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MOTORCYCLES FROM:

Harley-Davidson
Financial Services

By **FRAN O'HAGAN - PRESIDENT, PIED PIPER MANAGEMENT CO.**

AUGUST 5TH, 2010

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What can your dealership learn from Starbucks?



Are Starbucks baristas hired only if they love coffee, or only if they already have experience making a cappuccino? And does a Starbucks manager dread losing an employee since the departing employee's "tribal knowledge" will be so hard to teach to a new hire? No.

The Starbucks business model embraces the fact that baristas will come and go, by making sure the processes used to run a Starbucks are written down and are simple and easy to follow. Since making coffee is such a well-defined process, Starbucks employees are taught instead to focus first and foremost on the customer. The best Starbucks employees are therefore not the ones who make the best cappuccino. The best Starbucks employees are the friendly ones who remember repeat customers, help them have a good day, and are the reason why the customers keep coming back to pay \$4 for a cup of coffee.

Is a motorcycle dealership the same as a Starbucks? Hardly. Selling a motorcycle requires very different skills than making change for a coffee. While much is different, savvy motorcycle dealers still can find inspiration from the carefully defined processes that allow new employees to hit the ground running and encourage a focus on the customer.

