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Manifesto

Ozzio Italia, lockdown as an opportunity and strategies for the future

A conversation with Marco Pozzoli, designer and CEO of the Brianza-based company that interprets contemporary lifestyle through multiple function projects.

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The history of Ozzio Italia is constantly changing, as is the furniture this Brianza-based company produces, trying to intercept the transformations of modern living. The story began in 1961 in the artisan workshop of the Pozzoli family, and today the brand is present in Europe, America, Asia and Russia with ten showrooms in major international cities. Ozzio Italia's strong point is its convertible and multifunctional furniture, elements that change in shape and function through sophisticated mechanisms, especially useful (as a solution) for tight/small spaces. We spoke with Marco Pozzoli, designer and CEO of the company.

From a strategic point of view, how did you behave in the year of no trade fairs?
The first lockdown was quite traumatic: it affected both the clientele and the production department. We gradually reopened production and worked hard on exports, which account for 55%. In 2020 we prepared a lot, embracing a remote working model, working on updating Easy Line, the sister collection of Ozzio Italia. Right after the lockdown we saw a significant recovery in numbers. An area on which we decided to focus our energies was communication, so we implemented all social activities and worked on the production of video material, both consumer and technical, aimed at retailers.

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What about 2021?
We haven't stopped working for a single day and have confirmed the strategy activated last year. The idea was to present the brands' products in our 600 square metres showroom using the video format. We realised we could also work differently from the classic paradigms, focusing on multimedia products. I'm not saying that in the future there will be no more trade fairs: the trade fair is not only synonymous with showcasing furniture, it is also an important moment to meet the sales force, agents and customers from all over the world. For a small company like ours, in the future it will be essential to develop business in the territory at an international level, with agencies but also with company branches.

In terms of results, how is it going?
I would say it is going well. The revival is mainly due to three factors: home furniture is experiencing a happy moment, we made a number of products that the market responded positively to, we moved fast, concentrating our efforts at a time of caution and uncertainty, which is something that brings added value today.

The home has become the centre of our lives. What are you focusing on to intercept the changes and new needs people have in the home?
We have been working on the concept of multifunctional furniture since 2001, and even more so this year we have focused on this product category. Take for example the elevating tables: you can use them in the living room and when needed, they turn into real office tables. We are currently working on a number of projects that will take shape over the course of the year: a storage unit that contains a desk, an armchair with accessories and a multifunctional desk.

Precisely because of the transformations taking place at this particular time multifunctional and convertible furniture is experiencing a happy moment. How did you get the idea to focus on this product category?
The very first project of this kind dates back to 1998 when there was a minor crisis and we created the first consoles and convertible tables, also thanks to input from local customers. Then there was a second decisive moment: in 2001 and 2002, during the first trade fairs in Milan, international customers and especially the Japanese, began to show interest in this type of furniture. So we decided to open up to the international market. We came up with the idea of creating different variants of the first convertible objects, which initially only opened up like a wallet. Then we developed less traditional, innovative variants: the square one, the round one and the double-opening one.

In terms of products, could you give me some successful examples?
The 4x4 table, designed by Giulio Manzoni, is a product with a great attention to detail in terms of materials and finishing and can seat up to 12 people (when needed. We developed several variants, doing considerable research, because in the case of special mechanisms we [illegible] concentrating our efforts at a time of caution and uncertainty, which is something that brings added value today.

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