

Company growing in ashes of dot-com bust

- *Bizresearch offers service in the booming field of search-engine marketing.*

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Despite the economic downturn that many Internet-based businesses felt through the dot-com bust, one such company in Worthington has continued to grow and thrive.

Laura Thieme has built her business from the ground up, starting in the corner of her bedroom, moving to the dining room and more recently to a space in Officescape on West Wilson Bridge Road.

Bright red walls and photographs from around the world adorn the walls in the new office. Thieme took the pictures herself during her many international trips speaking on search-engine marketing.

"You won't see cubicles or gray anywhere in this office," she said.

Thieme's company, Bizresearch, got its start in 1997. It provides search-engine marketing, tracking and return-on-investment analysis services for retailers, Fortune 500 companies and select law firms throughout the United States and Europe. Bizresearch also offers Web site development.

"People were more interested in how to get their Web site on the top of a search-engine site than what I was talking about in the early '90s," Thieme said. "It was something no one had ever heard of. I could get them listed."

With her help, Thieme said a business can increase its Internet traffic, get new and more business leads and increase its sales.

"If business did not increase by double digits, then I'm not doing a very good job for them," she said. "I am a results-oriented person."

Thieme said she saw the demand and growth pick up in 2004.

"When the dot-com was shaky, people wanted something that had proved results," she said. "I can give that to them."

Thieme said Bizresearch averages an increase in revenue of about 40 percent each year.

Selecting her clients takes time, Thieme said. She has to turn away so many people that she can be selective in who she works with.

"I have to like them, and I have the luxury to make that decision," she said. "They must have a good Web site or be willing to spend money to make it better. They must be good at what they do. They must be good people. I have to like the way they do business and I have to like how they treat their employees and me."

Thieme attributes part of her success to her personal philosophy of growing slowly.

"I take it in steps," she said. "That is why I am here today."

Currently, Bizresearch employs 11 people and has room for 23. Thieme said she expects to hire two people each month between now and the end of January.

"I will be increasing by one-third by January 1," she said.

On top of staff expansion, Thieme said she is expecting to outgrow her current space within the next two years.

"We have a larger demand that our company can handle," Thieme said. "I am turning away business in the millions of dollars because I don't have enough staff."

In 1993, Thieme graduated with a bachelor's degree in Russian studies from Ohio State University. Thieme worked for American Electric Power in Columbus before working for Deloitte & Touche in St. Petersburg, Russia.