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[HAWAII AT WORK]



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Manager has one sweet job

**Jerry Kalua does more
than just sample candy**

People sometimes laugh when I say that I oversee quality assurance for a candy and confection company, as if all I do is eat chocolates all day. But I take my job very seriously.

Quality assurance is just part of my daily routine. As plant manager of Island Princess's factory, I am also involved with the hiring, training and scheduling the production team.

Our Honolulu factory is about 30,000 square feet and is

always busy with activity. We process about 4,000 to 6,000 pounds of chocolate, pop 1,000 pounds of popcorn kernels and caramel-coat 3 million popcorn pieces every day. Usually, we limit production to one or two types of products per day.

Generally, my day begins at 6 a.m. and ends around 6 p.m. I make it a point to talk to as many employees as possible, usually reaching every employee before the day is over. I spend 60 percent of my time on the factory floor working with the rest of the team. The remainder of my day is spent on production planning, scheduling and administrative tasks, including review of inventory reports and working on employee training, such as our safety program. Making good chocolates and building good relationships with our employees are two of my main goals that help me structure my days.

The pride we take in our company and the work we do contribute to the success and popularity of Island Princess. We know that when people buy our products, they expect first-class quality. My job is to ensure that those expectations are met or exceeded.

I've been in the candy business for more than 28 years. Most of that time was spent on the mainland. After graduating from Kamehameha Schools, I spent three years up at the University of Hawaii and then got married and moved to the mainland. I got a job in the Bay area working for See's Candies, then spent 14 years at Jelly Belly, mostly in Chicago. It wasn't until my dad told me he was retiring that I realized I'd been away from Hawaii for 25 years. So, in February of 2000, I moved back. Shortly thereafter I started work at Island Princess.

Nothing compares to working in a chocolate factory for a local company. Every day really is a sweet treat.

"Hawaii at Work" features tell what people do for a living in their own words.

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