

Creative Mobile Interiors

Where Diversity Creates Success

by Larry Plachno



Creative Mobile Interiors is based in Grove City, Ohio, just southwest of Columbus. Current operations are housed in four different buildings located just south and east of Exit 97 on Interstate 71. This is the current corporate office although there are thoughts of consolidation into a new facility in the future. NBT.

Readers who have been following the conversion industry are aware that fate has not been kind to conversion companies in the Midwest. In recent years, five different conversion companies in five different Midwest states either closed their doors entirely or relocated and substantially changed their operation. In most cases the

basic problems were financial. All of this left an obvious gap in available conversion services in the Midwest. The company that has stepped in to fill this gap is Creative Mobile Interiors of Grove City, Ohio.

If you had to use one word to differentiate Creative Mobile Interiors from most

other conversion companies, that word would be "Diversified." While most conversion companies concentrate on converting new Prevost and MCI coaches with motor home or entertainer interiors, CMI offers an unbelievable range of services in an impressive range of vehicles.



CMI provides service on converted coaches and similar vehicles. One coach is already in the service bay while the NATIONAL BUS TRADER 102C3 is outside and next in line. NBT.



Much of CMI's conversion work is with smaller vehicles. Here, a new Sprinter van in for custom interior was photographed in CMI's smaller vehicle conversion shop. NBT.

Expectedly, CMI provides new coach conversions. However, in addition to Prevost and MCI, they will also convert Van Hool, Setra, and even Neoplan or Temsa shells. In addition to new conversions, CMI also does conversions in pre-owned coach shells as well as retrofits and updates. CMI's diversity extends to the conversion of smaller vehicles too. They have converted numerous Mauck personal vehicles and are currently very active doing Sprinter interiors.

CMI's diversity moves beyond powered vehicles. They are also developing an excellent reputation for trailer conversions. These include smaller trailers that can be pulled behind SUVs and converted coaches to the full-size trailers pulled by semi tractors. These huge 53-foot commercial truck trailers can be converted for many types of commercial applications including product introductions and company showrooms. CMI also offers vehicles for rent or lease. These range from their "Buckeye Bullet," a minibus

suitable for tailgating at sporting events, through full-size coaches with executive interiors.

The interiors provided by CMI are also diversified. These include the typical motor home and executive interiors to more specialized conversions for catastrophe response, hospitality, product display, mobile offices and various medical uses.

Owen Connaughton founded CMI in 1999. The company boasts of having an impressive staff of more than 30 highly qualified individuals. Owen himself has a degree in engineering and more than 23 years experience in the custom conversion industry. Several members of the staff can boast of extensive prior experience working for Custom Coach Corp. CMI's chief engineer has more than 16 years industry experience including 12 years as the chief engineer at Custom Coach.

The state-of-the-art electrical group has previous experience in the sophisticated area of satellite communications on aircraft, as well as audio/visual expertise, and is headed by a seasoned engineer. This experienced crew likes what they are doing and has a turnover rate of less than 10 percent annually.

CMI is located in a fast-growing suburban area on the southwest side of Columbus, Ohio. Leave exit 97 on Interstate 71 and look for a new industrial area just southeast of the exit. The operations of CMI are housed in four plants that cover a total of approximately 21,000 square feet.

Primary office functions, a modern meeting room, engineering, and the customer area for picking wall and floor coverings are adjacent to the area dedicated to large coach conversion and updating work. In addition to the actual indoor working bays, a secured fenced area to the rear is used for coach park-

The rear of the main office building includes both the primary big coach conversion area as well as a woodworking shop. These three coaches are here for conversions and updates. Several of the CMI staff have extensive prior experience with conversions. CMI.



Every conversion company has a room where customers can pick out the colors and materials they want for fabrics, wall coverings and counter tops. The experienced CMI staff works with marble, granite, leather, bamboo and even some exotic materials. NBT.



ing. Activities here cover a wide range from new coach conversions to interior replacement and upgrading.

Adjacent is a second building dedicated to service. An increasingly popular segment of CMI's business revolves around servicing and maintaining its own coaches as well as coaches converted by other conversion companies. In addition to dealing with full-size converted coaches, CMI also maintains the smaller Mauck and Sprinter units.

Around the corner are two plants dedicated to smaller vehicle conversions. In its earlier years, CMI developed an enviable reputation in converting Mauk personal vehicles. In recent years, that business has shifted to the Sprinter Personal Luxury Vehicle. About half the length of a 40-foot coach, the Sprinter is ideal for smaller conversion applications and accounts for a major share of work at CMI.

In addition to working with wood, CMI's expert staff has experience with marble, granite, leather, bamboo and some exotic materials. Externally, they can provide custom paint, graphics or even vinyl and decal schemes. All floor plans are custom. Customers can provide their own vehicle or CMI can find a suitable one for you.

CMI's customer list is as diversified as their services. No job is either too small or too big. The NATIONAL BUS TRADER coach was recently at CMI for some updates and modifications. A PD4108 belonging to Charles and Janet Wotring was also there for similar work. Corporate customers have included Time-Warner, Hewlett-Packard, Airstream, Boston Scientific, Infinity Marketing, IBM, and Laidlaw. Among their private and institutional customers are the March of Dimes, Navy Seals, Mobile Medical, Fahlgren and C-Span. CMI also does work for entertainers and other famous people including Ray Charles and the King of Morocco.

Plans for the future include a possible expansion and consolidation. In order to keep up with expanding business, CMI has had to expand into nearby facilities that were immediately available. As a result, current operations are spread into four different buildings, although they are all nearby. One thought for the future is to build a new facility so that all operations can be consolidated into one property.

For information on what Creative Mobile Interiors can do for you, phone (866) 204-8264 or visit the CMI Web site at www.CreativeMobileInteriors.com. □

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