

# Leading lights of industry at show



Steel Service Centre UK sales manager Andy Hume and UK sales director Andy Evans, who hope their presence at the event will lead to new orders

A laser cutting firm based near Stafford sold its expertise to more than 8,000 potential buyers at a Midlands manufacturing show.

Steel Service Centre, at Hixon, which has recently invested in excess of £400,000 in the UK's largest tube laser machine, took the opportunity to promote recent contract wins and a range of new services to potential new customers at Midlands Manufacturing 2006 at Coventry's Ricoh Arena.

The company was one of 55 manufacturers that exhibited as part of the 'Made in the West Midlands' zone.

Andy Evans, UK sales director, said: "We are delighted to promote the region's engineering capabilities and the new breed of firms that are world class and innovative.

## Thrive

"With such a captive audience, there is little doubt that we have picked up a number of new sales leads and, hopefully in the long term, the odd contract here and there."

Steel Service Centre says its success demonstrates how manufacturing can thrive in today's competitive environment, with the right level of investment and expertise paving the way for new business in the automotive, aerospace, yellow goods and construction markets.

Now in its sixth year, the firm is set to smash the £2.5m annual sales barrier and could end up adding to its 20-strong workforce by the end of the year.

The event was supported by Acceler-

By Nick Pritchard

[n.pritchard@expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:n.pritchard@expressandstar.co.uk)

ate, Advantage West Midlands, MAS-WM and the Technology Innovation Centre (tic).

Rachel Eade, Accelerate programme manager and the driving force behind the 'Made in the West Midlands' brand, says the time is right to follow the company's approach.

She said: "Applying existing expertise to new applications is the only way that manufacturers can continue to grow and this is going to be extremely relevant in light of cheap foreign competition and the ever increasing impact of globalisation.

"Everyone was extremely upbeat and optimistic for the future and, if some of the companies here are anything to go by, there is a great determination to not only survive, but penetrate new markets.

"For example, there was a manufacturer days away from moving into a state-of-the-art new site, a world-class designer of heavy duty cleaning machines and a pressings firm with fresh interest in the sporting world. Diversification, in a nutshell, has got to be the way forward."

'Made in the West Midlands' brings together Accelerate, Advantage West Midlands, MAS-WM and the 'tic' network under one banner, with the aim of streamlining delivery and promoting the capacity and skills of manufacturers on both the domestic and international stage.

The distinctive branding, which has its own website ([www.madeinthewestmidlands.com](http://www.madeinthewestmidlands.com)) and corporate literature, is also planning to take special zones at some of the largest manufacturing shows in the world, including Paris, Frankfurt and Detroit.

For further information, please contact Rachel Eade on 0121 607 0123 or e-mail [info@madeinthewestmidlands.com](mailto:info@madeinthewestmidlands.com)