
Jack C. Taylor

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

By M. Karen Hubbard

A short time after Jack Taylor had enrolled in Washington University's business school in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1940, the United States entered World War II. He left school to join the United States Navy. He spent his time during World War II flying F6F Hellcat fighter jets from battleships earning two Distinguished Flying Crosses and the Navy Air Medal. Jack Taylor made it through the war, returned to St. Louis, and started a delivery service company. In 1948, he left that job and started working for the Lindberg Cadillac dealership. Jack managed to work his way up to the position of sales manager.

In 1957, he convinced his boss to let him start a car leasing business at the dealership. He had to take a 50% pay cut and put up \$25,000 of his own money for a quarter of the business. He started the Executive Leasing Company with seven cars. His customers suggested that Jack rent out cars while their cars were in the shop, and that is how Jack got into the car rental business. His rental division had seventeen cars available. In 1969, Jack decided to expand outside Saint Louis and changed the name of the company to Enterprise (named after the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier upon which Jack Taylor had served in World War II).

While the other rental companies were fighting over the airport rentals, Jack worked his company into the market for hometown renters. Also, a manager started picking up customers in Orlando, Florida, and this would lead to Enterprise's "We'll Pick You Up" slogan. By 1980, Jack's rental fleet had grown to 6,000. Then in 1989, the company's name changed again to Enterprise Rent-A-Car since the rental business is where Enterprise had grown. At this point, the company was located in more than five hundred different places and had more than 50,000 vehicles available to rent. The company's headquarters is located in the St. Louis, Missouri, area.

The 1990's were very good for Jack's company. In 1992, the company earned more than \$1 billion in annual revenue (money before bills are paid) and employed almost 10,000 people. In 1993, Enterprise opened its first international branch in Windsor, Canada. The company continued to grow, and by 1995, it had more than \$2 billion in annual revenue. It was also at this point that the company opened its first airport rental location at the Denver International Airport.

Jack Taylor turned his company into a rental car empire by keeping to his business credo: "Take care of your customers and employees first, and profits will follow". Mr. Taylor's son, Andrew C. Taylor, has worked his way up through the company starting out as a car washer at the age of 16 to Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Since he took over, the company acquired National Car

Rental and Alamo Rent-A-Car in 2007. The company now has over 7,000 offices in five different countries. In the United States, there is an Enterprise location within fifteen miles of ninety percent of the population. The company has more than one million vehicles available to rent, and employs 75,000 people. Enterprise is the number one car rental agency in the United States.

Mr. Taylor does not keep all of the company's profits. In 1982, he formed the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation which has given over \$140 million to St. Louis and other company operated communities' cultural establishments. (The Foundation concentrates in St. Louis because it is the Taylor family's home town. They want St. Louis to remain a first class city with first class cultural institutions.) The Foundation has given \$40 million matching challenge to the St. Louis Symphony and \$30 million to the Missouri Botanical Garden. It has also given to the Forest Park restoration, National Urban League, and established a scholar program at Washington University in St. Louis for minority and financially disadvantaged students.