

Shine comes off luxury jeweller Vashi as it calls in liquidators

Vashi, the upmarket jewellery retailer, has gone bust just months after seeking new funding at a valuation of £250m.

Sky News has learnt that insolvency practitioners from Teneo Restructuring were appointed this week as joint liquidators of Vashi's holding company.

Insiders said the appointment followed a winding-up petition filed by Canary Wharf Group, one of Vashi's retail landlords.

Vashi trades from four stores and is said to employ about 200 people.

The company was founded by Vashi Dominguez, who opened his first store on London's Piccadilly in 2016.

In a statement, Teneo said it had been appointed "by the Secretary of State following the making of a winding-up order".

"The intention of the liquidators is to locate and preserve assets of the business for the benefit of creditors."

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A property industry source said that Canary Wharf Group had been behind the petition and had been backed by more than dozen creditors.

‘Insufficient funding’

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Another source said the appointment of liquidators implied there was insufficient funding in the business to enable it to trade through a conventional administration.

Last year Vashi embarked on a £75m fundraising which it said was to facilitate its expansion into the US.

An investor deck circulated at the time, it said was aiming to secure the money at a £250m valuation or 6 times its 2021 earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation.

It was unclear how large any recoveries might be for creditors.

Sources said it had been attempting to raise significant sums of money for some time.

According to the company's website, its investors included "the founders and CEOs of major global brands, managing partners at private equity firms, and several family offices".

JamJar Investments, the venture capital firm set up by the founders of Innocent Drinks, is among the company's shareholders.

Calls unanswered

Richard Reed, one of the Innocent entrepreneurs behind JamJar, was named in Vashi's investor presentation as a brand advisor.

"Vashi has the potential to do to the jewellery establishment what Airbnb did to hotels – upturn the current consumer proposition, give a better, more authentic personal experience, create an entirely new and better way," Mr Reed was quoted as saying.

It boasted that it had seen tenfold sales growth between 2016 and 2019 and had been ranked 26th in the 2019 Sunday Times list of Britain's fastest-growing private companies.

Mr Dominguez was a regional winner in the accountancy firm EY's Entrepreneur of the Year awards in 2021, the company's website said.

Vashi could not be reached for comment on Wednesday, while calls to its customer service line were met with a message saying the business was closed.