

Kitchen design studio puts the business in the hands of its team

Dedicated staff at a kitchen design business have been given full control of their futures as it becomes the first employee-owned firm of its type in the UK.

Cameron Interiors, which has a studio in Edinburgh, has become renowned throughout Scotland for luxury German kitchens – and is the country's only Bulthaup dealer, regarded as the most exclusive kitchen brand available.

Founded in 1979 by Leonard Cameron, since 1997 it has been owned and run by Managing Director Kirsten Robeson and her husband Ian. It has since grown to a team of 12 across the two locations, supported by a dedicated and trusted installation team, some of whom have been with the business for more than 40 years.

Having initially considered a trade sale, this idea was quickly rejected and instead they chose to entrust and empower their dedicated team, who work with discerning private clients, architects and carefully selected developers such as Edinburgh based Square & Crescent.

Kirsten, who is originally from Glasgow and has been with the firm since leaving college in 1993, said: "This is my chance to 'pay it forward' to a brilliant team that have enabled us to cement our position in the market and allow us all to look

forward to a bright future.

“Designing kitchens at this upper end of the market is a deeply personal process and the people and the service are as essential as the unwavering quality of the product.

“The notion of selling to a trade buyer was a non-starter, as so much would be put at risk. When I found out about employee-ownership I was intrigued – and huge thanks to Linzi Wilson of Consilium for guiding us through the process as smoothly as possible.”

All shares of Cameron Interiors have now been placed into an Employee Ownership Trust with all staff immediately becoming beneficiaries. In time, all employees can benefit from an annual share of any profits.

To ensure a smooth transition, Kirsten will remain MD for the medium term, fully supporting and advising the business before ultimately retiring with Ian to spend more time with their family. She will also take a seat on the Trust Board alongside Edinburgh manager Louise Delaney, who has many years' experience working to grow the business and has played a crucial role in its east coast expansion. Aileen Wilson will remain Glasgow store manager, having played an integral role in the management team.

Kirsten had been unaware of the employee ownership option until a conversation with her accountants, Consilium CA. Partner, Linzi Wilson introduced the idea, and as Linzi explained how the Employee Ownership Trust worked, Kirsten saw this as the ideal solution.

“Consilium are delighted to have advised Cameron Interiors on the successful transition to employee ownership. It has been a pleasure to work with Kirsten and the team and look forward to the business flourishing under the new ownership structure.

“It was evident from our initial discussions with Kirsten that preserving the legacy of the business and protecting the workforce and her loyal clients were significant priorities for her when considering the options for succession.

“This is the third Employee Buyout we have advised on in recent months, all completed since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Employee Ownership can be an excellent solution for business owners who are considering their succession planning options.

Carole Leslie of Ownership Associates also advised on the deal. With demand for the succession model growing year on year, Carole has now helped more than 60 businesses achieve their goal.

Carole said: “Cameron Interiors is the embodiment of quality kitchen and interior design in Scotland – renowned not just in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but throughout the country.

“Brands like theirs are so often family affairs, making succession difficult. In becoming the first to go through employee ownership they are blazing a trail, one that I’m sure many more will follow.”

April Bingham, Head of Corporate, Bellwether Green, provided legal advice.

April said: “It was fantastic to work with Carole and Linzi again and for the first time with the team at Cameron Interiors. It is obvious that Kirsten was extremely keen to find a path for the company that embraced the whole team and inspired them to participate in its onward journey.”

<https://cameroninteriors.co.uk/>

