

WSI knows the Internet, business

by JENNIFER DECKER
staff reporter

LAPEER—Charlene Karppinen's job is to simplify technology and business troubleshooting through what she termed "Internet aspirin."

Karppinen, is owner and Internet business consultant for WSI—which stands for "we simplify the Internet." WSI is a global franchise business with less than 12 Michigan locations. Karppinen opened her Lapeer location in April.

"I am not a Web designer or developer," she said. "I sit down with a business, ask what are their business headaches, what keeps them up at night. I'm a problem solver and start with operations and narrow it down to specific issues."

Karppinen said a typical Internet business analysis can take anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes. She's found the biggest cost saver to a business is e-mail marketing and referred to it as "permission marketing," meaning it's not spam, but truly wanted by the recipient.

She explained her services are an investment and said Internet marketing is the best one can get because a return will be obtained on original investment. Furthermore, she said it's the

Her laptop computer functions as her office and Karppinen is on the go wherever she's needed. That usually starts with a Webscan or running up to 10 different Internet tools.

A former teacher, Karppinen taught 18 years in Oakland County schools. While she left the classroom formally to seek out new opportunities, Karppinen figured her teaching continues in her job.

"This is teaching. Once a business owner understands a strategy and process, they go, 'Oh, wow.' The biggest problem with existing Web sites is no one can find them. My target market is the small to medium-sized businesses of 5-100 employees," she said. "The bottom line is this is a custom-tailored Internet business proposal detailing affordable solutions."

For Karppinen's job, she had to take e-learning lessons, in addition to 1/2 year of in-house training in Toronto, but it's all part of ever-changing technology.

Karppinen's greatest sense of accomplishment is "seeing the excitement on the client's face when they realize they designed a project."

Her future plans are to grow her business and add staff.

Karppinen's hobbies include bread baking, being active in her church and with Growth and Opportunities of Lapeer. Her husband is John and they have two grown daughters and one grandchild.