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Ford Motor Company: The Power of Collaboration

When you think of Ford Motor Company, what comes to mind? If I had to guess, the first thing that pops into your head is an image of a Ford truck or SUV. If you didn't think of a vehicle, you probably thought of the logo. What you probably *didn't* think about is the impactful history of the company itself. Ford's incredible innovations and accomplishments most likely weren't at the top of your mind. You probably didn't think of Ford's exceedingly generous contributions to the Allied powers in World War II, either. Clearly, Ford is much more than what meets the eye. Despite being a generic, well-known car company, Ford Motor has a surprisingly rich history filled with achievements that set the standard for other automotive companies.

As any successful company would, Ford Motor began in a workshop behind the home of Henry Ford, a mechanical engineer. In 1903, Ford successfully created a fully functional car, an ambitious task to complete with the resources he had at the time. That same year, he started a business, and he named it Ford Motor Company. His first car model he sold commercially, Model T, began selling at a rampant pace. As a result of this, Ford desperately needed a way to streamline the car manufacturing process so he could keep up with high demand. This dilemma was easily solved by using a concept called the "assembly line," a process that had never been used by automotive companies before. To elaborate, an assembly line is essentially a manufacturing process that's split into multiple steps, each step performed by different people. The assembly line helped with the speed of the car manufacturing process and reduced labor costs. In assembly lines, unskilled workers can be employed because workers only have to learn and perform one specific task instead of having to learn all of the instructions to making the car. The cost of the Model T dramatically decreased after the utilization of the assembly line, with

the price at around \$850 before the implementation of an assembly line, and \$300 after. In the early 1900s, \$850 was around 18 months' salary, as opposed to \$300, at the time that was around 4 months' salary. With a cheaper assembly process, more customers could afford Ford's cars. The assembly line made the automotive company an incredibly lucrative corporation.

About 5 years into Ford's endeavor with Ford Motor Company, Ford decided to expand his business to different countries. The first international branch he opened was located in Paris, France. This branch opened the opportunity for business with the remainder of Europe, a feat he had planned to achieve years before. With partnerships outside of America, Ford was able to access more materials and was able to sell automobiles outside of America without hefty shipping fees and slower shipping processes that often discouraged international customers. By the late 1920s, Ford had opened branches in Latin America, Australia, Asia, South Africa, and Europe. Ford's products were popular in other countries, but they were definitely most popular in America. In America, over half of car-owning citizens owned a Ford vehicle. With international sales added to the large American industry, Ford Motor had proven itself to be a tremendously prosperous company. Furthermore, with new international branches, Ford was able to create cars and job opportunities for people all over the world. As a corporation, Ford has always strived for healthy, fair work conditions for its employees, which in turn motivated international working-class citizens to work for the company. The assembly line would prove to be especially beneficial for international companies, as international employees' jobs were made much simpler and offered higher pay. Additionally, with the help of the assembly line, Ford was able to reduce the amount of time employees spent in the factory from 9 hours to 8 hours and increase pay from \$3.75 to \$5 an hour. Ford was the first automotive company to implement the 5 day business

week as opposed to a full week of work. These changes created a desirable work atmosphere for working-class citizens all over the world.

For nearly 40 years, Ford Motor had been a quintessential car manufacturing business, setting the example and innovating technologies for other automotive companies to mimic. However, in 1941, a devastating surprise attack on Pearl Harbor shook the nation. At this time, the president of Ford Motor was Henry Ford's son, Edsel Ford. Despite his father's views as a pacifist, Edsel was determined to be of service when it came to the war effort. Edsel made the decision to refrain from the production of civilian vehicles and to start focusing primarily on producing military equipment such as jeeps, airplane engines, and most importantly, B-24 bombers. He joined forces with many other major manufacturing companies in America to become a part of what's now known as the Arsenal of Democracy. The Detroit area was considered the Arsenal of Democracy because of its material contributions to the Allied powers. As a result of Ford and other motor companies supporting the war efforts, America became one of the largest contributors to the Allied powers. If it weren't for Ford's international connections, the tens of thousands of military equipment produced wouldn't have been able to reach the Allied powers fighting in World War II as efficiently as it was. Ford manufactured over half of the B-24 bombers used by Allied powers during the war, and proved to be a substantial asset to the Axis power's defeat. 2 years before the war was won, Edsel died of stomach cancer. This was a tragic point in time for Henry Ford, but he didn't let grieving get in the way of Edsel's mission. Ford continued to produce military equipment until the war came to an end, fulfilling the objective Edsel wasn't able to complete on his own.

Altogether, the contributions made by Ford in World War II wouldn't have been possible without the strong international connections between America and other countries fighting

against the Axis powers. Ford Motor's acts to help the Allied powers prevail against the Axis powers reflect Ford's purpose: to make the world a better, more efficient place. Jim Farley, the current CEO of Ford, states "What makes this company different is that Ford has a higher purpose. We serve others and improve lives... we try to make the world a better place." This statement ricochets off of every wall and boundary of the corporation. Ford always has and always will create and manufacture new ideas regarding the world's demand. For instance, Ford has pledged to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. In lieu of the current popular demand being gas-powered vehicles, Ford is deciding to take the narrow path and is doing what's right to protect the environment and our long-term interests. Ford has also taken substantial steps toward fairer working conditions, and is also taking efforts to remove bias from their approach on hiring women and minority groups for corporate office positions. These values are held internationally among Ford's branches, making Ford one of the safest and most desirable companies to work for all over the world. Ford will continue to be the pioneer of today's automotive industry, as well as meet the needs of *all* of their employees. Ford's positive collaboration with other countries has significantly impacted the welfare of the corporation itself, as well as setting standards for other companies worldwide. For example, Ford has worked with third-world countries to place an absolute ban on child labor when it comes to their corporation, and became a role model for other businesses in the area.

Whenever you think of Ford Motor Company, what do you think of? If it's their efforts in World War II or their priority on humanity, then this essay served its purpose. Surprisingly, there is a copious amount of international corporations that have made significant impacts worldwide, but many of this information goes unnoticed. Ford Motor Company's has left a lasting mark on

today's society, in American and worldwide. So, the next time you think of a business, I encourage you to wonder: What comes to mind?