



More Than a Motorcycle: The Leadership Journey at Harley-Davidson

By Rich Teerlink, Lee Ozley

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More Than a Motorcycle: The Leadership Journey at Harley-Davidson By Rich Teerlink, Lee Ozley

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.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

"This honest, detailed, and compelling description of the transformation at Harley-Davidson is a must-read for anyone struggling to accomplish organizational change. Teerlink and Ozley provide valuable lessons on how to work cooperatively with employee representatives, and remind us all of the wisdom of the saying, 'technology makes it possible; people make it happen.'"

--Jeffrey Pfeffer, Thomas D. Dee Professor of Organizational Behavior, Stanford Graduate School of Business, and Author of *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*

"Full of practical insights for management, union leadership, workers, and theorists, **More Than a Motorcycle** documents how Harley-Davidson recovered from a top-down, confrontational, almost bankrupt company to a more cooperative, people-driven industry leader. Teerlink and Ozley objectively present all the spurts, near disasters, wrinkles, and warts of a real turnaround, all the time linking the company's practical actions to many of the most advanced management theories of the time. This book is a rare gem that will stand the test of time, future practice, and theory."

--James Brian Quinn, Professor of Management, Emeritus, Amos Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College, and Author of *Intelligent Enterprise* and *Innovation Explosion*

"**More Than a Motorcycle** captures the essence of the paradox at the heart of leading change: you must motivate people to demand what, in their minds, they really don't want. A powerful insight very well delivered."

--Watts Wacker, Chairman, First Matter Inc., and Coauthor of *The Visionary's Handbook*

"A wonderfully educational and well-told story about the transformation of an American icon. **More Than a Motorcycle** is a must-read for anyone interested in effective organizational change."

--Edward E. Lawler III, Director, Center for Effective Organizations, University of Southern California

"This unique book is surely one of the best I have read on leadership and management. It is inspirational and authentic. Only those with a high view of competence and commitment and a genuine respect for people could have written this book. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

--Max De Pree, Author of *Leadership Jazz* and *Leading without Power*

"Finally, a book that tells the truth about organizational change! This rich saga relays the fears, the mistakes, the partnerships, and the successes that show how change really happens. What glistens through is the true journey and its demands on us: humility, learning, community, love, and inclusion of others. I thank Rich and Lee for writing this book and applaud their courage in doing so. They respected us enough to give us the straight story."

--Margaret J. Wheatley, Author of *Leadership and the New Science*, and Coauthor of *A Simpler Way*

About the Author

Rich Teerlink is the retired Chairman and CEO of Harley-Davidson, Inc., and speaks internationally to corporate and educational institutions. Lee Ozley is an organizational consultant and coach. Both are Corporate Fellows at Auburn University's Graduate School of Business.

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