

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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FTD Files Chapter 11

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Wire service florist FTD filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on June 3 on behalf of all its domestic subsidiaries, which includes the FTD brand, online floral service ProFlowers, Shari's Berries, and Personal Creations (a personalized gifts website).

According to one news report, the Downers Grove, Illinois-based company has not turned a profit in four years. According to The Wall Street Journal, the filing is due to "an overload of debt it took on to buy former rival ProFlowers in 2014." However, we also hear that FTD didn't do a good job integrating the various companies after the purchase.

FTD has arranged \$94.5 million in financing to continue day-to-day operations as it tries to sell off its various divisions. It's already entered into an agreement to sell its FTD and ProFlowers businesses in North America and Latin America to Nexus Capital Management for \$95 million, pending approval of the Bankruptcy Court and any higher bids; it has letters of intent from two firms to Personal Creations and Shari's Berries; and it is finalizing the sale of its U.K.-based Interflora to a subsidiary of The Wonderful Company (no doubt Teleflora) for \$59.5 million. (In addition to Teleflora, The Wonderful Company also owns Wonderful Pistachios, POM Wonderful and Fiji Water, among other brands.)

FTD has been around since 1910, and their "Mercury Man" logo is one off the best-recognized symbols in the florist world, with 30,000 member florist shops in more than 125 countries, which is why it's expected FTD will continue under new ownership. **GT**