

Brian Zimmer



Raikes School MBA Graduate -- UNL

Zimmer Consulting, LLC

Story by Nancy Evans & Updated by Brian Zimmer

The Jeffrey S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (formerly the J.D. Edwards Honors Program) develops leaders for this era of expanding information technology and business globalization. Students live and learn in the Esther L. Kauffman Academic Residential Center located at the heart of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln campus. Students are selected for this innovative program based on high academic achievement, outstanding leadership experience, demonstrated interest in computer science and business, and career goals.

The program is a recognized leader in interdisciplinary computer science and business education. It provides an education balanced in technology and management while developing professional skills in leadership, communications, and collaboration. Graduates, who are among the most highly sought-after in the field, understand the strategic uses of technology and are able to bridge the gap between technology and business perspectives.

When talking about designing technology solutions for small businesses in rural Nebraska, Brian Zimmer speaks like a veteran. After all, he's been working with them nearly a decade—since he was a sophomore in high school in the tiny farm town of David City, Neb.

Now, as a MBA graduate from UNL just stepping into his twenties, Zimmer is looking to expand upon the small businesses he now serves through his business, Zimmer Consulting LLC. Zimmer is also staying active at UNL having recently accepted a half-time appointment as a lecturer within the Raikes School.

Outside of the University, Zimmer designs and implements network information systems for his clients, does custom programming and, in the case of

a telemarketing client, maintains the information system and writes the scripts callers use as they're talking on the phone. While at the University, Zimmer works with Raikes School students helping them learn to manage software development consulting projects in the Design Studio capstone class.

Zimmer's goal is to build an enterprise that will spread the advantages of the Internet and other technologies to businesses in rural Nebraska.

"Small businesses should have access to similar levels of technology and services as medium or large businesses, and my goal is to make that happen. I like challenges and finding solutions," he said. "My goal is to support small businesses so they can utilize more advanced technologies even though they're in rural Nebraska."

"I want to overcome the distance gap of not having local resources, like consulting," Zimmer added. "I'm also doing research to develop products to help small businesses."

He got his start by helping a friend of his father who was having some trouble with the computers at his business. There aren't a lot of computer consultants in rural areas, so Zimmer offered to give it a try.

"I proposed doing it for a small fee because I would be learning and they would get the same work done for a lot less," he said.

He found solutions for the businessman, and soon, he was offering help to others.

Zimmer also is a "value-added" reseller of Dell computers, modifying computers that he purchases to fit a customers' needs, then reselling and installing them.

His clients include professional service firms, non-profits, and government entities in Columbus, David City, and Lincoln. He does Web hosting for a number of other clients, and is focusing on developing core product and service offerings applicable to small businesses.

Hands-on experience is a big part of the honors program in which he graduated. He studied abroad at Oxford one summer, taking two international economics courses, and worked at a start-up business another summer. Zimmer also spent a summer in Ord, Nebraska as part of the Nebraska Rural Initiative learning more about small business needs.

"I definitely plan to stay in Nebraska," Zimmer said. "I've been to other places and nowhere has the same friendly feel."

"I like actually getting to know people—in rural Nebraska you can walk down the street and say 'Hi.' You can't do that for the most part in a lot of other places."

This story was commissioned and first published by the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative.