



## Luigi Gozzi Director of Engineering, LCI RV Europe

Words and photo Antonio Mazzucchelli

**L**uigi Gozzi, 53, joined LCI Italy on 1 February 2019 as Director of Engineering responsible for all RV engineering activities at the European headquarters. His arrival was strongly supported by the CEO of LCI Italy and the RV Europe segment, Michele Ceccucci. The commercial team, led by Lorenzo Manini, Commercial Director for Europe, is now joined by the technical team, coordinated by Luigi Gozzi, who heads the various technical design offices in each production plant: Calenzano, San Casciano, Pontedera and Mirano. Luigi Gozzi comes from the world of industry, with 22 years' experience in Pramac, a multinational world leader in the production of generators and warehouse handling machines, based in the Italian province of Siena, where he held the position of Research and Development Director. He also spent five years as Research and Development Director of a company specializing in e-mobility, developing battery-powered electric vehicles, such as a heavy L7 passenger quad, and also charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: What exactly is your role at LCI Italy?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** I co-ordinate various design groups which have different work methods and procedures. LCI has acquired companies that were started and developed independently, each with its own rules and procedures, so my first task was to unify and give everyone the same design procedure,

from the initial idea to the final product on the market. It was also necessary to unify and strengthen the engineering tools, ranging from CAD to simulations, etc.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: What did you introduce to LCI RV Europe, and what steps do you intend to continue to take?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** I have already introduced new design procedures, which ensure the control of every single step necessary to bring the product into production, and enhanced the tools available to designers, such as static and dynamic CAD simulations, to speed up the design process and to create a product in less time and with a greater reliability. We have also started to work with two universities: the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Florence, who we have started some collaborations on specific projects; and the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design of the University of Ferrara, who we collaborate with on all aspects related to the economy and the use of our products by the end user through a fairly innovative process called 'inclusive design' aimed not only at the average user, but also users who have reduced sensory or motor skills. This is an innovative approach that allows our products to be accessible to a very wide range of private users.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: Do you also involve your BtoB clients in these R&D projects,**

**or are you working autonomously on innovation and then presenting it to the customer?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** We do both. We always work closely with the customer: each proposal is shared with the customer through the different steps, from virtual rendering to real prototypes, up to when the components that leave the production line. In this way, the customer is constantly updated on the progress of the project.

We are also focusing on a lot of innovation, and are working in research and development to find new solutions and new products to intercept latent needs that customers are not yet aware of. As a result, our activity has also required us to go through the procedure for filing patents.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: How much contact do you have with your American parent company? Are you working closely together?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** Sure. From an engineering and R&D standpoint, we are all constantly updated on projects from both sides. Obviously, we are talking about two profoundly different markets, the US and Europe, with different rules and market characteristics. However, from the engineering point of view, we are constantly aligned, both in terms of new products and the transfer of know-how from Europe to the USA, and vice versa. So we need to have aligned platforms and use the

same development tools so that projects and processes can be easily transferred from one side of the ocean to the other.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: In regard to the development process, which were the most demanding products?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** The most challenging are the so-called slide-outs: on the US market they are very common, but in Europe they face difficulties both in the regulatory aspect, and in terms of the mass and size increase. So, we are working on the development of slide-outs for the European market and something will probably be ready to be seen at the Dusseldorf Caravan Salon 2019.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: In regard to the usability project we talked about - the inclusive design project - what is the most important or significant product you have focused on?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** Being a collaboration started recently with the University of Ferrara, we started with some typical products of our range: steps and doors. We will evaluate the first results and then we will also implement this technology on the other products.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: In regard to your bed product, do you have any technical improvements, or some future development as a result of these studies that you can tell us about?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** We are currently developing innovative solutions, already patented, that will be presented at Caravan Salon 2019: these solutions will introduce quite important innovations in the RV sector.

**Aboutcamp BtoB: How have you found the working environment in LCI?**

**Luigi Gozzi:** The work environment is really exciting, with extremely available and passionate people who work very well in a team. Despite the acquisition of companies that we could call "an owner's company" (family-owned businesses), I was amazed to find people who are really very involved in teamwork and therefore able to share experiences, values and commitment with the other colleagues in Lippert offices in Italy. This really was a very positive aspect. There is still a lot of work to do because the company has very strong growth ambitions in Europe, so we have to prepare good foundations and equip ourselves with tools and procedures that allow us to work as well as possible.



## Lippert Components contracts Joerg Reithmeier as Senior Advisor of Business Development

Lippert Components entered into a contract with Joerg Reithmeier to act as LCI's Senior Advisor for Business Development. As Senior Advisor, Reithmeier will support the Company's acquisition efforts throughout Germany and will help propel growth within the European Caravan market through strategic acquisitions. Reithmeier will work closely with LCI RV Europe CEO Michele Checucci to strengthen LCI's product offerings within the European RV market and help drive LCI's overall strategy in Europe forward. Reithmeier brings with him 8 years of experience in the European Caravan Industry and an additional 10 years in the Automotive Industry. Reithmeier was most recently on the Executive Board for Erwin Hymer Group, Europe's largest caravan manufacturer. Reithmeier will add insight and unmatched experience for the Company within the German market.

"Joerg will add tremendous value to our ability to work efficiently and successfully with our European partners," stated Jason Lippert, LCI's CEO. Continued Lippert, "Germany produces more RVs than any other country in the European market, and Joerg

brings us immediate expertise that will help us better understand our German OEM customers as well as the rest of the European caravan manufacturing community so we can be the best supplier possible. Our goal is to expand our European footprint and a necessary part of this process is having leadership stationed in Germany, talking to our German customers every day."

"I am very pleased to support the LCI Europe team," stated Reithmeier. "Our cooperation shows how committed LCI is to the European RV market. My immediate goal is to continue to build LCI's profile in Europe of competency, commitment, and outstanding technical solutions. I feel that as we continue to communicate LCI's unique culture of treating others like family, we will continue to build trust among our OEM customers and potential acquisitions that there is no better company to partner with than LCI. I am especially excited to support new acquisitions by the LCI family. Working alongside LCI's current team, and being as focused on growth as LCI now is, there is no doubt that LCI can be a market leader in Germany and the rest of the European RV market."

## Company Profile

From over 65 manufacturing facilities located throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, Lippert Components, Inc. (LCI®) supplies a broad array of components for the leading manufacturers of recreational vehicles and manufactured homes. It also supplies components for adjacent industries including buses; trailers used to haul boats, livestock, equipment and other cargo; pontoon boats; modular housing; and factory-built mobile office units.

Lippert Components products include steel chassis and chassis components; axles and suspension solutions; slide-out mechanisms and solutions; thermoformed bath, kitchen and other products; windows; manual, electric and hydraulic stabilizer and leveling systems; furniture and mattresses; entry, luggage, patio and ramp doors; electric and manual entry steps; awnings and slide toppers; LED televisions and sound systems; navigation systems; wireless backup cameras; other accessories; and electronic components.