Harley faced competition in the motorcycle market. Other competitors were producing faster bikes and the public was more interested in the speed of the bike, rather than style. The previous Harley models were not designed specifically for speed, but more in the aesthetic sense.

The team had to figure out what the customers wanted but still stick to the traditional Harley look. Most importantly they had to work on increasing the speed of the bike to compete with other companies. As the development progressed, they encountered more problems with the bike. Some problems they ran into included mounting the new engine, placing the new exhaust pipes, installing a radiator with proper airflow, and the location of the gas tank.

They collaborated with Porsche in order to work on the engine of the new bike. They looked at other racing bikes along with the look of the old Harleys. They used this information to increase the speed while retaining the classic look. Harleys are notorious for their customization and the team drew inspiration from bikes of the followers. Each problem required new information and research.

The engineers worked with the stylists to create new designs for each feature of the new bike. The engineers created a design that worked well, and the stylists critiqued it. Both teams worked to appease fans with the combination of the aesthetics and functionality. This process required a strong understanding and communication between the team designers/stylists and the engineers.

Over the long, enduring process the team developed a relationship with outside sources to assist them on the project. Big name companies, like Porsche and Ford, helped work on the
project. Porsche assisted the team in the manufacturing of an engine that would fit into the bike as well as supply the proper speed. Head stylist, Willie G. was the overseer of the project and was notably stubborn when it came to keeping the traditional Harley style. Some ideas that provided efficient functionality, did not pass Willie’s stubbornness.

With the implications of clay modeling, the stylists were able to get a base look of the bike which could be easily molded and modified in order to appease to the sizes of the parts of the bike. After the model was created, the team was able to further their design process. The radiator was notable because of the extensive effort and time that was implemented to perfect the air flow and design. Through trial and error the team finally stumbled upon a solution when they structured a wind barrier to collect sufficient air. After the air problem was solved, the team was able to focus on the style element.

To test the bike, a prototype was created. This bike was driven to detect any initial problems with the bike. With this testing, important problems were located and were able to be fixed. After the initial ride, more tests were run to enforce a safe riding experience. These tests included a water endurance, sun endurance, suspension endurance, cooling capabilities, sound levels, corrosive resistance, and overall durability of the bike. Harley’s were famous for their long lifespans and reliability.

To unveil the design, Harley gathered a large group for a big scale reveal.