gateway House Domestic Violence Center and to the Gateway thrift stores.

What is the Brenau Fashion Network?

The mission of Brenau Fashion Network is to build a strong understanding of the fashion industry in its entirety, through industry field trips, discussions, and networking. It is also the goal of BFN to build a professional presence on campus, as well as, to promote community service and foster awareness of the Brenau Fashion Network among Brenau University students.

For further information please contact Karen Garbow at: kgarbow@brenau.edu

Winter 2014 Trends

Key Trends
- Romantic Illusionist
- Earth & Fire Elements
- Fine & Dandy

Colors
- Soft, Subtle Colors
- Dazzling Blue
- Gold & Sienna Browns

Fabrics, Prints, & Patterns
- Plaid
- Oriental Floral
- Paisley
- Houndstooth
- Tweed
- Charmeuse
- Satin
- Flannel

Silhouettes
- Tubular
- Shape Manipulation

Hot Items
- Biker Jackets
- Cropped Pants
- Miniskirt
- Oversized Coats

By Caylene Ingram