

BEGBIES TRAYNOR

29 April 2010

30 Jobs Saved as Shopfitter Sold Out of Administration



Interior and restaurant fit-out specialist GF Group that includes the specialist joinery manufacturing business of Inform Manufacturing and went into administration in February 2010 has been acquired by a consortium backed by its founder and a group of former directors.

The Brighouse-based business was established in 1979 and had grown to be a leader in its sector with clients including restaurant chains such as Nandos and Frankie & Benny's, and retailers including Flannels.

GF Group founder Gordon Fawthrop sold the business to a £7m MBO team in 2009, and it was after this deal that the business experienced a massive downturn in business and rising costs causing the failure earlier in the year.

Charles Brook and Peter Sargent of Begbies Traynor were appointed joint administrators of the company and immediately began to market the firm as a going concern.

After weeks of ongoing negotiation with several potential buyers, Mr Fawthrop and a group of former colleagues have been able to secure the assets and goodwill of the business and will continue to trade as GF Interiors, and ensure the safety of at least 30 of the staff.

The new company will be headed by Mr Fawthrop as chairman and David Morton.

“We have worked very hard to put together the right deal to take the business of GF Group out of the hands of administrators. We now have the opportunity to rebuild a great business which we have all spent many years developing,” commented Mr Morton.

“It is devastating that over the past months so many of our colleagues have lost their jobs, and we are determined to get this firm back to full strength as soon as the market allows,” he added.

Joint administrator Charles Brook said: “GF had a fantastic brand within its sectors, and there was considerable interest and competition from potential buyers. The management’s previous knowledge of the company and its secure funding mean that we can be confident the business has a bright future under the continued direction of the people who founded and grew it prior to the 2009 MBO deal.”

The firm had employed in excess of 120 staff before the failure in February.

The administrators were advised in this structured deal by Leeds-based lawyers, Lee & Priestley and the purchasers were advised by Huddersfield law firm, Baxter Caulfield.

Photography

(L to R) David Morton, managing director and joint administrator Charles Brook of Begbies Traynor at the GF Group’s Brighouse factory