

# Customer Commitment Drives Sales

Sixty-two units in the field, more on the way



United Personnel Carriers (UPC) general manager Jay Michaud knew that with the right product, backed by impeccable customer service, a full line of stocked parts and a committed staff, a viable business could be built to make a difference in the mining industry.

The last year has been a testament to how right Michaud and staff really were. With his business partner St. Germain, they proved to their clients that they can count on UPC to fully support their product after delivery.

UPC builds modified Cub Cadet 4X4 vehicles into personnel carriers for use in the harshest environments underground. UPC's Shifter 4X4D vehicle has been a huge hit in mines across Northern Ontario, and has Michaud balancing everincreasing demand and company growth with his commitment to provide responsible and reliable customer service to existing clients.

"Last year, we had 32 units in the field. One year later, we have 62 units in operation," says Michaud. "It has been nuts. We've nearly doubled our production and people keep asking for more. We're trying to build two vehicles for stock, but we can't. Mines want to buy them right away. It has been word-of-

mouth about what we build and how we do business that has allowed us to have this success. The key is and always will be customer satisfaction."

UPC was incorporated in 2008 and sold its first unit to Goldcorp's Porcupine division in Timmins in March 2009. UPC takes a stock 4X4 utility vehicle and transforms it into a mining machine that exceeds standards. They complete the makeover by adding the industry's first spring applied hydraulic release (SAHR) brakes for this type of vehicle, a heavy-duty NEMA certified control and instrument panel, heavy-duty LED lights, a two-piece aluminum cover that protects the heavy-duty, long-life CVT system (extending drive belt life), fully retractable jump seats, fire-proof wiring and sealed controls, among other modifications. It features a Yanmar Tier 4, 854cc, three-cylinder diesel engine that pumps out 34.6 pounds-feet of torque and 22 horsepower (it's the only unit this size with a certified Tier 4 engine), three-inch ladder steel frame, a 14.4 cubic foot cargo bed, raised radiator, rack and pinion steering and cargo capacity of 800 pounds. It all adds up to an impressive package combining value, reliability, safety and efficiency.

"The engine is the lowest emission

engine in its class and with the SAHR brakes, it makes it one of the safest small vehicles underground," says Michaud.

"We have the proven lowest operation cost-per-hour in the market." What makes the Shifter unique and up for any challenge is its ability to be nearly infinitely modified for use in almost any situation underground within the maximum configuration of the vehicle. (UPC is currently working on adding a four-person face forward unit and also refining the first small battery operated unit that will revolutionize the mining industry.)

The vehicle is also designed to be repaired quickly in case of breakdown. UPC stocks \$150,000 in parts. Any repairs can be dealt with overnight or the next day.

"We can do virtually anything for a client to modify the vehicle," he says. "We can build different configurations to suit any need. We have the lowest downtime for this type of machine in the market. It's important to customers to be able to get parts for repairs overnight. This keeps them going and happy."

The company's dedication to its client base has fuelled its growth. In 2011, UPC had four employees. There are now nine people working for the company to keep up the high standards and meet customer demand. No matter how busy and how daunting the challenge, Michaud will always ensure that customers get the best from him and every employee.

"There is more demand for these vehicles, but also more demand for companies that supply customers with service, parts and the right expertise every time. UPC takes pride in building what its customers want and servicing it. We felt strongly about this product and we made sacrifices to bring it to market. Everything has to be right. Even putting the stickers on right. Every detail. I know



if I am not happy, my customers will not be happy. It's a big commitment, but well worth it."

UPC is taking the slow and steady approach to future growth and reaching company goals. Michaud doesn't want to get too big, too fast. He wants the growth of UPC to be done right and will not deviate for any reason.

"We're opening the door inch-

by-inch to a bigger market nationally and internationally," he says. "It's important to us to have a proven unit before we open too many doors, and we have to take care of existing clients before getting more. We have to build the company right, so we can always meet the high expectations of our customers." ✖

<http://www.upc-canada.ca>



# United Personnel Carriers

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Jay Michaud and Dave St.Germain had a hunch a recreational vehicle could be modified and serve the role of a personnel/utility carrier in the underground mining industry. Read their story @ [www.sudburyminingsolutions.com/new-personnel-carrier-making-inroads.html](http://www.sudburyminingsolutions.com/new-personnel-carrier-making-inroads.html)

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