

Tech savvy

InnerEye Studios enjoying the pace of business in W-S

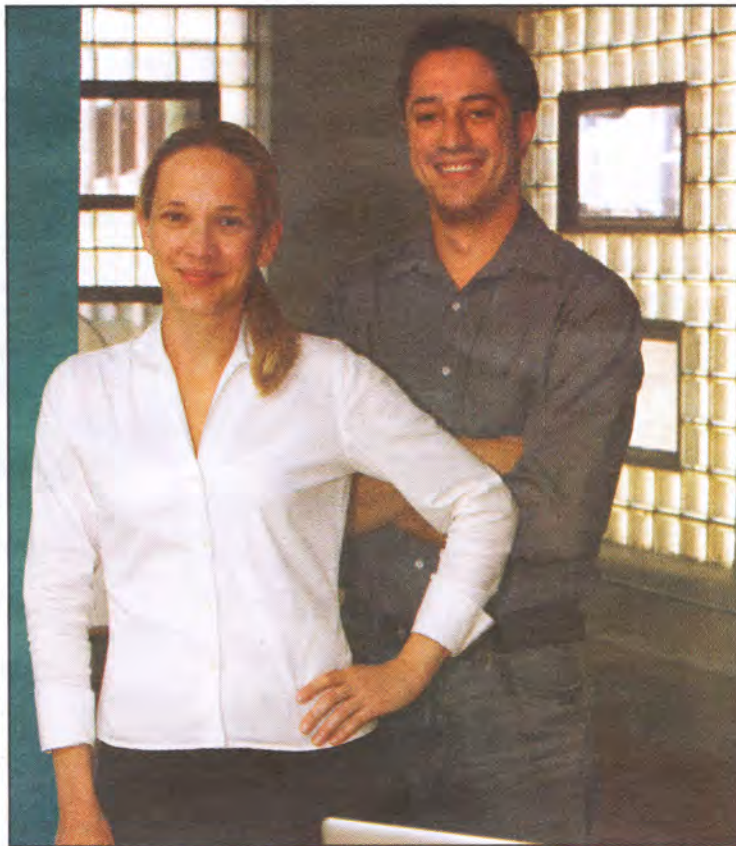
WINSTON-SALEM — You know all that energy that's gone into updating the Triad's image from old-fashioned manufacturing to young, tech-savvy and "knowledge-based"? Joshua Moe and Nadja Rauber-Moe could be the poster children for that effort.

In 2008 the couple, both in their early 30s, relocated the web and software development company they founded 11 years ago, InnerEye Studios, from Boston to Winston-Salem, drawn by the region's technology push and its quality of life. Since then, they've jumped in to the community with both feet, working on projects for regional economic developers, nonprofits and for-profit firms.

What does InnerEye do? Builds web sites and software, including recently a number of mobile apps for Apple's iPhone and Google's Android platform. It develops programs for partners such as Once Upon an App, a private company in Winston-Salem, as well as nonprofit organizations such as the Piedmont Triad Partnership, the Center for Design Innovation, Boston College and Conservation International.

How did it start? Joshua was a recent graduate of Boston College and Nadja a graphic designer in Brazil when they met and started InnerEye in Boston as the tech bubble was ready to burst in 1999. Many of their high-tech contemporaries didn't survive, but InnerEye stayed lean and flexible, and modeled itself as a partner to marketing and ad agencies that wanted to promote their tech savvy to clients. "We also knew there were a lot of people in the business losing jobs who would be eager to work with us," Joshua Moe says.

Why the move? Boston is a big, expensive pond for a relatively small fish like InnerEye, and they saw more opportunity and a better quality of life for their future family in the Triad. They learned that North Carolina has more nonprofits — a prime niche for InnerEye — per capita than other states, and they could see that Winston-Salem was



Joshua Moe and Nadja Rauber-Moe are owners of InnerEye Studios LLC in Winston-Salem. The web and software development company moved from Boston to the Triad in 2008.

JULIE KNIGHT/THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Who is in charge: Joshua Moe and Nadja Rauber-Moe

Year founded: 1999

Employees: Four

betting heavily on technology and education through the Piedmont Triad Research Park, Wake Forest University and otherwise. "We wanted to be in an area where we could have a positive impact on the economy and culture," Joshua Moe says.

Biggest competition? Tons of other developers that can be located anywhere in the world. But the virtual nature of the business is also a blessing. A big reason Joshua and Nadja could pull up stakes and move to Winston-Salem was because they knew they'd be able to hold on to the relationships

they'd already built with New England clients such as Boston College and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Long-term goal? To become more product-oriented than service-oriented. InnerEye has done well and learned much by working on behalf of its clients, but there's more profit to be earned building mobile apps and other software to sell itself, Nadja Rauber-Moe says. The company will stay lean though, probably growing to a team of around 10, not counting contractors. "We want the core team to be small enough that we can continue to touch all the key points," Nadja says.

Advice for other entrepreneurs? You'll need access to a lot of skills and knowledge, but you don't necessarily have to pay for them. InnerEye has no debt and no outside angel investors, but Joshua and Nadja have been able to get advice just by asking for it. "If you hold people in high esteem, it's nothing short of amazing how much they'll be willing to help," Joshua Moe says.

— Compiled by Matt Evans