Gambit Corporate Finance - Review of 2021

2021: M&A Review

2021 M&A activity was buoyed by the UK economy's impressive recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, reduced Brexit uncertainty and renewed appetite from investors seeking to deploy record levels of dry powder accumulated by a postponement of transactions in 2020.

Heightened competition for high-growth assets fuelled both transaction volumes and values. TMT and Medical & Biotech sectors dominated deal activity, whilst cross-border transactions and notable megadeals helped UK deal values surpass 2020 levels by Q321.

Record Year for Gambit

2021 was Gambit's most successful year in its history.

The firm advised on 15 transactions during the year, with a cumulative deal value in excess of £300 million.

Transactions included company disposals, acquisition support, management/employee buy-outs, fundraising and refinancing assignments.

Notable transactions included:

- The sale of one of the UK's largest independent learning providers, Motivational Preparation College for Training to Learning Curve ("LCG"). The acquisition adds a further 30 locations and 180 employees to LCG's operations across England and Wales, establishing the largest military training organisation outside of the Ministry of Defence.
- Providing strategic advice to the British & Irish Lions, helping to secure committed debt facilities and contingency funding options to support the 2021 Tour of South Africa and assist the delivery of future Lions rugby programmes.
- Securing funding for Veezu, the UK's largest multi-region taxi and private hire company, from MML Capital.
- The sale of Premier Forest Group's Irish subsidiary, Premier Forest ROI Ltd (comprising Brooks Timber & Building Supplies and Dublin Plywood & Veneer) to Northern Ireland headquartered Murdock Builders Merchants.

Most Active Financial M&A Adviser

Gambit was named by Experian MarketIQ as Wales' most active financial M&A adviser in the year to Q3 2021.

The firm has maintained this ranking since 2020.

Debt Adviser of the Year

The firm was awarded 'Debt Adviser of the Year' at the Finance Monthly M&A Awards for the second successive year .

Gambit's dedicated debt advisory function enables businesses to achieve the optimal funding structure and partner with the most appropriate finance provider to meet their strategic ambitions.

The team has extensive experience in refinancing and fundraising transactions from a range of institutional sources including mainstream banks, private debt funds, asset finance/invoice discounting and mezzanine finance providers. The firm has raised funds ranging from £1 million to over £100 million.

Dealmaker of the Year

Partner, Geraint Rowe was named Insider Magazine's 'Dealmaker of the Year' for 2021.

2021 marked the third consecutive year and fifth occasion that Geraint has received the award, having previously received the accolade in 2005, 2015, 2019 and 2020.

In the year to 30 June 2021, Geraint initiated, led and advised on a range of transactions, with a combined value in excess of £160 million.

New Staff and Promotions

Wayne Harvey joined the firm as Partner in July. Wayne's career has spanned some 40 years as a former Senior Partner at Deloitte and Partner at Ernst & Young.

Gambit further bolstered its deal team and dedicated research function, with the recruitment of three new Analysts; Harrie Thorrington, Lloyd Evans and Menna Ward.

Sam Forman was promoted to Director in December 2021.

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2022: Gambit's 30th Anniversary

Gambit celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2022, a major milestone. The firm is the oldest independent corporate finance boutique in the UK. Gambit will be sharing some memorable insights and news on exciting projects in its pipeline over the coming months and wishes to convey its immense gratitude to its clients and team for supporting the firm since inception.

2022 Outlook

The surge in M&A activity witnessed during the UK's economic rebound from the pandemic is expected to continue into 2022, with companies actively exploring M&A, fundraising, disposals and other transactions. Investment appetite is supported by substantial levels of low-cost capital available to corporates, and the accumulation of capital ready to be deployed by private equity.

Pandemic-resilient sectors such as software & IT services, human capital, healthcare and business services are witnessing higher transaction volumes and deal values. An increase in the number of distressed deals can also be anticipated in lesser-performing sectors, reflecting the ongoing uncertainty surrounding Covid-19, with recent supply chain disruption further exacerbating trading difficulties experienced by some UK businesses.

Notable inflationary pressures have been experienced in recent months, with the Bank of England (BoE) anticipating a peak of 5% CPI in April 2022. In December 2021, the BoE raised interest rates for the first time in more than three years, from 0.1% to 0.25%. This has been viewed as the first in a series of short and medium-term interest rate rises, casting uncertainty over the longevity of the current low interest rate environment. A heightened sense of urgency has been created to execute debt funded transactions, such as management buy outs, before rates rise further and the cost of borrowing becomes more expensive. As the debt landscape continues to evolve, effective preparation and discussions with a trusted adviser remain central throughout 2022 to ensure an optimal capital structure is achieved.

Benefits of Gambit

- A team of highly experienced specialists
- Focussed on value creation and maximisation
- Commercial focus and attainment of shareholder objectives
- Significant cross-border capability as exclusive UK shareholder of Corporate Finance International
- Deal risk minimisation
- 24/7 availability

Key Services Include

- Mergers & acquisitions
- Disposals
- Management buy-outs
- Fundraising
- Development capital
- Debt advisory
- Private Equity advisory
- Refinancing
- Value Maximisation Reviews
- Succession planning
- Strategic advice

CFI

Gambit has significant cross-border deal capability and is the exclusive UK shareholder in Corporate Finance International B.V. (CFI), a partnership of middle-market investment banks and corporate finance advisory firms. With over 230 professionals located in 18 countries across the world, CFI members specialise in cross-border acquisitions, disposals, capital raising, and related services. CFI members have completed 500 cross-border deals since 2010, earning a ranking of 20th in Europe and 29th globally by Thomson Reuters for transactions valued up to €200 million (H1 2021).

CORPORATE FINANCE INTERNATIONAL

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Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the shareholders of

MPCT

on its sale to

LEARNING CURVE GROUP

AGILITAS

Gambit Corporate Finance provided strategic advice to

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to

veezu.

on its funding from

MML RETURN ON IDEAS

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the shareholders of

premier forest products

on the sale of

BROOKS

DPV

to

MURDOCK BUILDER'S MERCHANTS

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the management of

outsource

on its management buy-out with funding from

Close Brothers

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the shareholder of

Learna

on its management buy-out with funding from

HARWOOD CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the shareholders of

HEATHPAK Solidboard & Corrugated Packaging

on its sale to

SOLIDUS SOLUTIONS

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as advisor to

NEWPORT WAFER FAB

on its sale to

nexperia

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the management of

just love food company

on its management buy-out with funding from

Banc

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to the management of

FSG TOOL & DIE LIMITED

on its management buy-out

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to

cmc

on its employee buy-out

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to

SMG Specialist Mortgage Group

on its acquisition of

Y3S Bridging & Commercial

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to

SMG Specialist Mortgage Group

on its sale of

PINK PIG LOANS.

to management

Gambit Corporate Finance acted as lead advisor to

veezu.

on its acquisition of

DIAMOND CARS

A2B TAXIS BARRY 747 500

Gambit acted as lead advisor to

premier forest products

on the demerger of its Irish business

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