

Insomniac Design finds its niche working with nonprofit organizations

by **Matrissa Leggett**

When Desiree Walsh Spencer opened Insomniac Design in March 2008, she had one client and other small jobs to get her started. Now she has a client base of 10 and projects planned ahead to get her through the rest of the year and into 2010.

"It has been a wild ride," Walsh Spencer said. "The year has gone pretty fast."

Insomniac Design specializes in brand management and marketing solutions for small and large businesses and non-profit organizations. Walsh Spencer works in areas from identity development, logo, Web site and stationery designs to creating marketing campaigns.

"I start with the idea for a logo and develop it to see how it will look on paper or the Web and how it will branch out to other marketing pieces," she said.

About half of Walsh Spencer's clients are in Omaha, but she also works with organizations in York, Neb., Kansas City, Denver and South Dakota.

"I have past experience working with large and small companies," Walsh Spencer said. "I want to develop a niche working with non-profits and smaller companies because I feel like I can make a larger difference. It is rewarding to help a company that may have felt they could not afford a better marketing plan than they had. Although I enjoy working with larger companies too."

Her first client was the Omaha Area Youth Orchestra.

"I am on their board, and they wanted new designs for their 50th anniversary," Walsh Spencer said.

She has built the business through net-



Desiree Walsh Spencer, left, principal of Insomniac Design, meets with Jenny Hoefener, community outreach coordinator for United Cerebral Palsy of Nebraska ... Specializing in brand management and marketing solutions.

working with contacts in the industry.

"Last year was really good, I made more in 2008 than I would have made in my previous job," Walsh Spencer said. "I wish I could say 2009 will be even better than last year, but non-profit organizations were hit by the economy in October of 2008, so I have not had as much work from them. July was slow, but I have enough work to keep me busy through the winter and into the spring. It's nice to know I have that

security.

"It should be getting better in 2010. I have some new clients coming on board, and some of them are bigger companies which will help."

Walsh Spencer said she had thought

about the idea of opening her own company for about a year before actually taking the plunge.

"I had been working and working but not actually seeing evidence of helping anyone," she said. "I was feeling burned out.

"When I was laid off by my former company, it opened the opportunity to go out on my own. Now I feel like I am giving back to the community more."

Walsh Spencer said she named the company Insomniac Design because she often comes up with her most creative ideas late at night.

"It's when the mind is at ease that the best ideas happen," she said. "I keep a pad and pen by the bed."

Walsh Spencer grew up in York and attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she earned a degree in fine arts with an emphasis in graphic design. She worked as a freelance graphic artist for two years. She moved to Omaha in 2003 where she worked for a small design firm and developed her interest in working with non-profit organizations. She then moved on to a larger advertising agency where she was an art director for two years.

Walsh Spencer is married to Brian Spencer who is an architect with RDG Planning and Design.

Her future goals for the company include hiring an employee in a Web development role.