

Gambit Corporate Finance toast best ever year with deals worth £500m in 2024

Gambit Corporate Finance orchestrated transactions with a value of more than £500m in 2024 in what was its best ever year.

The mid-market corporate finance advisory firm, established in 1992, said that while the UK mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market experienced some turbulence last year, due to continued macroeconomic headwinds and concerns over the likelihood of significant changes to the UK tax system, its impressive growth has continued. It acted on 16 deal last year.

Notable transactions included acting as lead advisor for Bridgend-based Nodor International in it becoming majority-owned by Inflexion Private Equity. Nodor is the world's leading darts brands, with its products including Winmau dartboards and Red Dragon darts.

The deal, which will accelerate the company's global growth plans, was one of the biggest ever private equity transactions in Wales. While the value of the deal was not disclosed, it is understood to have been well north of £100m.

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It also advised a shareholder of Cross Hands-based leading food and beverage business Castell Howell on the disposal of a material stake in the business

Clinica Baviera SA, the Spanish-quoted business and one of the largest ophthalmology chains in Europe, also turned to Gambit on its entry into the UK market with the acquisition of Optimax. Optimax operates 19 clinics across UK major cities and specialises in eye surgery and ophthalmic services.

Gambit also acted for Newport headquartered timber group Premier Forest on four acquisitions, while also advising Carmathenshire-based Shufflebottom on its acquisition by Embrace Steel Group, which is one of the UK's largest independent providers of steel-framed buildings for industrial and commercial sectors.

Gambit said average enterprise value/Ebitda multiples were strong with solid fundamentals, with it ensuring premium valuations. It said this trend is expected to continue through 2025. Whilst there was a decline in international buyers in the UK M&A mid-market early last year, Gambit said it is experiencing increased international interest, particularly Northern European and US buyers.

Gambit is the exclusive UK shareholder in Corporate Finance International (CFI), a group of global corporate finance advisory firms with 28 offices in 18 countries and some 300

fee earners. CFI enables Gambit and its clients to identify and directly access buyers, sellers and investors on a global basis.

In 2024, CFI completed in excess of 100 transactions and more than 30% of these were cross border. CFI was ranked by Thomson Reuters as number 18 in Europe and in the top 30 globally for transactions up to €200 million in value.

Frank Holmes, Gambit partner, said “We are very proud that Gambit achieved its best ever year in its 32 -year history, despite some turbulence in UK M&A markets. We have invested heavily in the growth of the firm and we have a team of unprecedented quality and size. This, coupled with our unmatched global reach via Corporate Finance International means that we are expecting the momentum generated in 2024 to continue.”

Jason Evans, partner and head of debt advisory at Gambit, said: “The abundance of capital held by private equity funds, venture capital investors, debt funds and acquisitive companies, coupled with a lowering cost of capital and more stable macroeconomic landscape is fuelling a recovery in M&A volumes and debt capital markets.

” Interest has certainly returned for well-prepared borrowers, with appetite for cash-out transactions such as dividend recapitalisations being far more prevalent now than in recent years”.