

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

7/1/2021

New Name for Nexus, RBI Owner

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PROSPPIANT

You might not recognize the name Gibraltar Industries. They're the Buffalo, New York, outfit that acquired greenhouse builders Rough Brothers (RBI) in 2015, Nexus Corporation in 2016 and Thermo Energy Systems in 2020. They also own several other companies involved in high-tech processing

for the cannabis sector.

Gibraltar's strategy is becoming more clear now: They want to be a leader in the controlled environment agriculture space, and make North America a leader in the process, and to that end they're rebranding under the new name "Prospiant."

What's a Prospiant? It's derived from the word prosper, meaning "to grow, succeed and flourish in life, health and financially;" while "ant" is the Latin suffix meaning "persons or things who perform an action."

"We want to be agents of prosperity for our customers like you," the company said in the press release.

David Qu, VP of Strategy and Marketing, is a mechanical engineer by training and joined Gibraltar in the fall of 2019 after stints with numerous multinationals, including Ford and Johnson Controls.

David said Prospiant hopes to "transform" the North American controlled environment agriculture industry to make it more competitive.

"We are about four decades behind the Dutch in terms of political support, in terms of education, in terms of ecosystems to develop and advance growers, research ... We're trying to build something that will transform this industry for North America," says David.

"We are going to make a conscious effort to try to influence the industry going forward," he continued. "That's the vision. The new name is simply a reflection of our new identity, which is driven by the strategic shift of the business."

Will they be focused on greenhouse vegetables to the exclusion of floriculture growers and retailers?

"Absolutely not!" David answered. "They were our biggest customer in 2020. ... We are focused right now on serving our retail and flower grower customers. On our new website you'll see we have dedicated market sections to talk to those customers."

Also, they're not dropping the names of the brands that make up Prospiant. Nexus Growing Solutions will be aimed toward the cannabis industry; RBI will be RBI Commercial Solutions, aimed at traditional commercial and retail

greenhouse operations; and Thermal Produce Solutions will focus on greenhouse vegetable operations. As for greenhouse designs and products, they'll define the needed product architectures and offer them across market segments as appropriate.

And in addition to the selling side of the business, Prospiant will be focused on developing research partnerships with universities and building support from legislators for the domestic CEA industry.

"We're no longer just a structure supplier," says David. "We want to be a leader in this industry, to help advance the whole ecosystem of controlled environment agriculture." **GT**