



Leadership Profile: Kathleen Cesa

By Ellen Fishel

Kathleen Cesa currently serves as the owner of KOC Member Services, an association management company in New Albany, Ohio. Cesa was elected to the OSAE board in February to serve one term. She started KOC Member services in April 2003 after working as the director of support services for TCS Software. Cesa manages five groups under KOC. She said that her main goal at KOC is to take all the day-to-day burdens off of the group leaders that she manages. By doing this, the leaders are able to focus more on developing their mission, Cesa said. She indicated that her greatest accomplishments when working with her clients come when she can allow the volunteer leaders she works with to “focus energy on their passion.”

Cesa entered the association industry about 25 years ago. She said she received a job offer and immediately fell in love with the industry. She earned her CAE distinction in 2006. According to the ASAE website, less than five percent of association professionals receive this distinction. Cesa said that having the CAE distinction helps earn her credibility in the association world. Along with signifying that she could pass the exam, the distinction “shows you have a broad range of experience,” Cesa said.



Cesa

Cesa said that shifting nature in the way people communicate is one of the biggest challenges facing the association industry today. With technological changes and increased emphasis on using social networking websites such as Facebook and Myspace, Cesa said that people in the association industry must change the way they interact with clients.

“People have to learn to think differently about how we want to present benefits to members,” Cesa said.

If Cesa wasn’t working in the association industry, she said that she would like to be a college professor. She said that being a professor in sociology or anthropology would be ideal, because the association industry deals a lot with these fields by examining how people think and interact.

When she is not working, Cesa enjoys biking and walking. She calls herself an “avid reader” and loves to spend time with her two grandsons. 

Ellen Fishel is an intern for Encompass Media Group.