

# STRATEGIES

INFORMATION AND TIPS FOR DOING BUSINESS BETTER

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## SMALL BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

# Go-between

Logistics company looks to continue expanding its services

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**R**andy Smith recently moved his company, third-party logistics provider Mid Inc., into a 63,000-square-foot facility at Mid Logistics Center, on Shepherdsville Road. Not bad for a guy who was running his business out of his truck when it was founded in April 1994.

As a bulk distribution and logistics operation, the company's services include warehousing, inventory control, shipping and even installation of appliances being shipped to purchasers.

"We really relish the opportunity to be a full-service, one-stop shop for the client," said Smith, president of the company.

### Company has national clients in two divisions

Mid Inc.'s services are divided into two primary sections: a fixtures division and an appliance division.

The company's 2-year-old fixture division has national clients such as Bowling Green, Ky.-based Camping World Inc. and Pittsburgh-based PPG Industries Inc.

For PPG Industries, Mid Inc. not only stores commercial racking and paint-mixing equipment for PPG's stores, it also travels across the country to set up new stores.

Smith said PPG previously used its own employees to set up racks and install equipment, which often took weeks. His company usually is in and out in 24 to 36 hours.

For Camping World, Mid Inc. stores and ships displays used for NASCAR events. Smith's company

is in talks to expand those services into merchandising, which could have Mid Inc. employees staffing Camping World booths at NASCAR events.

Mid Inc.'s appliance division, which accounts for 80 percent of the company's business, delivers and installs appliances for companies such as General Electric Co. and The Home Depot Inc. The local company recently has focused efforts on enhancing service in this division.

### New location offers on-site employee training

Company leaders started Mid Inc. Academy last year. Employees previously had gained experience by traveling to home appliance installations with experienced technicians, but the new program provides a real-world model for installation and problem-solving in Mid Inc.'s own facility.

The new facility has connection capability for numerous home appliances, such as dishwashers, microwaves, washing machines and dryers.

The academy, run by veteran installers, provides continual training for employees and simulates difficulties an installer might face on a job site — appliance hook-ups that need modifying, for example.

"The academy just gives us a chance to make it challenging for our guys, allow them to think on their feet and simulate those issues they might have in the field," Smith said. |



Randy Smith, president of Mid Inc., stands in the warehouse where his company stores General Electric Co. products.

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### TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BOOST COMPANY'S PROFILE

Mid Inc. owner Randy Smith is looking to technology to streamline the communication process.

The company is acquiring videoconferencing equipment that would be used internally and possibly for seminars with clients and prospective clients.

The company also is producing a DVD to provide to clients such as The Home Depot Inc., explaining to salespeople the installation process and outlining questions to ask appliance shoppers at the point of sale. Smith said this could be beneficial by ensuring that customers buy appliances their home can accommodate.

And these services, Smith believes, can set Mid Inc. apart from competitors.

"In my industry, we normally don't think outside of our immediate area," he said. "And that's where we're going to try to find some diversification." |