



# Harley-Davidson Motor Company (Corporations That Changed the World)

*Missy Scott*

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It's 1901 and a guy named Harley has an idea. Put an engine on a bicycle. What? Outside his door, carts are still pulled by horses and autos are a rare sight. It's 1908 and a Harley-Davidson motorcycle sets a record by getting 188 miles to a gallon of gas. It's 1909 and the company introduces something new to its line: a V-twin cylinder engine. Fast forward to the 21st century, and the technical innovation hasn't stopped. But there's a lot more than just choppers in the mix. Examples: The Harley-Davidson racing team adds a seventeen-year-old girl to the roster. 250,000 people help celebrate Harley's 100th anniversary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And a museum devoted to the company's products opens up. Clearly, this is a company unlike any other.

How did Harley do it? How did it go from making motorcycles to creating a Harley experience that puts hundreds of thousands of people aged sixteen to one hundred on the road traveling to events each year where they can meet company officials and other Harley riders? That's what this book is all about. In addition, the author offers special features that include a look at the colorful people associated with Harley, interesting trivia, a Harley-Davidson time line, a focus on products, a look at how the company treats its workers, what its detractors have to say, and where the company is headed.

Honda may match Harley-Davidson for quality and perhaps innovation, but no one has matched the company for its ability to create 'buzz marketing' and turn casual riders into unofficial sales people. Harley-Davidson, it turns out, isn't just in the motorcycle business. As its mission statement points out, it's in the business of fulfilling dreams. This book documents how Harley-Davidson is a rare company in other ways: Its loyal workforce, for one thing, is guided by principles like trust and respect for the individual. For another, the company has made a superb effort to keep jobs in the United States, when it would be far cheaper and easier to use offshore labor. Teetering on the brink of bankruptcy in the early 1980s, Harley has roared back to capture the hearts of riders the world over, including the million-plus members of the Harley Owners Group (members are known, naturally, as HOGs). Harley-Davidson—a company that changed, and is changing, the world.

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