

by Rebecca D'Amico

Vitaoe Industries Expands, Delivers Quality to Customers

CM: What is the nature of your business?

LV: Vitaoe Industries, Inc. provides priming, painting, fabrication, packaging, assembly, and delivery services to the composite industry. Our emphasis is on heavy-duty truck components, but we have been involved in a wide variety of parts and services for truck, car, marine, and aviation industries. Uniquely specific "Just In Time/ Just In Sequence" delivery programs have been developed to meet each



Larry Vitaoe
President
Vitaoe Industries
Chillicothe, OH

customers' needs and expectations. We provide "Class A" finishing on SMC, TPO, Metton, Fiberglass, ABS, Polypropylene, and other substrates. Our manual paint line can accommodate parts and assemblies up to 12' wide, 12' high and 38' long. Our indexed automated paint line is specifically designed for both single stage and base coat/clear coat application. Both lines have provision for electrostatic paint application with forced air-drying. Vitaoe Industries' Quality, Production, and Delivery Systems are registered to ISO9001:2000.

CM: How many employees do you have?

LV: We currently have 62 employees in our 57,000 square foot Chillicothe, Ohio facility. Property has been purchased for a second location to specialize in finishing aircraft and truck components.

CM: What is your company's background?

LV: Vitaoe Industries started as an outgrowth of our General Motors Dealership body shop operation established in 1981. We have been painting composite and aluminum heavy duty truck exterior components for a large truck manufacturer since 1994. We built our first facility of 22,000 square feet for composite painting in 1997. Our GM dealership was sold in 1998 so that we could devote more time to the painting operation. We added 35,000 square feet to our facility in 1999.

CM: How has it evolved from its beginnings?

LV: In our early days we did only priming of composite components, and we now prime, paint, and assemble both interior and exterior components. We also deliver various chassis parts in "Just In Time/Just In Sequence" order to the truck manufacturer assembly lines. Crating for painted composite aerodynamic panels is assembled and prepared in our facility for shipping all over the world.

CM: How did you get started in the industry?

LV: We were contacted by a composite molder to see if we could apply

conductive primer to their customer's specifications. After review by the customer, we were asked to do more and more parts and assemblies. Eventually our customer base widened primarily through networking within the composite and truck manufacturing industries.

CM: What obstacles does your company face today in the regulatory or technical arenas?

LV: Like many companies directly or indirectly involved with composites, we face challenges in keeping on top of EPA regulations for Air Quality Emissions and Hazardous Waste Disposal. Our participation in EPA P2 Assessments to efficiently reduce wastes and to properly handle the disposal of hazardous wastes generated in our operation has been helpful. We also participate in the voluntary OSHA inspection program. Each year, we have an on-site OSHA inspection to make sure we are operating in a safe, responsible manner. The Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation also has an excellent voluntary inspection program to reduce the risk of injured workers. We are members of the Ross County Safety Council and participate in the Ohio BWC Drug-Free Workplace program. Additional obstacles certainly would include increasing energy costs as well as increasing health care premiums.


CM: What are your marketing efforts?

LV: Participation in the ACMA Trade Show has been our most successful active marketing. Additional sales opportunities have come from referrals from paint manufacturers and end-user companies that want to buy ready-to-install painted composite parts and know of our capabilities.

CM: What development or research would you like to see happen to improve the industry?

LV: Additional development in reducing outgassing and porosity in certain composite processes would certainly be helpful. We are aware of several paint facilities that do not like to paint some composite parts for that reason.

CM: Where do you see your business in five years?

LV: We are excited about our new additional facility specializing in aviation and trucking components. We have molded some prototype fiberglass parts for very limited production but we are careful not to compete with our established customers. Additional locations will be considered as we try to expand our sales and our customer base. Although we have considerable capacity at our Chillicothe location and are operating well under our EPA limits, we appreciate the value of being as close to our customer base as possible. We are also actively working to broaden our involvement in JIT/JIS delivery programs for various manufacturers. 

Rebecca D'Amico is CM Magazine's production & marketing coordinator: 703.525.0511; rdamico@acmanet.org.