

Harley-davidson.com and the global motorcycle industry



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Harley-Davidson, often abbreviated H-D or Harley, is an American motorcycle manufacturer. Founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, during the first decade of the 20th century, it was one of two major American motorcycle manufacturers to survive the Great Depression. Harley-Davidson also survived a period of poor quality control and competition from Japanese manufacturers. The company sells heavyweight (over 750 cc) motorcycles designed for cruising on the highway. Harley-Davidson motorcycles (popularly known as "Harleys") have a distinctive design and exhaust note. They are especially noted for the tradition of heavy customization that gave rise to the chopper-style of motorcycle. Except for the modern VRSC model family, current Harley-Davidson motorcycles reflect the styles of classic Harley designs. Harley-Davidson's attempts to establish itself in the light motorcycle market have met with limited success and have largely been abandoned since the 1978 sale of its Italian Aermacchi subsidiary. Harley-Davidson sustains a loyal brand community which keeps active through clubs, events, and a museum.

Licensing of the Harley-Davidson logo accounts for almost 5% of the company's net revenue. B. Global Competitors Honda motorcycles, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha are some of the major competitors of Harley Davidson. C. Motorcycle Buyers The demographic profile of motorcycle buyers has changed over the years. According to the Motorcycle Industry Council, 61% of buyers are over 35 years old whereas in 1980, only 27% has reached this age. In 1980, only 2.4% of motorcycle buyers had incomes of \$50,000 or higher, whereas in 1998, over one third were in this income group.

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White-collar professionals are the largest group of new bike riders, accounting for 36%. Many are former riders now stepping up to their dream machines and state that motorcycle riding helps reduce stress in their lives.

D. Motorcycle Company Websites H. D. management believes that the Internet is a powerful marketing tool. Its website is affectionately called the "anti-websites" since it encourages visitors to get offline and onto their Harleys. The website includes detailed information on the company and its products.

It has nearly 1.5 million visitors in 1997 alone. V. Areas of Consideration A. Competition All of Harleys major competitors have products other than motorcycles on their ebsites including cars (Honda, Suzuki, and BMW), outboard motors (Honda, Yamaha, and Suzuki), and Jet skis, snow mobile, boats, generators and power equipments. However, Harleys website is devoted exclusively to motorcycle-related information about its products, experience and the company itself, including financial data.