

“Deciding to upgrade with ITW Gema has saved us a lot of money.”



THE COMPANY

Lippert Components, a Drew Industries subsidiary, manufactures specialty trailers at their Milford, Indiana plant that are fully customizable for hauling a wide variety of items.

THE CHALLENGE

In the past, Lippert had been a liquid coating operation. They turned to powder coating to achieve a better finish that was both environmentally friendly and cost-effective and decided to place an automatic powder coating line at the Milford plant. Quick color change and low powder consumption were significant factors for the installation. Since Lippert is a spray-to-waste operation, transfer efficiency was a very important consideration.

THE SOLUTION

Lippert's Milford facility chose an automatic line from ITW Gema. A 20,000 cfm Diamond™ booth contains sixteen OptiGun™ automatic powder guns, OptiTronic™ Plus control units, and OptiFlow™ pumps. The system also includes an AutoTracker™ Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) and Chameleon™ Color Management System.

THE SAVINGS

The combination of OptiSystem™ components, along with the AutoTracker and Chameleon, has enabled Lippert to realize greater application efficiency than they had experienced in the past. Since they do not reclaim powder, achieving the best coverage with the least waste is very important. Decreasing consumables and optimizing powder consumption have resulted in a highly cost-efficient operation, factors that have contributed to a **payback in 24 months**.

ITW Gema

Superior By All Measures

“High transfer efficiency and savings on consumables has really made our new system pay off.”

Cliff Boyer III, Lippert Components



READY TO UPGRADE?
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THE LEADERS

Leaders Like Lippert

Call 800-628-0601 and ask for Debra or visit www.itwgema.com/upgrade for a free assessment of your powder coating operation.

Lippert Saves Money on Consumables With High Transfer Efficiency from the OptiSystem™

“Whether you reclaim powder or not, at ITW Gema the objective is to get paint on the part – not on the floor.”

ITW Gema saves Lippert big money with the precision control of the OptiSystem.

A case study from Lippert Components, a Drew Industries Subsidiary

Lippert Components manufactures specialty trailers at their Milford, Indiana facility. They needed high transfer efficiency, so they turned to ITW Gema for a solution.

Company Background

Lippert Components, a Drew Industries Subsidiary, is a steel fabrication company serving the manufactured housing, recreational vehicle (RV), and specialty hauling industries. They produce mobile home chassis, chassis

parts, and galvanized steel roofing as well as RV, fifth-wheel, and travel trailer chassis. Lippert is a multi-state, multi-facility organization, with a reputation for being both an industry leader and innovator.

Existing Equipment and Challenges

Lippert began powder coating at their Goshen, Indiana location using another brand of manual powder coating equipment. Unimpressed by the performance of their system, Lippert chose ITW Gema when they opened another manual powder coating line in Middlebury, Indiana.

Because of the success they achieved with their manual system, Lippert once again turned to ITW Gema to outfit their new plant in Milford, Indiana. They wanted an automated line that could perform the fastest possible color changes, maximizing efficiency to provide a high-quality finish at a reasonable price. To achieve this, having the most technologically advanced equipment available was imperative. According to Cliff Boyer, Powder Coat Manager, “Our entire line from blasting to oven to powder coating contains state-of-the-art technology and this gives us a major competitive advantage.”

Objectives for the new paint line included:

- Superior transfer efficiency
- Low consumables cost
- High-level of process control
- Quick color change

Equipment Installed

ITW Gema installed sixteen OptiGun™ automatic powder guns, OptiTronic Plus™ control units and OptiFlow™ powder pumps in a 20,000 cfm Diamond™ booth. For parts needing manual work, an EasySystem™ touch-up unit with OptiTronic™ controller was mounted on each side of the booth.

Light curtain part recognition was also included, enabling the guns to recognize different part configurations and only trigger the number of guns necessary to coat the part. Reciprocators allow for automatic movement of the powder guns, while an AutoTracker™ Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) provides complete control over the coating process.



Using eleven colors and planning to increase their palette to over twenty, Lippert needed the capability to perform quick color changes. They found that ITW Gema's Chameleon™ Color Management System provides the highest level of performance and enables them to spray powder directly from the manufacturer's shipping container.

When it's time to change colors, the Chameleon controls the internal cleaning of suction tubes, pumps, powder hoses and spray guns, taking valuable time off the cleaning process and freeing operators to handle other color-change tasks. “With the push of a button, it purges everything and makes color changeovers incredibly fast.” Cliff stated.

Savings

Since the installation of the OptiSystem, Lippert has achieved the high transfer efficiency they were looking for. With the help of powder supplier, Environmental Coatings, they were able to develop a special powder with low cure times and the unique characteristics that the industry demands. This special powder formulation, coupled with the precision of the OptiSystem, has kept quality high and costs low. Optimizing performance has enabled Lippert to achieve a **payback in 24 months**.

All objectives have been achieved for this project, including:

- Compared to the Goshen system, transfer efficiency is 15% higher
- Cost of consumables is 50% less as compared to the Goshen system
- Management has complete control over the system, resulting in repeatable results and virtually no rejects
- Color changes can be performed in ten minutes or less with two operators

Future Outlook

The service Lippert receives from ITW Gema and their local distributor, American Industrial Corporation, is very important to the success of the powder coating line in Milford. “The training and support we received from Gema,” Cliff said, “was better by leaps and bounds than anything we got from their competitor.”



Lippert has been so pleased with the success of this system, that they are looking forward to upgrading two more plants with equipment from ITW Gema.