



## First Job Fridays: Tim Tassopoulos

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How do you rise up the ranks and become a business leader? For many of America's top executives, it comes down to their first job. That first step on the career ladder is accompanied by the skills and experiences that become a launching pad for professional growth.

This was certainly the case for Tim Tassopoulos, the new president and chief operating officer of Chick-fil-A. In this week's First Job Friday feature on Information Station, we're highlighting Tassopoulos, whose success in the restaurant industry can be traced back to his humble beginnings.

Tassopoulos began his career as an hourly employee at none other than Chick-fil-A. At the age of 17, he began working at a local Chick-fil-A store in Georgia, preparing food and serving customers Monday through Saturday. Tassopoulos originally applied to the restaurant chain as a fall-back option if he didn't secure any other opportunities, but then settled on Chick-fil-A after having lunch there. "It's been a 39-year back-up," explains Tassopoulos. "I got bit by the Chick-fil-A bug."

In those four decades, he's seen it all. Tassopoulos rose from a wide-eye teenager manning the food production line to a business

consultant with a hand in corporate decision-making. In 1986, he developed Chick-fil-A's first free-standing restaurant concept, then moved on to serve as director of field operations, vice president of operations, and senior vice president of operations. That resume has also landed Tassopoulos a spot on the company's executive committee.

But it wouldn't have happened if he hadn't spent long hours behind the register.

It goes to show the American Dream isn't dead—if first jobs continue to inspire America's youngest employees.