

UK business split into four sectors following major acquisitions

New divisions at Lastminute

LASTMINUTE.COM has split its UK business into four divisions following the departure of managing director Richard Bowden-Doyle.

Chief operating officer Ian McCaig decided the role of MD was too big for one person following the company's raft of acquisitions over the past 12 months – including Medhotels for £22.6 million, the £12.1 million purchase of hotel booking agency First Option and the £54.9 million share deal for rival online agency Online Travel Corporation.

Medhotels chief executive John Kent becomes retail MD with responsibility for consumer-facing business including the central Lastminute business.

Online Travel Corporation chief executive Mark Jones is the new business-to-business and business-to-trade MD, with responsibility for trade business Holidayandmore.com

REPORT BY PAUL NELSON

and the group's white labelling projects.

Holiday Autos deputy chief executive Doug Sawers will be MD for group operations, while Lopo Champalimaud is the lifestyle MD, responsible for non-travel related products and customer relationship management.

Holiday Autos MD Mathew Hart becomes marketing and communication director. Hart is replaced by Brian Murphy, who moves from his role as Activehotels.com marketing and sales director.

Group commercial director Andrew Windsor will take up a role managing the firm's business travel division, including Travelstore and the former First Option business. His job title has yet to be decided.

McCaig said the restructure is designed

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to improve the integration of the acquisitions, create a flat management structure and faster decision-making process.

“One managing director was just not going to work, they would become a bottleneck for lots of issues,” he said. “Richard and myself looked at it and it was clear the management structure had to be flatter. The restructure has made the best of the skills within the company.”

Meanwhile, McCaig is heading a review of the group's sub brands, which includes Medhotels, Gemstone Travel and OTC.

All the brands will be reviewed to see if they should be rebranded Lastminute, duel branded or left as separate entities.

