

The Chain Built by **ECKERD**

Jack Eckerd (1913 – 2004) was an American businessman who was a major innovator in drugstore retailing, and a public servant, politician and philanthropist.

A native of Wilmington, Del., he graduated from Culver Military Academy and the Boeing School of Aeronautics. He was a pilot for the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, receiving three Air Medals and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Eckerd Drugs was founded by his father, J. Milton Eckerd, in Erie, Pa., in 1898. After serving as a pilot in the war, Jack Eckerd started a phenomenal expansion of the chain by buying three stores in Florida in 1952. The company went public as Jack Eckerd Corporation in 1961 and when Eckerd sold his shares in

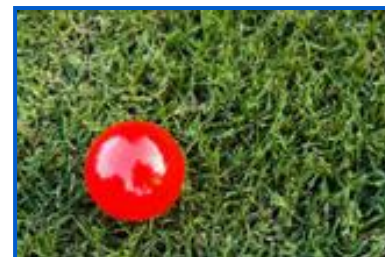


1986, there were about 1,500 stores. The chain was later sold to J.C. Penney, who built the number of stores to 2,600 before selling to rivals CVS and Jean Coutu. Stores in 10 states from Florida to Arizona became CVS; the stores from Georgia to New York continued as Eckerd Corporation, run by Jean Coutu's U.S. arm along with its New England-based Brooks chain. In July 2007, Coutu's 1,549 Eckerd stores across the Mid-Atlantic and New England became part of the Rite Aid drugstore chain, finally ending more than a century of the Eckerd name in drug retailing.

Eckerd would point to a principal reason of his business success as being his commitment to GOAL – Get Out and Look (and Listen); it was a hallmark of his practice. He spent nearly 50 percent of his time in the stores, both his and those of his competitors, talking to employees, cosmeticians, pharmacists, clerks and customers – and watched what was happening.

That's when he came up with the strategies of discounts for seniors and 2-for-1 photo processing – innovative ideas first introduced by Eckerd and now common retailing practice.

That's where he learned the lesson of the red rubber balls. One day, when he was visiting one of his stores, Eckerd noticed that one display item – bright red rubber balls – simply was not selling. He started with his management personnel, asking them why, but no one could give him a satisfactory reason.



So Eckerd went to one of the clerks. She looked him in the eye and explained what should have been obvious but was lost on minds that were limited to “executive-suite thinking.” She told him: “Children buy rubber balls, but these are on the top shelf where the kids can't get their hands on them.”

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The balls were moved to the bottom shelf and soon sold out.

Keeping in touch with the people we serve – talking to associates, residents, family members, volunteers and visitors, and listening to what *they* have to say – produces good results for us in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home as well.

It is a principle that has helped Life Care grow from the time when Forrest Preston opened the doors of the first facility on Jan. 4, 1970.

– Beecher Hunter