

CHANNEL

Professional Services Action Team Forms Inside CEDIA

Most CE pros know about CEDIA. They understand the benefits, the networking opportunities, the training. One thing they may not realize, however, is how many peripheral CE businesses are hard-working CEDIA members.

One segment of the CE universe has seen its profile better illuminated in recent months thanks to Leslie Stevens of Eclipse Marketing.

Led by Stevens, the CEDIA Professional Services Action Team has been created to highlight the contributions of independent service providers to the industry. Marketing firms, PR experts, business management consultants, product developers—all of these CEDIA members will now have their own action team under the organization's structure.

Stevens started the initiative two years ago, presenting the idea to CEDIA. There are about eight independent service providers currently sitting on the action team. There are about 50 member companies overall that fall into the independent service provider category.

"And there's maybe 50 more that would be [in that category] and have done volunteer work for CEDIA, but haven't had incentive to join," she says.

According to Stevens, those non-members now have incentive to join, meaning that her action team not only benefits her service providers and those that would hire them, but also CEDIA itself by potentially increasing membership.

"CE pros have an asset of unique talent right within the industry; that's the message we really want to get out there," says Stevens. "We want the channel to know we're here."

Mario Leon of Electronic Solutions Company was eager to join Stevens in developing her action team. "It's long overdue," he says. "I've been working in this industry for 20 years, and a lot of the folks in this industry don't understand what a consultant can do for them."



Leslie Stevens, of Eclipse Marketing, spearheaded the creations of CEDIA's Professional Services Action Team, giving voice to some of the industry's hardest working CE pros.

Leslie Shiner of The Shiner Group was another early recruit of Stevens. The Shiner Group does a lot of financial management consulting within the CE industry. "CEDIA members need someone with expertise that understands this industry," she says. For this reason, she was immediately on board with Stevens.

"CE pros have an asset of unique talent right within the industry."

—Leslie Stevens, CEDIA PSAT chairperson

"This really goes a long way in helping CEDIA members

know there are people out there that understand this industry," Shiner says.

The first steps for the Professional Services Action Team involve establishing a set of ethical standards. "It will include standards for not revealing client information, approaching each other's clients," Stevens explains. "We want to raise awareness, develop a code of ethics and work to help improve some of the issues that have to do with training. We're also recruiting other companies."

The action group now has a Crosspoint microsite available to members. For more general information about the Professional Services Action Team, visit www.cedia.org/psat. —Geoffrey Oldmixon

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