

Successful Applicant: South Central Barbers

Awarded £10,000 for flooring, plastering, stud walls and ceiling work



Interview with our Grant Advisor, Crover:
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Tell me about yourself and South Central Barbers.

I'm Robb Maksimczyk (he/him) and South Central is a barbershop at 3 Marsh Street, BS1 1RT.

The end goal for me ever since I first got into barbering was to have my own shop and create a brand that was bringing something different to the table.

What do you do that's different?

From the outset, when you first step into South Central, you can see the difference in the décor and in our attitude.

As much as I love my job, over the last few years I've found the industry has become a bit of a parody of itself. It can take itself much too seriously. It's become a bit too cool for school, and that was something that I'm not!

I wanted a shop that embodied that kind of spirit of not being too serious and was welcoming to every kind of person: all ages, all genders, from all backgrounds in a space that is warm and welcoming and most importantly, fun!

'I wanted a shop that...was welcoming to every kind of person...'

How have you diversified Marsh Street and the city centre?

I think most importantly, we're an independent business. Just a quick scan around outside our front door shows you that there's not many other independent businesses here. We've got a chain pub right opposite and a chain pizzeria next door.

It's difficult to be able to bring an independent business to the city centre.

If you look at other barbers in the area, we are very different in that we're not just a gent's barbershop. Something that I always wanted to make was a unisex barbers.

Lots of styling and grooming skills come under the barbering umbrella and we're always looking to serve clients of all genders.



How important is sustainability to your business and what commitments have you made to be more sustainable in your new unit?

We've just started to make little changes here and there. We've completely eradicated bottled water, which we used to offer in the old shop and offer all clients water from a filter jug.

Previously our hair products were an Australian brand and a Dutch brand and now we mainly stock a brand we created from scratch over the last couple of years which is produced in Tiverton, 60 miles away.

We've managed to significantly reduce the number of products we have coming from overseas by creating our own product line.



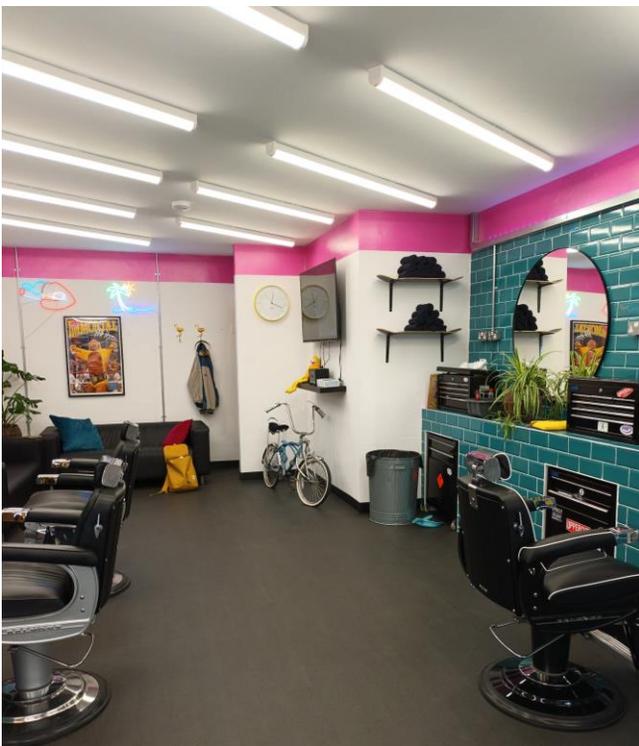
Tell me more about launching your own product line and how that felt.

It was a lot of work!

We looked at how many hair product brands were on the market and there are so many but they're all either geared towards guys who are into motorbikes and being super manly and masculine. If they're a British brand they tend to focus heavily on the Union Jack, and feel a little bit Nationalist, and that's fine, but I was trying to find a product which matched the aesthetic and values of my shop, and I couldn't find anything.

All the existing brands were already being stocked by other shops in the area, so we wanted to have something that fit with our aesthetic, that nobody else was doing. I started working with a lab down in Tiverton 3-4 years ago to create a brand which embodies the values of South Central Barbers. It needed to be fun, not take itself too seriously and represent all our clients.

It's not just for guys who have short hair and want traditional styles, it's for everybody. It's not a men's product or a women's product. It's somewhere in the middle and works for everyone.



'We're incredibly inclusive... we want to be the nice guys of barbering'

How does South Central make Bristol a better place to live for our local residents?

We're a welcoming place. Barber shops give people an opportunity to come in for so much more than just a haircut. Clients want to talk, have some of that 'barbershop therapy' and we always want to offer that. We welcome anyone to come in for a coffee and a chat. We're incredibly inclusive, and that's how we always want to be. We want to be the nice guys of barbering; your friendly neighbourhood barbershop with a modern twist.

We also always work with local brands wherever we can. We work with local printers for our merch and only work with product distributors based in Bristol. We always make a point to not only support local clients but also local businesses.



'Without this grant we would have been in an incredibly tight position (it's) given us so much breathing room'

How has this funding helped your business to trade and achieve your goals?

Without it, we would have really been up the Swanny!

It's so expensive now to be able to start an independent business in the centre of Bristol. It can feel near enough impossible, so having this kind of funding makes such a difference to us.

Just to cover the building work and get into a position where we could have a unit we could actually turn into a Barber shop was so hard, and that's what the grant's done for us.

Without this grant we would have been in an incredibly tight position and that's not how anyone wants to begin. This funding has given us so much breathing room to be able to function without the stress of wondering whether we'll make it through the first 6 months.

Visit South Central Barbers

3 Marsh Street, Bristol, BS1 1RT
Web: wearesouthcentral.com
Tel: 0117 929 2309



What is your favourite thing about running a small business?

It was so hard to get into the industry when I started barbering, so my favourite thing is being able to provide an opportunity to new people.

Nurturing new barbers who really want to do this and give them the opportunity and the focus to get them from having never picked up a pair of scissors to earning good money and creating a living for themselves.