



## Case Study

Consumer | Food and Beverage

Investment Banking

Willis Stein & Partners' creation of Ubiquity Brands, a premier snack food platform.

### Background

- Willis Stein & Partners ("Willis Stein") is a Chicago-based private equity firm and owner of Ubiquity Brands.
- Ubiquity Brands is a snack food portfolio company created by Willis Stein's acquisition of Jays Foods, LLC ("Jays") and Lincoln Snacks Company ("Lincoln Snacks").
- Lincoln Snacks is a national direct deliverer and premier manufacturer and marketer of snack food items including Poppycock, Just the Nuts, Screaming Yellow Zonkers and Fiddle Faddle.
- Jays is a Chicago-based, leading Midwest Direct Store Delivery provider, manufacturer and marketer of a full line of quality snack food products including its signature Jays Potato Chips, O-KE-DOKE popcorn, Krunchers! Potato Chips and a line of Hot Stuff snacks.
- Mesirow Financial was engaged by Willis Stein for financial advisory services.

### Challenge

- To deliver investment banking resources and advice to enable Willis Stein to create a growth platform in the attractive but competitive snack food industry.

### Action

- Mesirow Financial introduced Tim Healy, an experienced food & beverage industry executive, to Willis Stein. Tim's background, which included expertise at large food & beverage companies such as Frito-Lay and private equity firms such as J.W. Childs, was a good fit with Willis Stein's strategy to build a leading competitor in the snack food industry.
- Mesirow Financial served as buy-side advisor to Willis Stein's purchases of Lincoln Snacks and Jays. (Jays was purchased through a \$363 bankruptcy process.)

### Result

- The Ubiquity Brands platform was created with the combination of these two companies.
- Mesirow Financial continues to assist Willis Stein and Ubiquity Brands as the exclusive financial advisor on its snack food platform acquisition and growth strategies.



### **Additional Services offered by Mesirow Financial**

**Investment Management** Institutional money manager in the areas of hedge fund strategies, private equity, currency and commodity management, real estate, U.S. value and international equities and fixed income, as well as investment advisory services for private clients and retirement plan sponsors

**Global Markets** Well-capitalized broker/dealer with expertise in investment banking, sale-leaseback financing and non-discretionary brokerage services

**Insurance Services** Full-service insurance brokerage and consultant specializing in the areas of property and casualty, surety, employee benefits, life and disability and private client insurance, as well as structured settlement services

**Consulting** Financial advisory services including corporate recovery, litigation, investigative and intelligence services, interim management\* and valuation services, as well as real estate consulting and compensation and executive benefit strategies

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### **About Mesirow Financial Investment Banking**

Mesirow Financial's Investment Banking group focuses exclusively on middle-market transactions and serves established middle-market companies and large corporations, both public and private, in merger & acquisition advisory, capital markets advisory, restructuring and special situations, fairness and solvency opinions, board of directors advisory and special committee representation. We are a national firm with strategic initiatives in China, Southern Europe and the Middle East. Our practice combines rich industry knowledge and long-standing relationships with expert advisory services in the middle market, and our full range of services allows us to serve clients at any the stage of their business.

### **About Mesirow Financial**

Mesirow Financial is a diversified financial services firm headquartered in Chicago. Founded in 1937, we are an independent employee-owned firm with offices across the country and in London. With expertise in Investment Management, Global Markets, Insurance and Consulting, Mesirow Financial strives to meet the financial needs of institutions, public sector entities, corporations and individuals. For more information about Mesirow Financial, visit our website at [mesirowfinancial.com](http://mesirowfinancial.com).

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\* Interim Management services provided by Mesirow Financial Interim Management, LLC

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