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FOR CUSTOMERS, convenience is key—they'd like it if everything could come directly to their door. Even a traditionally stationary business like mortgage lending can be mobile, as Fredrick L. Hicks Jr., founder of The Mortgage Bus Enterprises LLC, discovered. This Raleigh, North Carolina, entrepreneur envisioned a Winnebago fitted with comfortable seating, state-of-the-art

computer equipment and big-screen displays so his clients could look up different mortgage lending rates right in their home, office or at the local mall.

Hicks designed the floor plan himself and spent three years making real estate investments to finance it. In December 2005, he took his first ride in the bright green and yellow mortgage bus. "People love the idea," he says.

"We've had a great following. My business has increased significantly by using the bus at events and different venues—even just driving down the road." He projects 2007 revenue will be more than \$675,000.

The convenience factor is what makes a mobile business tick. "Taking it to the customer is a growing trend," says John Mautner, founder of the Cycle of Success Institute, a small-business education company in Chicago. Whether you own a food business or a service business, you can peddle your services to office parks and large fair and event planners, he suggests.

Be mindful of special licenses that might apply to your type of business, especially if you work with food. Also,



PHOTO COURTESY: JESS ISAAH LEVIN

Customer caravan: A custom-designed, mobile mortgage office lets Fredrick Hicks bring lending options straight to his customers.

you'll need top-notch tools such as cell phones and wireless computer access to keep in touch while on the road.

Mobile opportunities are gearing up in a wide variety of industries, including mobile arcades (www.games

KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS CONVENIENCE BY MAKING YOUR BUSINESS MOBILE.

By Nichole L. Torres

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