

Case Study

Company: Darkstar - MBY (Ltd.)

Business sector: Tourism and Leisure

Established: 2009

Number of employees in St.Helens: 25

Premises: Leisure arena – 9,000 sq ft

Location: Darkstar, The Arena, Central Street, St.Helens, WA10 1TZ

Support received: Grant support, Marketing support & promotion.

Company Profile:

MBY Limited was established in 2002, operating in property rental and developments to public bodies and government departments. The company has invested in two large leisure and tourism facilities in St.Helens; Rumble, Rumble – a children’s soft play centre and Darkstar – a multi-media laser tag gaming centre.

Following the success of “Rumble, Rumble” and identifying a gap in the market, MBY Limited invested £1.5m, at the height of the recession, to transform a former derelict shed and car park into the UK’s biggest laser tag entertainment arena.

The centre has created 25 jobs and features a 9,000 sq ft, multi level ‘Hex’ arena equipped with the world’s most sophisticated laser tag technology, a 60 cover licensed bar & Italian restaurant and three party/ recreation rooms for group and corporate events.

In its first six months of operation, Darkstar has welcomed over 80,000 visitors, including gamers from Australia, China, France, Germany, Malaysia and Spain.

MBY Ltd worked closely with St Helens Chamber and St.Helens Economic Development Team on this new venture, gaining support with start up-funding and ongoing business support from the Chamber’s Entrepreneur Kickstart programme.

In 2009 MBY limited was short-listed in the Entrepreneur of the Year category at the St.Helens Tourism Awards.

Testimonial:

Lynn Ben-Yousef, Manager says: “ We have received phenomenal support from the Chamber and Council to deliver and market Darkstar in the Liverpool City region and beyond. St.Helens’ location, midway between Liverpool and Manchester, provides a wide catchment area for regular visitors. Excellent motorway and public transport links have helped in attracting visitors from across the UK.”