Oct 16, 2014 00:00 BST

Northumbria University students take summer market by storm

While many of their counterparts may be enjoying the traditional life of a student, one group of 22-year-olds has launched a successful holiday business with help and support from Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Summer Takeover, which launched in 2013, was created by Northumbria University students Ben Trattles, Warren Pearson and Harley Gibb. Ben chose to complete an Enterprise placement as part of his degree and along with Warren and Harley, has become the University's most successful placement to date, achieving a turnover in the region of £100k in its first year alone.

The business caters to the unique market of young travellers who wish to work abroad by offering working holiday packages to party destinations. Via the [Summer Takeover web page](), built by local North East digital agency, Big Bad Robot Digital, travellers can book everything in one place, securing a job, accommodation, the help of experienced representatives and an itinerary of activities in the first week which introduce them to the lifestyle.

Ben approached Northumbria University's Enterprise Manager, Graham Baty, in his second year of study, to discuss his upcoming placement year with an idea to start his own business rather than opt for a more traditional industrial placement.

The Enterprise placement is a unique course aspect which allows participants to grow and test their own business idea in a supportive environment. Students have access to specialised business mentors, free office accommodation and support from the Student and Graduate Enterprise team, one of whom acts as their placement supervisor.

With over 10 years' experience in helping to create a range of start-up businesses, drawing on an established mentoring network of industry experts, Northumbria University Student and Graduate Enterprise was named the fourth best university for start-up businesses in the Witty Review 2013.

Business with Marketing student, Ben Trattles, realised a gap in the market when planning to work abroad with his business partners Warren and Harley.

Ben said "Although thousands of young people work abroad each year, we experienced first-hand the difficulty of securing and organising all elements of a working holiday from home. We booked our flights, securing jobs and accommodation once we arrived, but not everyone has the confidence to do this. We realised the need for a company offering working holidays packages which provide the security of booking each component with a reputable UK company."

When the threesome returned to the UK, they knew exactly what was needed and developed a business plan for Summer Takeover, with a dream to plug the gap in the market and turn their love of travelling into their livelihood with the help of the University.

As part of the Enterprise placement Ben, Warren and Harley received full access to the Hatchery, Northumbria University's free on-campus office accommodation for start-ups, as well as access to the specialist business mentors, in particular benefiting from free marketing and legal mentoring from industry professionals.

Ben said "The main reason businesses and other student start-ups struggle to launch is a lack of resources, but Northumbria University's Enterprise placement year enables its students to test and grow their business in a supportive environment.

"We received invaluable advice and services such as free marketing and legal mentoring, which meant we were able to create a professional and well thought out business model and I can honestly say that we wouldn't be where we are today without the help of the University, both from the skills gained from our courses and the support they have given us to get Summer Takeover off the ground."

Graham Baty Enterprise Manager at Northumbria University said "Northumbria University is committed to developing the entrepreneurial and enterprising skills of its students. We provide wide-ranging support to help our students and graduates to maximise the potential of their business plans and continue this through the start-up process and beyond.

"We're thrilled at the success of Summer Takeover, it shows our students have what's needed to become successful entrepreneurs when provided with the right tools and I'm incredibly excited to see what the future holds for the three of them". Summer Takeover working holiday packages sold out for the Easter and summer vacation period in 2014 and looks set to continue this success. They are now looking to the future with a focus on increasing market share and consolidating their position in their five current resorts; Ibiza, Magaluf, Ayia Napa, Malia and Zante with plans to expand to more destinations in the future. The placement has successfully created three jobs for founder Ben, and partners Warren and Harley, which will continue full time when they graduate in 2015.

For more information on Summer Takeover, please visit summertakeover.com or to attend a Northumbria University open day visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday

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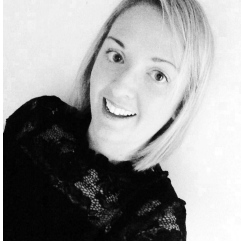Student Communications Manager
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