



## Success Story: Bushi-Ban International – Clear Lake

Master Zuhair Hillail

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This martial arts training center with a world-class reputation continues its astonishing growth rate with the help of the SBDC. Bushi Ban International-Clear Lake, located at 915 Oak Grove at El Camino, was established in May of 1994 by Zuhair and Carolina Hillail, owners.

Zuhair's training in the martial arts dates back 30 years to his youth in his native Kuwait. He has earned an impressive number of world titles. From the first, his reputation and strong marketing skills attracted a large following and his business grew steadily, reaching capacity by the end of 2001.

In December of 2001, the Hillails came to the SBDC for assistance with a loan application to buy the vacant facility next door for expansion of the business. They obtained a loan large enough to purchase and renovate the adjoining property. Sales doubled in 2002.

When the lease for the original space came up for renewal in 2003, Zuhair again asked his SBDC consultant for assistance in applying for a loan to buy that building. After successfully acquiring that property, the Hillails added a 1,000 square foot workout facility and a 1,000 square foot outside facility for evening programs.

Along with the continued guidance from the Grand Master of Bushi Ban, Zulfi Ahmed, and the SBDC, Zuhair was constantly in pursuit of growth and spreading the goodwill of Bushi Ban throughout the local communities from 2004 through 2006.

Pearland became the next target market-leading to the opening of a 4125 square foot facility in March 2006. At the same time, research on the Friendswood community was being conducted because it conveniently lies between Pearland and Clear Lake. Property management of a newly renovated center approached Zuhair to consider a new location. In April 2007, Bushi Ban continued its expansion by opening a 3550 square foot facility.

Due to the enormous growth in League City, it was only a natural direction for Bushi Ban to pursue this market. In less than 90 days, Zuhair was able to locate a site, complete the build out, and have a February, 2008 opening.

Bushi Ban now employs 40 full time employees with annual sales eight times what they were in 2001. Master Zuhair Hillail is also a highly valued member of the San Jacinto College SBDC Advisory Board.

