

# CHARLES GREF

**President & General Manager**

*Looking for new challenges*

## Biography

Charles Gref and the motorcycle is a life story, a family core, a racer's ambition, and an entrepreneur's success. The common factors? The passion of a winner, the will to surpass oneself, the thirst for innovation, and now an experience that is only looking to inspire.

Born in Chicoutimi, Canada, in a family whose heart had already been beating for motorcycles since 1947, Charles mounted his first motorcycle at the age of 6, and quickly found his place on the tracks less than four years later. During his career as a racer, which lasted until the 1980s, the young Gref won close to 200 trophies in trial, motocross, enduro, drag, and snowmobile, without counting the provincial and national titles.

In 1979, his family moved to Montreal and continued planting the seeds of what they had started to grow in Chicoutimi: their company, values, and fame. This is how Harley-Davidson Montreal was born on Ste-Catherine Street. The next few years proved to the Grefs their talent, prosperity and business intelligence. In 1984 they opened Moto Internationale, a dealership for Harley-Davidson, Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, Kawasaki, and BMW. The year 1993 marked a second major milestone, when their business relocated to St-Jacques Street, where it is still situated.

Throughout the years, Charles developed his leadership and management skills, and at the same time he consolidated his knowledge of the market and his expertise. He quickly moved up the business ladder, thanks to his experience, his undergoing continuous training, and his Harley-Davidson and BMW university diplomas. Soon he became co-owner of Moto Internationale, first taking the position of Vice-President, and eventually that of President. In July 2004, Revue Commerce honored him as Builder of the Month, a title he shared with his father, Raymond. The tone was set. More than a retailer, Charles Gref played a key role in the motorcycle businesses. His objective? Innovating and standing out from the competition, with his well-known passion, ambition, and courage. He steadily guided the growth of his business, from retail to online sales, to import and export, to distribution. In 2005, when the Gref family chose to keep only the Harley-Davidson and BMW brands, Charles's entrepreneurial flair led him to prove his managerial courage. Following a \$3M investment in 2006, the Harley-Davidson Montreal and the BMW Motorrad Montreal divisions saw the light of day. Charles Gref proved his determination and his winning vision in helping his business develop and establish its reputation in North America. During peak seasons, the company generated sales revenues of more than \$33M, sold more than 2700 motorcycles, and had 100 employees a year. The company was at the top of Canada and Quebec sales of motorcycles - many times for Harley-Davidson and other manufacturers, and for 25 years for BMW. In 2018, after 60 years of successful business, the Grefs took an opportunity and passed the torch to Groupe Gabriel Auto. Charles was then President and General Manager of Motos Daytona Inc., comprising Moto Internationale, Harley-Davidson Montreal, and BMW Motorrad Montreal.

Charles Gref is not only an experienced businessman, but also a talented instructor and a truly expert in the field. First in North America to hold 3 diplomas of certified chief instructor on road and off road with BMW Motorrad, he organized the first Canadian GS Challenge in 2007, event which he reiterated every 2 years until 2017. In 2014, he participated in the International GS Trophy as Marshall for BMW Motorrad, experience which led him to cover 4800km in 7 days! In Montreal, at Securite Active, his advance training school dedicated to driving Harley-Davidson and BMW motorcycles, he has offered on road and off road courses since 2006. Until now more than 2000 motorcyclists have benefitted from his experience.

Charles is now looking for new professional challenges, as a board member or as a consultant. He wishes to put his color, his years of experience, his passion, and his pedagogical talents in the service of an organization, that he will in turn help to advance, innovate and stand out. Confirmed leader, with a sense of fairness and unity, he possesses the qualities of listening and reassuring, an expertise in satisfying clients, and making partnerships prosper, as well as tested abilities to mobilize a team, and supervise an inventory and budgetary resources.



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PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER

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## Summary

*Leave the beaten track and life will never get boring.*

*Some people say that when you are truly passionate about motorcycles, you have fuel running through your veins. In the case of BMW Motorrad Montreal's Charles Gref, you wonder if there's a boxer engine powering his body and soul.*

– BMW Motorrad. *Impatience is a virtue. Make life a ride.*

## Work experience

### Motorcycle dealership (Montreal, Quebec | Canada)

PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER

#### BMW Motorrad Montreal | Moto Internationale

Managing and leading all the departments (sales, parts, service, store, marketing) to make sure that the company meets its short and long term business objectives across Canada. Analysing and solving problems.

- Setting targets and goals for sales and management teams.
- Presenting business strategies and common goals clearly to work employees.
- Attracting new clients and identifying new markets
- Representing the company worldwide during bike shows, industry meetings and networking events.
- Seeking out and identifying new business opportunities.
- Raising the company's profile in the motorcycle industry.
- Being involved in the BMW events and rides with customers.
- Reviewing customer feedback and then suggesting ways to improve processes and service levels.

### Motorcycle riding school (Montreal, Quebec | Canada)

FOUNDER & CHIEF INSTRUCTOR

2006 – Present

#### Securite Active

- Teaching Off-road and On-Road courses to motorcyclists (2 000 students since 2006)
- Designing and evaluating the courses
- Supervising six instructors

## Motorcycling Certifications by BMW Motorrad

BMW Motorrad International Instructor Academy 2005-2006

- Off-Road
- Off-Road Performance 2
- On-Road

## Key skills

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Staff management
- Developing ideas
- Competitor analysis
- Customer trends
- Market research
- Customer loyalty
- Sense of togetherness
- Communication

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

- Identify and capitalising on opportunities.
- Maximising revenue at every opportunity.
- Financial and commercial awareness.
- Networking in a professional manner.
- Developing successful and innovative business methodologies.
- An articulate and experienced negotiator.
- Conducting commercial negotiations.
- Able to open doors and initiate relationships
- Developing key relationships.
- Understanding customer requirements.
- Strong commercial and customer service awareness.
- Demonstrating products and services in person.

### GS CHALLENGE EXPERIENCE

#### Event organization

- GS Challenge (Quebec | Canada)  
(2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017)

#### Event participation – Marshal

- GS Trophy 2014 (Calgary | Canada)

### MOTORCYCLING PUBLISHING REVIEW

- BMW Motorrad. (n.d.). Charles Gref. *Impatience is a virtue. Make life a ride.*
- Nuovo F. (2015). L'histoire d'une dynastie – Les Gref. *Libres : histoires de motos.* Montreal, Quebec : Les editions La Presse.
- Ebert, G. (2008). Unlikely threesome. *Dealernews*, 44(3), 28-33.

### MOTORCYCLING TV SHOW

- Neron, G. (TV host) (2010). Tout Terrain [7 tv shows: *BMW Motorrad Day 1-2 / GS Girls / La Classique du printemps / GS Training / Securite Active On-Road - Off-Road classes*]. Montreal, Quebec : TVA Sports.

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