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Local Media Relations Firm Flourishes Under CEO

By Kathryn Streeter

Chryssa Zizos' rise to the top began long ago. As a preteen, she elaborated on the qualities of a CEO in a letter to her older sister, signing her name, "Chryssa Zizos, CEO."

"From a young age I knew I would own a business," Zizos said from her corner office a short walk from the King Street Metro. "It was simply a matter of time."

Today Zizos sits atop Live Wire Media Relations LLC, a small firm with big influence. Her bold assumptions about her future seem entirely natural, coming as she does from a long line of entrepreneurs. Examples of building up a business were all around her, and today every member of her tight-knit Greek family works for him or herself.

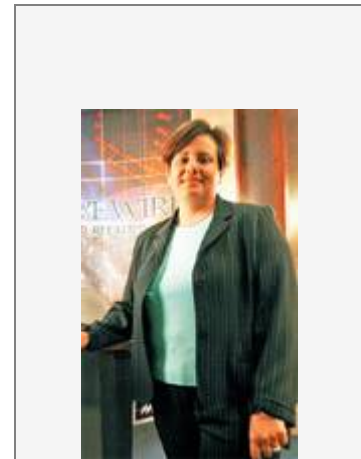
"Life has been good," said Zizos, who projects 2007 net earnings at \$1.6 million. "Who I am at home is who I am at the office, but I'm the fastest to get serious." Zizos, who says she's a keen judge of character, mostly hires on the spot, and the esprit de corps is evident in her 10-person staff.

Success with such clients as The Carlyle Group, Princeton University, Sport and Health Clubs as well as politicians and professional athletes can be credited to strong strategy. Zizos offers her business plan in a nutshell: "Best talent, low overhead and best clients." High-quality deliverables with a personal touch make Live Wire competitive with the world's top firms.

Live Wire prepares, packages and delivers a message. "We teach an executive how to use their personality to communicate sincerely," Zizos said. It's an exhaustive "whole package" critique, which includes dress and posture.

Zizos recalls one client who said that besides his wife, he'd never had anyone be so direct with him. And, "I have been known to stress my students out at American University," Zizos, an adjunct professor, admitted.

Yet Zizos offers a rare specimen as a Washington businesswoman: she's not stressed out. Working a four-day week with weekends at



Times Staff Photo/Regan Kireillis

Chryssa Zizos, CEO of Live Wire Media Relations LLC in Alexandria, is being nominated for the Washington Business Journal "Women Who Mean Business" 2007 Award.

the lake, Zizos makes time for her personal priorities. Most nights about 6:30, Zizos is preparing dinner, with her daughter assisting. She passes along this quality of life to her staff, who enjoy one month of vacation each year.

Zizos claims that attending university in Kentucky helped ground her principles.

When the busy spells hit, Zizos rolls up her sleeves. "I'm the general-in-the-trenches-type. I wouldn't be happy if I didn't get to do the work."