

Wheeled Coach Success – A Story of Trust



This is a story of how one TriMark customer moved from being just a customer to becoming a true fan. This is a story of why relationships are such a critical component of successful business partnerships. This is a story of how exceeding expectations creates an environment for future growth. This is a story of trust.

Wheeled Coach Industries (www.wheeledcoach.com), the largest single brand manufacturer of ambulances in North America, is located in Winter Park, Florida. The Wheeled Coach core business consists of custom built T-I, T-II, T-III, and Medical Attack Vehicles, as well as light, medium and heavy-duty rescue units and law enforcement specialty units.

Wheeled Coach is focused on delivering customers the best possible value while meeting their "specific" vehicle needs. Wheeled Coach enjoys a justly-deserved reputation as the leader in product innovation and technological advancements.



Wheeled Coach states that their products stand apart from competitors based upon:

- State-of-the-art customized manufacturing
- Superior engineering capabilities, including a full Pro/ENGINEER software implementation
- Full product line that meets or exceeds federal specifications
- Most are custom designed and engineered to unique customer specifications

The Predicament

Wheeled Coach contacted TriMark after frequent field failures of their prior door hardware as well as pressure from end customers to provide a door system alternative. The functionality and reliability of the old product was not good and the customer base was very dissatisfied. Antonio Cokovski, Wheeled Coach Director of Engineering states, "The relationship just was not working for us or our customers."

At that time, the Quality Control Manager at Wheeled Coach was familiar with TriMark and the company's reputation for problem-solving and he was the one who initiated the contact and drove the initial program.

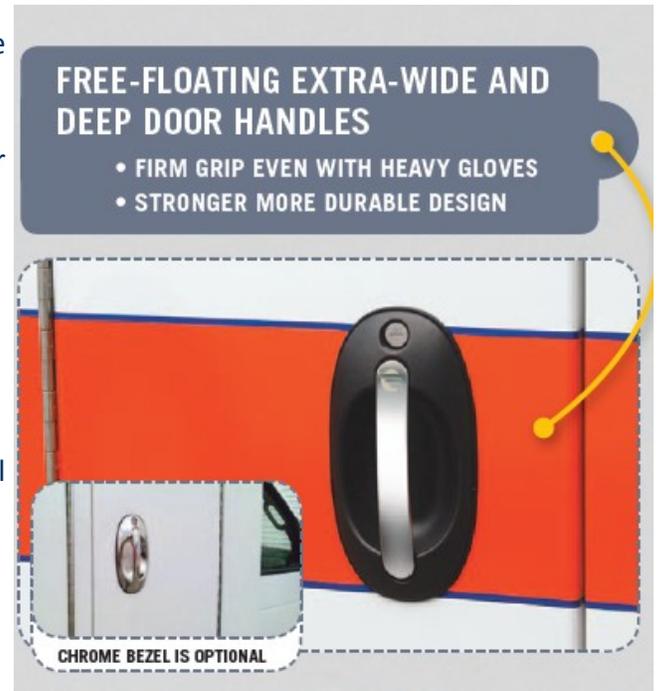
The Solution

Wheeled Coach's goals and objectives were to have TriMark create a floating system that would fit all door sizes, minimize installation time and solve installation issues that they currently had with their existing supplier. Working with Cokovski and his team, TriMark engineered a newly styled handle (020-1100) specific to Wheeled Coach which incorporated the floating function (when locked) for the entrance and compartment door systems. TriMark also created a new handle for the trailing door which was designed for easy access to the door opening mechanism, ease of operation as well as being an excellent ergonomic fit. According to Antonio, TriMark came in and worked directly with engineering, purchasing and sales to provide a quality door system that is functional and reliable.

"I chose the TriMark team to work with, because from the beginning of our relationship, I developed high level of trust towards you and your team as well. I believed then and I believe now that Wheeled Coach and TriMark have enough smart people to bring this project to big success for both companies," states Cokovski.

"I also had a very clear set of expectations about what the new design should be (floating handle, automotive style, fully functional, etc,) and the TriMark team showed us they were up to the task from the beginning. We had weekly meetings and I really liked TriMark's team approach, including their professionalism, attitude and behavior. They approached ideas with an open mind and made the ideas happen." Cokovski continues.

"There were some critical areas where TriMark really exceeded our expectations," states Wheeled Coach. Examples include project schedule, cost savings, assembly savings, weight savings, new functionality, quality improvements, aesthetics, standardization of product, keyed alike vehicle, keyless entry and others."



Safety

Safety is paramount at Wheeled Coach - from product design through manufacturing - and is verified with real world testing. Recently Wheeled Coach subjected a complete ambulance fitted with TriMark products to a voluntary side impact crash test as a testimony for compliance to current and future safety standards. The structural integrity and occupant crash protection was assured as well as the performance of the TriMark door hardware system. The door system meets all Canadian crash test standards and is also a NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Association) approved design.



TriMark was also responsible for a parallel project which was taking place involving the design and manufacture of an emergency door release which is unique to Wheeled Coach. Wheeled Coach SafePASS™ – Patient Access Safety System is a direct override system allowing for emergency exit from a vehicle. Designed specifically with a crew and patient safety in mind, this locking system provides improved ergonomics and protection. The exterior door handles have large, deep wells for a firm grip even with heavy gloves. The unique TriMark floating mechanism helps eliminate wear and tear normally caused by trying to open a locked door. And, the emergency "direct release" tabs allow for doors to be opened in the event an accident has bent the door lock control rod. Other locking mechanisms can jam, making patient unloading and crew exit difficult and possibly dangerous.

When we asked Antonio to sum up his experience to date with TriMark, this is what he told us. "I can trust them. I can sleep at night because TriMark is my hardware supplier. If a company chooses TriMark, they will be very satisfied with their product and relationship.

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