



PL50

## CL-BUS: a new CBE product generation

CBE presents a new range of 12- and 230-Volt systems characterized by next-generation electronics allowing CBE components to communicate with external devices through a LIN BUS based protocol. A flexible range ready for the future.

Words Giorgio Carpi

For over 40 years, the core business of CBE has been 12- and 230-Volt electrical systems for recreational vehicles. Motor-home manufacturers in Europe and worldwide know that CBE is a worthy technical partner for reliable, functional electrical systems with a modern design able to satisfy all needs related to the installed electrical devices. The range spans from entry-level to more sophisticated systems. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that CBE has launched a new range of products with a LIN BUS communication system designed to interact with CBE devices and with those made by other manufacturers.

*"We have decided to add a range of next-generation products. Each one is different and not interchangeable with the elements of the current ranges", said Paolo Moiola, co-CEO of CBE. "It is a clean cut with our current production. The first decision was to choose the transmission protocol. Technically, the CAN BUS preferred by the automotive industry could be better in some cases, but since part of our industry was already oriented towards LIN BUS, we chose to adopt it creating a specific protocol for CBE dedicated to all our devices that we called CL-BUS (CBE LIN BUS)".*

But fear not. CBE confirmed that production of the current product ranges would be maintained and that a complete replacement would take time. This time is necessary for customers and also for

CBE to gradually reach the level of cost optimisation previously achieved on products that have been on the market for a decade. For the time being, this technology is mainly intended for medium and medium-high range vehicles that fit a high number of electronic



Above: CBL18  
On the other page: DL40



devices which can potentially interface. For low-end vehicles, the prices for new products are still not as competitive as comparable entry level products.

*“The key matter for our OEM customers is that our new systems are similar to the traditional range of 12-Volt modules, control panels, battery chargers, sensors and light dimmer nodes but with the extra potential of being able to connect to outside world”, added Paolo Moiola. “In other words, the management of non-CBE devices can be incorporated either partially or totally in the CBE system. We created an open system because we think that there is no clear consensus in our sector, neither on European nor on world level, as to what the protocol of the future will be. So, we decided to create a product which was also technologically ready for other standards, thus preparing us for potential further developments.*

*In this way, we have developed a system with an innovative design, which leaves freedom of action in connectivity-related activities to us as suppliers and to our customers. And in the future, the manufacturers will decide which direction to take and we will be a valuable technical partner for them. Not by chance, CL-BUS was developed to be able to be interface with other existing protocols, also not LIN BUS”.*



Of course, end users will be able to interface with the system through different devices, such as smartphones or tablets. The control panel will not be retired and will remain a necessary element for use as secondary control unit should the smartphone not work or should the battery be flat.

A simplified version is also available, with LED instead of display. This is still a very common solution since 75% of motorhomes made in Europe have LEDs, not displays. The system can be Bluetooth-ready although this is not a necessary feature for operation.

*“We have redesigned and re-engineered the entire product range”, concluded co-CEO Dorian Sosi. “It is nothing short of a generational leap. We have already started installations with select customers and are ready on supply chain level to kick off production. Our R&D department has been working on this for a long time because such a change cannot be taken lightly. It is a genuine revolution for us and we wanted it to be as smooth as possible for our customers as well. For this reason, the new system is designed to be expandable with protocols which may be introduced in the future, without the customer having to change the product codes. Of course, the new range can also be integrated with selected AL-KO products which are becoming increasingly popular and technological. The fact that CBE is part of the AL-KO group can only expand the possible connectivity scenarios with devices made by other companies within the Group”.*

## Milestones

- **1976** - CBE is founded by the former co-owner and CEO Bruno Conci, who started out in the caravanning industry manufacturing electrical systems and electronic devices for local manufacturers Laverda and VS Caravan. Just 2 years later the company launches the first LED control panel for motorhomes.
- **1982** - First attendance at the Turin show (now in Parma)
- **1985** - First attendance at the Essen show (now in Düsseldorf)
- **1987** - First attendance at the Paris show
- **1990** - CBE moves to a new 1000 m<sup>2</sup> factory (Lamar/Trento)
- **1994** - First LCD control panel for motorhomes
- **2003** - CBE obtains UNI EN ISO 9001 certification. Constantly increasing turnover leads CBE to purchase a 4500 m<sup>2</sup> field where the current Spini/TRENTO premises – at that time 2800 m<sup>2</sup> – are located.
- **2008** - First touchscreen control panel for motorhomes.
- **2009** - CBE decides to invest strategically on the direct manufacture of wiring harnesses and takes over LCE, a consolidated company in that industry located in Arco/Trento.
- **2011** - A new production facility (still in Arco/TRENTO), spanning more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>, is made available to LCE. CBE strengthens and expands its production capacity in the wiring harnesses industry with the start-up SCT, based in Soliman/Tunisia,
- **2014** - Expansion of the factory in Spini/TRENTO (with the work completed mid-2015), creates a further 1000 m<sup>2</sup> dedicated mainly to additional test laboratories and storage areas.
- **2016** - CBE creates the simulation testing lab, a laboratory that allows the functional simulation of all CBE systems in combination with appliances and electrical utilities typically installed on recreational vehicles.
- **2018** - DexKo Global Inc. (through its subsidiary AL-KO) signs an agreement in July which has led to the acquisition of CBE.

Paolo Moiola and Dorian Sosi

