



First Job Fridays: T. Boone Pickens

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In high school there isn't a class on becoming a CEO, but there is a place where young people routinely learn how to succeed in business—their first job. These jobs are not easy, rarely glamorous, and most likely come with low-pay and blisters. However, first jobs do give fundamental lessons and insights on what it takes to be successful in business and in life.

In a new, regular feature on Information Station we will be profiling business leaders and their first jobs. We will be demonstrating the value of that first rung on the career ladder in our First Jobs Friday column.

This week we will be looking at famed businessman and entrepreneur, T. Boone Pickens. The man who successfully built and

managed one of the largest oil and natural gas companies in the United States. In 1997, Mr. Pickens started his own private investment firm, and at 87 years of age, still works at the firm.

After so much wealth and success, it is easy to forget T. Boone Pickens began—like so many other boys in 1940—delivering papers. Twelve years old at the time, Pickens was responsible for delivering 28 papers and collecting the subscription for his employer, the Holdenville Daily News.

One of the earliest lessons Pickens learned was determination. When customers avoided paying him, he had to come back and catch them when they weren't expecting him. "You have to be persistent if you

want to achieve your goals," Pickens says.

T. Boone Pickens made only a penny a paper, but he loved the feeling of independence earning his own money gave him. He said, "From then on I never wanted my parents money, I wanted to earn it myself." Pickens' first job taught him how rewarding work can be, and by the time he left the paper at fifteen he had the newspaper's biggest route with 156 papers.

For someone starting their first job, Mr. Pickens believes the most important advice to follow is developing your work ethic early on. "Don't look at the clock, rather work until you have done your job to the best of your ability."