

Harley Davidson: A Force For Good

A twenty-one year old college student at the University of Wisconsin Madison sits in the back of his cold shed with a singular light on. The light buzzes, creating a low tuned hum that scratched the back of his head. He picks up a pencil and lays down his paper. With the intention of creating something new, he draws up a sketch of a compact engine that could fit on a bicycle. What he didn't know was that this sketch would soon turn into the Harley Davidson Model 1. The Harley Davidson Model 1 was the first big stepping stone for the company; it revolutionized their production and began to build their reputation.

The Harley Davidson Model 1, prototyped in 1903 by William Harley. Directly after its completion Harley began working with his family friend Arthur Davidson to create an even better version to hit the market. By 1905, they had created their first production bike. That year the two of them made five total bikes and sold three of them through a dealer named Carl H. Lang in Chicago, Illinois. Once the pair knew their bikes could be sold, they wanted to expand their productions and create more bikes. To do this, they opened their first Harley Davidson factory on Chestnut Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That year the company decoupled their production and produced fifty bikes. The company continued expanding and producing more bikes each year for the next decade, before Harley and the Davidson brothers were approached by the US armed forces. In 1917, Harley Davidson began giving fifty percent of their production to the army for the duration of World War I, and then again for World War II. During this time the company produced an estimated total of eighty-eight thousand bikes, with some having specifications such as the WLA model just for the army. Since then Harley Davidson has

continued innovating, expanding, and branding themselves to be one of the best motorcycles on the market.

Now, Harley Davidson has around 1,400 locations in 100 countries, and has 5,000 employees worldwide. The company is worth almost seven billion dollars and is the nine hundred forty-second largest public company in the United States. Harley Davidson is now known to be a reliable and great motorcycle globally. The company has a loyal customer base across the globe. The Harley Owners Group in the United States is one of the country's largest and organized owners groups; as well as the SEQ Riders located in Brisbane Australia. The company has used marketing to its advantage by putting their logo on shirts, blankets, teddy bears, and more. The brand's logo and its aesthetic caught on in the early 2000's as a popular trend. Harley Davidson has built up a motorcycle empire based on genius marketing, loyal customer base, and its high quality durable bikes.

However, Harley Davidson has not forgotten its roots. The company's first factory on Juneau Street in Milwaukee still stands today, and serves as the company's corporate headquarters. In the same city, stands the Harley Davidson Museum which houses a collection of Harley's motorcycles and memorabilia dating back to the company's early days. The museum serves as one of Milwaukee's biggest tourist attractions bringing in people from all over the world. The company also banded together with four other companies to create the Near West Side partners in 2015. The non-profit organization works to clean up, transform and create innovative change in the seven neighborhoods around Milwaukee. That being said, Harley Davidson has given back to more than just the Milwaukee community. In 2012 Harley Davidson founded the Hunger Task Force Farm located in Franklin Wisconsin. It is a collaborative partnership whose mission is to make crops available to local food pantries within twenty four

hours of harvest. Harley Davidson employees choose to volunteer to harvest the crops or teach the kids about crops, agriculture, and eating habits along with the organization's child nutrition expert. The organization produces almost 30,000 pounds of fruit each year to give out.

From William Harey's humble beginnings creating sketches in the shed of his Milwaukee residence, came one of the most successful motorcycle companies in the world. This success came from its reliable bikes, genius marketing with products, and its generosity in giving back to its communities. Overall, Harley Davidson is a company that started off with humble beginnings, and grew to be a company loved by many; not just for their products but also for their service.

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