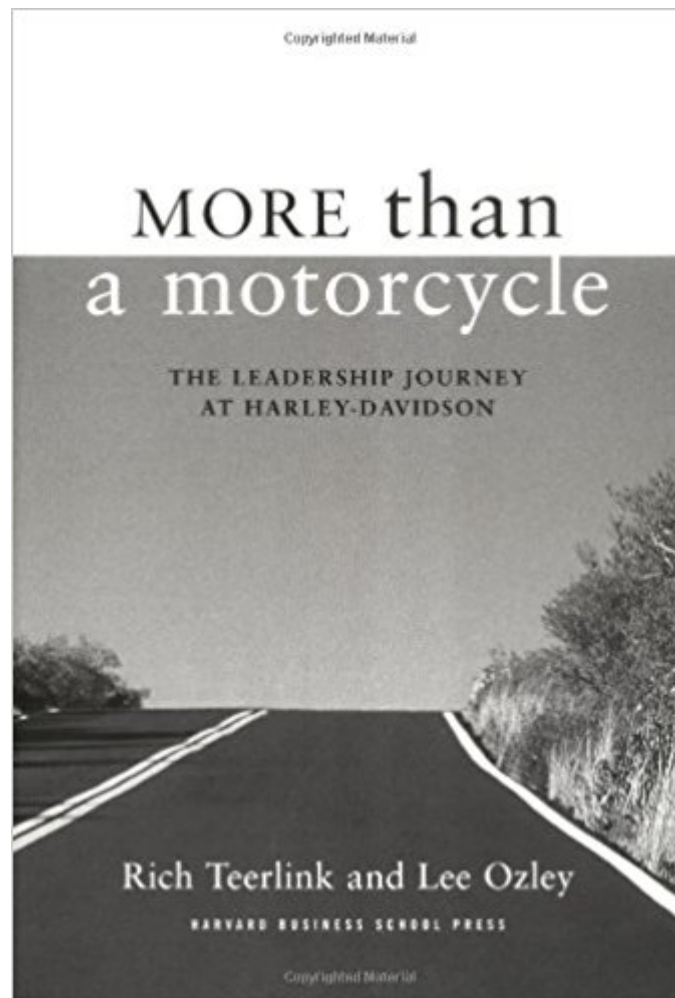




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# **More Than A Motorcycle: The Leadership Journey At Harley-Davidson**



## Synopsis

In the late 1980s, Harley-Davidson beat back an assault by Japanese competitors and engineered a remarkable financial turnaround. But it subsequently faced an even more formidable challenge: maintaining and improving on its success in the absence of an external crisis. To answer this challenge, then-CEO Rich Teerlink, partnering with organizational consultant Lee Ozley, threw out the top-down strategies that had just saved the company and began building a different Harley-one that would be driven not by top management, but by employees at every level. What happened next is the stuff of turnaround legend. *More Than a Motorcycle* is the story behind the story of the purposeful transformation of an American icon, as told by the two individuals most deeply involved in that decade-long process. The book chronicles the victories and setbacks along Harley's difficult journey from a traditional "command-and-control" culture to an open, participative learning environment. Teerlink and Ozley deliver three fundamental messages: people are a company's only sustainable competitive advantage; there is no "quick fix" to effect lasting, beneficial organizational change; and leadership is not a person, but a process to which everyone must contribute. They provide practical, reality-tested prescriptions for critical tasks like developing employee alignment, building structures that support participation, and implementing effective reward programs. Finally, they draw lessons from the Harley experience-lessons about values, trust, and community-that apply broadly to any business. An against-the-odds story of a business road less traveled, this book encourages today's leaders to look around the next bend-and to give every employee a view of the road from the driver's seat.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 278 pages

Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press; 1st edition (August 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0880115203

ISBN-13: 978-0875849508

ASIN: 0875849504

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1.2 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #760,347 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #249 in [Books > Business & Money > Processes & Infrastructure > Infrastructure](#) #1654 in [Books > Business & Money >](#)

## Customer Reviews

I found this book when I was looking for turnaround case studies to recommend to a client. Because the client was in the transportation industry, the success story at Harley seemed like a natural choice. I was grateful to find this book, but surprised by the fact that this is the only book on the topic, and that it is so comparatively new. When I read the book I understood why - these guys have been very busy! More than a motorcycle concentrates on the struggles at Harley over the past decade and a half, and how the Company has transformed itself into a learning, and continually self-improving organization...at all levels. At the heart of this transformation are the co-authors, the now retired CEO, and the consultant/coach that together helped to find and pave the path from near ruin to heady success. The story is presented without boasting, and in fact, spreads credit for the (continuing) transformation to those who helped define it, from the leadership, to the unions, to the line employees. It is a good lesson in what happens when you ask those closest to the problem, whatever that may be, to help define and solve it. And then ask them what else can and should be solved, and how to do that. But it's about more than just problem solving, its about asking people simple questions like what should be communicated, rather than assuming that you (management) know the answer. In fact, the section of the book that describes communication is, in itself, a good case study. The story seems to be a fair and introspective chronicle of what went right, where mistakes were made, and how it happened. This is not one of those turnaround books, written by the CEO, telling you what a smart guy he is and how he single-handedly lead the company away from ruin and certain failure.

The allure of the Harley Davidson Motorcycle is powerful as demonstrated by the 150,000 Harley enthusiasts who converged on Milwaukee, Wisconsin to commemorate the 95th anniversary of the legendary company in June of 1998. The Harley Davidson motorcycle has a special place in the American psyche. The most recent decade's successes with solid performing stock and market share hide from the uninformed the struggles Harley Davidson has faced as recently as fifteen years ago. Rich Teerlink, the former CFO of Harley Davidson and his consulting partner Lee Ozley, share some of their insights of Harley Davidson in their new book, *More Than a Motorcycle*. The duo share how the company transformed it's "command and control" hierarchy that was effective to overcome some of the market share pressures of the Japanese to a more employee-empowering

structure. The book provides an interesting notion that could have appeal in many organizations and corporations across the globe. The book is structured to provide the background on Harley Davidson and the call to action as foreign expansion created market share pressure. In the chapter entitled, The Whole Package, Harley's compensation system is discussed. The authors realized that without looking at the compensation system in place and seeing how it did or didn't support the new models and/or behavioral change, the organizational change model would be incomplete. There were two primary goals 1) make a larger portion of the employee's compensation at-risk or variable and 2) to compensate all employees essentially the same way, i.e., create the same pay components that apply across the company. Harley's journey through motivational theory and best practices is shared. Harley realized that money doesn't equate to total compensation.

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