

## High Quality Products and Services for the Custom Composites Market

### Industrial Composites

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**David Bradly**  
CEO



(Dave Bradly on right, and Phil Locker, COO, on the left. Photo by: Jean Levac/The Ottawa Citizen.)

### About

**Competition Composites Inc. (CCI):** CCI offers the highest quality of products and services on the custom composites market today. Since 2002, we have provided superior service to our customers and have assisted them in achieving their goals in composites use and design.

Whether it is winning races, keeping instruments in the air or product development, our depth of experience and commitment to excellence will allow you to focus on what you can do best – deliver to expectations. We have earned the reputation as one of the best composites full service providers globally, able to work on any custom job you may have. And though we ship worldwide, we are

equally pleased to service our local customers in person.

**Interview conducted by:**  
**Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor**  
**CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO:** Mr. Bradly, what is the focus of Competition Composites Inc.?

**Mr. Bradly:** We are a boutique manufacturing company that was founded from a passion for marine products, such as sailboats and paddleboats or anything that was required to make boats go faster. That is because my business partner and I have a background in sailing. It is our passion and we love racing. We were able to turn that into a monetized business many years ago. From that, we learned a lot about composites, fiberglass, carbon fiber, epoxy and all of the things that you can apply to almost any industry. We found that as people have learned about us and we have learned about their industries, they have switched in to say that they could use fiberglass or carbon fiber rather than aluminum, steel or some sort of manufactured product because it is lighter and stronger. We have done things as diverse as airplane parts, racing car parts and military boat parts—all sorts of things. Our tag line is “Shaping your Imagination.” If you can imagine it, we can probably build it for you. That is what we are about.

**CEOCFO:** Explain to us a little bit about why the composites work better and how you figure out what goes into the composite?

**Mr. Bradly:** People have varying opinions or perspectives on what composites mean. When you say fiberglass to some people they think about their kayak, canoe or the

shower that they stand in in the morning. More often recently, people have been thinking about composite parts in their cars. Most fenders, bumpers and hoods are starting to be made out of composites of some sort. The public awareness is improving in terms of what we can do. Unfortunately, there is hangover from the 1960s and 1970s where fiberglass was a dirty word and a dirty business. It was applied with a mop and a bucket and they were inexpensive, cheap, smelled bad, did not last very long, broke and cracked. All of those bad things people remember from those times, but now the highest end cars on the planet are all made with composites. It is just a better way to build something. As a rule of thumb, if you say something is made in steel we can make it in carbon fiber for about a third of the weight. It is the same strength but a third of the weight. Very often, it is actually stronger. Where weight effects things like performance, ability to move something around, speed and flexibility, the weight is key. If you can get the same strength or better for a third of the weight, why would you not do it?

**CEOCFO:** How do you make the shift to get everyone using composites rather than steel carbon?

**Mr. Bradly:** I do not necessarily want to shift everyone that way, but there are some business and some applications that are much more suitable to this transition than others. The carbon fiber and fiberglass composites industry is in a continual state of development, just like the seal industry and all other manufacturing industries. As I said, what was cool in composites in the 1980s and 1990s is so old school now that we are able to do much more

different things and advancements. How do we shift everyone into that? The whole ecology question has been very interesting — using less fuel, generating less greenhouse gases and moving less weight around and all those kinds of things. For example, when Boeing made their planes out of carbon fiber, which they do now, it saves them hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars of fuel for their operators every year just flying their planes around the planet because they are lighter and need less fuel to push them around the planet. That kind of environmental approach or question has been very key. Interestingly, we have just established a sister company about a year ago in industrial composites. Some areas are very traditional such as the construction industry — buildings, concrete, steel and wood — this is how you build a building. However, energy considerations are absolutely paramount now and it is being managed by the government. You have to make energy efficient buildings and it is no longer good enough just to put pink foam in the roof to insulate it. You actually have to make the building components be energy efficient, so we have established a company that builds composite balconies for high rises. If you think about cooling fins on an engine that is what those balconies are. They are sucking the heat out of the building, and if they are made out of concrete, they are sucking a lot of heat out of the building. We offer a composite alternative that sucks almost no heat out of the building. It weighs one tenth of a traditional concrete balcony, costs the same price, and it is being driven by Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) compliance, which is energy efficiency compliance. That is an interesting one. People are coming to us and saying that they used to build their widget one way but they have now been mandated to make it a quarter of the weight, the same strength and at the same cost. They ask us how they can do that. That kind of closes that circle and people are coming to us asking for help with

building something that is a better class of widget and can perform more efficiently, faster and be more energy efficient.

**CEO CFO:** How do people find the company?

**Mr. Bradly:** We have a very good global reputation in the marine composite business. That may seem like a very specific segment; not in reality. There are a lot of pleasure boats, powerboats and sailboats out there, but we have a global reputation. The interesting thing about the marine marketplace is the marine products have to perform in the harshest environment on the planet — the interface between air and ocean. That is where all of our products used to be, because they are all the marine products. If we can survive there, we can survive almost anywhere. We

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have a good reputation from doing so. It is around a lot of government contracts and larger international companies such as DND, C-Com Satellite Systems and Honeywell that we have been dealing with to build products for. That reputation is what starts to drive interest. The internet is key to all of this. We take pride in posting a lot of intellectual property on our website, so it is not just a sales brochure but it is actually useful for people to look there. We monitor our internet analysis constantly and people are using it a lot for these reasons. We are a go to resource for not just the products but also the knowledge that we bring to it as well.

