



NAME: Tiffany L. Thomas ||| **COMPANY:** AutoZone
TITLE: Associate Continuous Improvement Manager
COLLEGE(S) & DEGREE: Bachelors of Business Administration (LeMoyne Owen College), Associate of Science Degree (ITT Technical Institute), OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) 500 Certification at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, GA.

Q: How did you select your college major, certification program, or career path?

A: I visited I.T.T. and LeMoyne Owen College when I was in high school and wanted to pursue both. My circumstances weren't ideal and I didn't have the support I needed to go away to college, which meant I had to work to provide my basic necessities. While working, I decided to go to I.T.T. in the evenings in order to obtain a degree and to secure an entry level role that would afford me the opportunity to go to a 4 year college. This was not the ideal situation, but it was the path that I took as I was determined to meet my goals. I was truly blessed and allowed advancement based on my knowledge and experience that I was gaining. Before I could complete my degree I was offered a salaried position with the commitment that I would return to complete my 4 year degree. I knew that I wanted to attend LeMoyne Owen College because of the Supply Chain Management Program that they offered. I was a Supplier Quality Improvement Engineer and simultaneously worked in all facets of Supply Chain & Manufacturing while obtaining 4 industry certifications. I received a promotion and moved to Atlanta Georgia, which allowed me to attend the top certification program for OSHA at Georgia Tech.

Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of career path?

A: I initially wanted to become a Network Administrator, so while in school I was selected to lead a project regarding Quality Systems. I turned out to be a natural and I was very efficient and successful in implementing the systems. I was later offered a position which allowed me to utilize my certifications as well as some of my I.T. knowledge. I was mentored and groomed into a Supplier Quality Improvement Engineer as well as a Certified Lead Auditor. I like to think my career picked me. Although I had never heard of such roles they were high in demand, especially for women.



Q: If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college/career, what would it be?

A: I would have selected to take more math classes. In high school you think you're never going to use math beyond your class but I was very wrong. Math is in everything we do and the more you know the easier it will be for you with your college math classes.



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Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A: My favorite aspect of my job is being able to use my ideas to help improve processes and components that we all use. I love thinking about how I can aid in any situation.

Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A: I make a positive impact on society & my community by giving back. I've volunteered with many organizations such as West TN National Kidney Foundation (Sip Around the World/Chocolate Fantasy), Junior Achievement (Bowl-a-Thon) and I once was a part of the FedEx LeBonheur Fundraising board helping to raise funds through various charitable events. I'm most passionate about my Resume/Networking workshops that I have begun to facilitate with Career Services at my alma mater "LeMoyné Owen College". Through this opportunity I am able to reach out to traditional and non-traditional students (working adults) and encourage them as well as give them some professional development tools.

Q: What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your career?

A: I think the most interesting thing that I have been able to do in my professional career is meet people from all 7 continents and learn about the different cultures as well as see how innovative the human mind is while visiting the different manufacturing facilities. The role has afforded me to experience all the things some people only dream about doing.

Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A: Each morning I get up excited about my profession because I know that I am one of many African American Women in this type of career role. I'm honored to be able to teach other women of all nationalities about this type of career and empower them for this type of role.

Q: What advice would you share with K-12 students who are considering your profession?

A: My advice to you if you're thinking about this profession is to take all the math and logical thinking classes that you have access to. This will prove helpful when trying to solve and root cause engineering issues that arise. I would also encourage you to not give up on your dreams. Regardless of your situation or circumstances, your dreams can come true if you work hard at them. If you put in the work, you will be rewarded!!!



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