



Leading Motor Coach Manufacturers Turn to Autodesk to Boost Business Despite Tough Economy

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Top 3D Mechanical Design Package Helps Companies Grow Market Share, Increase Revenues, and Raise Productivity

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Jul 30, 2003 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Leading manufacturers in the motor coach industry are relying on 3D mechanical design technology from Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq:ADSK), the world's leading design software and digital content company, to help them buck negative economic trends. Three Oregon-based manufacturers who comprise the top end of the motor coach industry -- Marathon Coach, Inc., Country Coach, and accessories manufacturer Kwiikee Products Company, Inc. -- have turned to Autodesk Inventor(R) Series software to develop innovative products, increase the speed at which they are able to bring their products to market, and become more successful. These manufacturers now have a system in place to handle the increased demand that is expected this summer as more families are taking to the highways instead of the airways.

According to the Oregon Department of Economic Analysis May 2003 report, "What looked like a building recovery in (Oregon) manufacturing at the end of 2002 turned quickly into further job losses. Manufacturing will continue to lose jobs in 2003 with an annual decline of two percent." However, these three companies have found that by standardizing on Autodesk(R) software they have been able to grow market share, increase revenues, or raise productivity without adding resources.

Marathon Coach (www.marathoncoach.com), the world's largest converter of buses into deluxe motor coaches, uses Autodesk Inventor software to incorporate the latest technologies in its custom coach designs. With coaches that range in price from \$1 to \$1.5 million, Marathon offers hi-tech features such as in-motion satellite television, Internet and telephone reception, global positioning systems with pilot and co-pilot screens, concealed drawer dishwashers, and plasma television sets to its high-end clientele that includes celebrities and royalty. Marathon estimates that it currently produces almost twice the number of bus conversions per year than its nearest competition. Since the introduction of Autodesk software, Marathon Coach has been able to increase productivity and gain market share.

"We've seen a seven percent growth in market share during the past year," said Steve Schoellhorn, executive vice president of Sales and Marketing, Marathon Coach. "Through the use of Autodesk manufacturing technology, we have improved engineering organization, planning, process management, and the flow of information from engineering to the production floor. As a result, our 10 percent gain in efficiency has led to 10 percent fewer person hours needed to design and manufacture increasingly complex coaches."

Kwiikee Products Co., a manufacturer that provides products to leading motor coach manufacturers including Country Coach and Marathon and has a 95 percent share of the electric step market, recently transitioned from a difficult-to-use software, Pro/ENGINEER 2000i2, to Autodesk Inventor software, one application in the Autodesk Inventor Series package of 2D and 3D software, to speed design creation and eliminate expensive prototypes. Capitalizing on Autodesk Inventor software's ease of use, Kwiikee now creates computer-based prototypes to show customers design concepts on the PC. Autodesk design software has become a key element in helping Kwiikee attain greater business success.

"Our strategic vision is to achieve growth through new product innovation and existing product diversification. Based on some key changes we've made, Kwiikee experienced 25 percent revenue increase last year," said Jim Kunz, manager of R&D for Kwiikee Products Co. "Autodesk Inventor has been instrumental in helping us win new business despite the slow economy. The software allows us to release products faster, and to be more creative and inventive without increasing head count."

Country Coach is using Autodesk Inventor software to speed production and accelerate sales of its highly customized motor homes. Since it started using the software a year ago, Country Coach has realized a 25 percent gain in productivity by speeding design creation and modification, and identifying potential problems before they occur, thus reducing errors that can take place during production.

"We are using Autodesk Inventor exclusively to model new designs out of R&D," said Dave Diamond, director of R&D at Country Coach. "The bottom line is, we are able to be more innovative and to accomplish more with fewer resources."

"As in the motor coach industry, Autodesk is helping companies in each industry it serves navigate through the difficult economy and increase their competitive advantage," said Robert Kross, vice president of the Manufacturing Solutions Division at Autodesk. "Our software is helping to change the way people experience life by enabling manufacturers to bring more innovative and higher quality products to market at a faster rate and a lower cost."

IMAGINiT Tailors Services for Customers

Autodesk channel partner IMAGINiT worked closely with each of these coach manufacturers to tailor the Autodesk Inventor training, support, and customization needs to their particular environment. "With its powerful 3D mechanical design functionality, Autodesk Inventor software is used to communicate accurate design detail to every member of the team, from concept through manufacturing," said Ray Fagan, mechanical sales manager at IMAGINiT in Portland, Oregon. "We are right there helping our customers implement this technology to come out ahead in a tough economy."

IMAGINiT is a top Authorized Autodesk Reseller and Autodesk Training Center that provides solution-oriented services and products to architectural and mechanical engineering clients. IMAGINiT is part of IMAGINiT Technologies, a wholly owned subsidiary of RAND Worldwide.

Autodesk Manufacturing's Design and Management Solutions

Autodesk Inventor Series is a key component of Autodesk Manufacturing's design and management solutions that help customers solve critical business challenges by giving them the tools to innovate, increase productivity, optimize processes, and bring higher quality products to market faster for less cost. Unlike solutions on the market today, Autodesk's design offerings -- AutoCAD(R), AutoCAD(R) Mechanical, Autodesk Inventor Professional, Autodesk Inventor Series 2D and 3D mechanical design package -- and Autodesk Streamline(R) collaboration service solve problems for small and medium-sized manufacturers, especially those that cannot tolerate large-scale product lifecycle management installations, because they are easier to implement and deploy, and provide a faster return on investment. In addition, customers can take advantage of Autodesk's third-party applications and Autodesk(R) Professional Services to garner greater value from their software.

The most practical method for Autodesk customers to keep their design tools up-to-date is through the Autodesk Subscription Program. For an annual fee, the program provides the latest versions of licensed Autodesk software, offering a budget-conscious way to stay current with the latest technology. For more information about the Autodesk Subscription Program, visit www.autodesk.com/subscription.

About Autodesk

Autodesk is the world's leading design software and digital content company, offering customers progressive business solutions through powerful technology products and services. Autodesk helps customers in the building, manufacturing, infrastructure, digital media, and wireless data services fields increase the value of their digital design data and improve efficiencies across their entire project lifecycle management processes. For more information about the company, see www.autodesk.com.

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Note to Editors: The second "2" in the product name "Pro/ENGINEER 2000i2" should be superscript.

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