



First Job Fridays: Barack Obama

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Many of America's most recognizable leaders—in the business community and beyond—got their start in not-so-glitzy surroundings. They worked hard at unglamorous jobs early on in their lives to work their way up the career ladder. Their first job was instrumental, providing these success stories with the skills and experience needed to succeed.

In our regular First Job Friday feature on Information Station, we profile American leaders who found great value in their first crack at professional life.

This week, we're featuring President Barack Obama, who recently penned a LinkedIn blog post titled "Why My First Job Mattered." Like many people, President Obama's first job came as a teenager, when he spent his summers scooping ice cream at a Baskin-Rob-

bins in Honolulu. The president simply took orders from customers and scooped the right flavor(s), keeping the ice cream assembly line humming smoothly. While the work was "brutal on the wrists" and made President Obama "[lose his] taste for ice cream after one too many scoops," it ultimately proved invaluable.

As he writes, "My first summer job wasn't exactly glamorous, but it taught me some valuable lessons. Responsibility. Hard work. Balancing a job with friends, family, and school." The president goes on, "Access to a job in the summer and beyond can make all the difference to a young person." The point is that the work itself doesn't have to be glamorous—whether it amounts to scooping ice cream, flipping hamburgers, or delivering newspapers, that first job can be a launching pad for bigger and brighter

career opportunities. The reason is that basic on-the-job know-how can only be gained in the workplace. Even the most mundane tasks can teach employees a lot about work ethic and productivity—not to mention fostering valuable social skills. For example, scooping ice cream teaches the scooper how to keep customers happy and satisfy their sweet tooth as efficiently as possible.

Take President Obama's word for it: "I'll never forget that job—or the people who gave me that opportunity—and how they helped me get to where I am today." For him, the role of ice cream scooper set the stage for career advancement down the road.

Keep that in mind the next time you order a cup of Rocky Road. It might be the future President of the United States holding the scooper.