**CEO CFO:** Is everything custom or do you have some stock items and develop products before you introduce them to an industry?

**Mr. Bradly:** It is a dichotomy for a custom or boutique shop. Exclusively

custom is a great business to be in if you can get enough of that business, custom or selling to a market of one involves making one of whatever it is that you are building. It is very labor intensive and resource intensive to do that. It is not cheap and people who are truly buying custom products know that, but we are damn good at it. We have learned how to apply those techniques and capabilities to short run production. We are not building one million shower trays for anyone; that is not the business we are in. For example, we were a sub contract to a company supplying a line of military products into the US that were into the hundreds. These were large products and each one was about 16 by 8 feet. Each one was a composite structure and we made over 500 of these for a US customer. It was over a year and a half. We have done contracts for DND, the Canadian Department of Natural Defense. The same idea applied where we made parts for vehicles for DND that are now in the field and every single vehicle of that type that they own. Yes, we can go to a short-run production where it is hundreds and potentially even thousands, but we are not in “the stamp them out and pile up a big stock of light blue goldfish ponds.” It is not what we want to do and it is not what we are good at. Yes, we can turn a custom part or a prototype part and we can help a customer bring it into production. We have done that. In terms of development, we have design capability in house. We have 3D design software, design capability, CNC milling machines and all of that. We have worked with many customers to improve what they think is their prototype design and we have worked on it with them to make it easier to build a better product in the end. We do not just produce what is on the drawing. Some customers do ask us to make them exactly that, but most customers are interested in having an intelligent interaction with a manufacturer who has an understanding of the challenge they are facing. That is really where we are

— we can talk the talk and then walk the walk with the customer as we develop their product.

**CEO CFO:** What is one or two of the more unusual products you have worked on?

**Mr. Bradley:** We have a huge portfolio of marine stuff. We made a submarine radar part for the Chilean navy and it is going to the bottom of the deepest oceans. As far as we know, it is working just fine. We helped develop it and we made a couple of those. We have built turbine blades for NRC — The National Research Council. They have an ice wind tunnel, so basically it is for ice testing of all sorts of things. If you test whether or not an airplane is going to fly, you put it in this wind tunnel and blast air and ice pellets at it. We made the turbine blades that blast the air and the ice pellets, so that was an interesting little project for very high wear and difficult environment. We have made radars the big white golf balls you see in fields- and housing radar rays. There are many on buildings in Ottawa here that belong to us. Another interesting one is some structural rigging for a Hong Kong circus. It is a Cirque du Soleil set up, but it is one that we are doing in Hong Kong and it is all in water. This circus troupe and all of their acting is in and out of the water in front of the audience and they were having problems finding structural rigging that could withstand the water, the air and the pressures of people swinging and doing their acrobatics. They came to us, we helped them design carbon fiber structural rigging tubes, built them, sent them, they installed them and the circus is running. That is one of the weirdest ones.

**CEO CFO:** Is there something that you would like to make but cannot find a company that wants it?

**Mr. Bradley:** We have made pretty much everything that we thought we could do.

**CEO CFO:** How do you ramp up when business is brisk?

**Mr. Bradley:** As with many small manufacturing companies, especially when you are relying on the skill set of the people, ramping up is really a people-sourcing problem. Finding the correct semi and skilled labor is always a challenge. We have been very lucky here at CCI that we have hired people that have wanted to stick around and understand some of the skillsets coming in. They may come from the automotive industry or other manufacturing areas, but they generally have an interest in what it is we are doing. Ramping up is really a people equation. We have the space and we are able to turn products around very fast. If a customer says they want to prototype a new widget, we can do that very rapidly and in a matter of single digit weeks, we can get them their prototype ready to go. We can also do a short-run production with some tooling again in a couple or three weeks after that. Then, if they want to order 1,000 parts, that is when we would potentially run into time and resource issues but that becomes more a question of finding space. I fully expect production of the balconies to be a large-scale production question versus a small-scale. These are not going to sell by the tens, twenties or hundreds even but they are going to sell by the thousands or hundreds of thousands and then it becomes a production cell multiple question where we can recreate this anywhere in the world.

**CEO CFO:** How is business in general these days?

**Mr. Bradley:** We have grown year over year through all of the recently publicized recessions. We have been in existence for over eleven years and

I joined as CEO about eight years ago. Our growth has been because we were able to apply our core skillset across multiple industries. As one industry went up, another industry would go down but we were potentially supplying to both of them, which allowed us to even out some of those fluctuations. In general, the business has a little seasonality on the marine side, which is only natural. When it snows, not many people go sailing or boating. It is something that we have a very good handle on, however, and we spread that across other industries such as the military and construction. Business is going very well and we have expanded year over year for the last eight years.

**CEO CFO:** Why should people in the business and investment community pay attention to Competition Composites?

**Mr. Bradley:** People should pay attention to us because we are going places. We have been able to expand in a controlled and organic fashion that has been sustainable throughout a recession where everybody has been hunkering down trying to reduce costs and overhead. It is because we work with very good people in multiple verticals from market perspective with very cool technology processes and applications. In ten years' time, you might not even know that you are sitting on, using, flying in or driving on a product from CCI. We are in that many different verticals and it is only limited by imagination. People should pay attention because we are going places for sure.



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