

Mr. Christopher Ullman, Director of Global Communications at The Carlyle Group submitted the following application on behalf of Chryssa Zizos. Live Wire has worked with The Carlyle Group since 2002.

*Reasons for  
Nominating:*

Drive, passion, business savvy, single-mindedness.

I've known Chryssa Zizos since September 2002, only four years since she founded Live Wire Media Relations, LLC in the small sunroom of her Alexandria house. When I met her, The Carlyle Group was looking for a strategic advisor to provide extensive media training to our managing directors. What we got was truly, a live wire.

In the five years since we've worked together, Chryssa has helped the Carlyle Group media train over 85 of our top executives as well as provide executive leadership and presentation training to over 30 of our associates and vice presidents. But the reason I'm nominating her for this honor is because her story of personal and professional success has all the stuff of great stories: challenges, success, plot twists and inspiration. And yes, she can grow revenues, compete with the big guys and launch companies with innovative PR strategies. From being appointed as the first Congressional Head Page in American history at the age of 19 to launching, almost losing, and re-launching a company that was ultimately recognized the last two years as one of the Top 26 Privately Owned PR firms in the Washington metro area by the *Washington Business Journal*, Chryssa has carefully guided her career and the success of her clients.

Long before her career began, Chryssa struggled through school with dyslexia. Because she appeared to be more athletic than bookish, she went to school on a field hockey scholarship that she turned to her advantage.

As many who have to struggled against a seeming short-coming, Chryssa developed a healthy competitive spirit and a drive for success that just doesn't quit. In college, she began her career as a sports writer. Then she moved into public relations and served as Arnold Schwarzenegger's publicist while working at The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, which launched her career as a PR executive in one of the largest international PR firms in the world, Ketchum Public Relations. And finally, at age 26 she ended up launching Live Wire Media Relations, LLC, an unconventional PR firm, in her home's sunroom, which she has since traded in for a very swanky office with a simulated TV studio in Alexandria.

In a mere 9 years since its beginning, Live Wire has successfully represented over 80 clients, with nearly 35 percent representing Fortune 500 companies. And she survived the technology bubble burst of 2003.

In her role as president of Live Wire, Chryssa has helped launch companies, counseled individuals and companies in communication crises, and helped organizations grab more market share and profits imaginable through her innovative and pure passionate PR strategies.

Her clients have been featured prominently in national newspapers and magazines, syndicated radio shows, and national network television news programs.

Chryssa has successfully built a firm that proudly competes – and wins – against the giants in the PR industry, and boasts a track record of growth from \$250,000 revenues in 1998 to nearly \$2 million today.

While women who mean business do grow revenues, they're remembered mostly by what clients say about them. Here's what some of Chryssa's have to say.

*"We feel that Chryssa Zizos is as emotionally attached to our business and our success as we are, and this is reflected in the level of effort and results we enjoy from Live Wire. In terms of PR, we confidently outsource all of our strategic thinking into her very capable hands."*

– Ian Landy, CEO  
Excitations.com

*"Chryssa Zizos is a highly competent, focused and driven businesswoman. She sweats the small stuff, which is why the big stuff turns out well."*

– Christopher W. Ullman,  
Director of Global Communications  
The Carlyle Group

*"Chryssa knows PR and isn't afraid to give it to you straight. Her no-nonsense yet extremely personal approach to 'PUBLIC' relations delivers results far exceeding expectations. Her strong leadership and unwavering dedication shows in her team and the relationships built with clients and media alike."*

– Nancy Terry, VP of Communications  
Sport & Health Clubs

*"Don't let her brilliant smile and gracious manner fool you, when Chryssa takes on a project, she and her staff are all business; it is inspiring to watch her work!"*

– E. Hunt Burke,  
President and COO  
Burke & Herbert Bank & Trust Co.

*Detail Nominee's  
Record of Community  
Leadership:*

Chryssa is dedicated to shaping a new generation of PR professionals. To that end, she has personally funded 35 scholarships totally over \$50,000 for men and women who wish to study journalism at her alma mater, Eastern Kentucky University.

*"It would be difficult to find another woman in business that has made more contributions from the fruits of her success than Chryssa Zizos,"* said Susan Lambert, Former Editor & Chief of Eastern Progress. *"Her generosity in establishing two scholarship foundations at Eastern Kentucky University enables students who may not otherwise be able to afford higher education the opportunity to attain their bachelor's degrees -- a priceless necessity in today's business world."*

*"Chryssa's generosity and willingness to give of herself is not limited to financial assistance. She is a caring and conscientious teacher at American University, taking an active involvement in her students' successes. Chryssa Zizos definitely means business,"* Lambert added.

While she is more than busy blazing trails, she is also creating paths behind her for those who wish to follow. Zizos has continually taken both time and resources to make sure that those who choose to study in her industry have the opportunity.

“As a journalism student and newspaper staffer, Chryssa was always pushing herself, her teachers and her peers to accomplish a little bit more. You always felt like you wanted her on your team when a tight situation or a deadline loomed. I've often wondered what makes one person a leader when others are content to follow. Chryssa is fearless when it comes to trying something new and challenging. And she has the savvy and the ability to rally others to the cause,” said Dr. Elizabeth Fraas, Professor, Eastern Kentucky University.

“Her success in the business of public relations has paid off for students at Eastern Kentucky University who have benefited from the scholarships she has funded. She considers the scholarships a payback to a university that gave her an opportunity to succeed, but they are also testimony to her extraordinary vision and compassion for others,” Fraas said.

Zizos accepted an invitation to become a professor at the school she received her master's degree in public communications, The American University. A student in her public relations class, Anne Nicole, found Zizos to be “the most effective professor on campus. She gave us practical information, and had extremely high standards,” adding, “she is probably the reason I will become a PR professional.”

Not only has Zizos reached out to students, she has made sure to make a difference in her community. She is on the board of Community Residences, which provides quality services that enable individuals with a wide range of disabilities to live as independently as possible. This outreach and advocacy has helped over 1,100 citizens of Arlington to enhance dignity, self esteem, and quality of life.

*“As a dedicated Board member and Chair of the Development Committee for Community Residences (CR), Chryssa Zizos is a persuasive and goal-driven leader when it comes to raising money and awareness for a cause that she believes in. In just two years, Chryssa's compelling and passionate appeals have helped to double the amount of private contributions received from the community for CR's mission. And, by bringing her business expertise and personal commitment to the cause, she has contributed significantly toward the bottom-line of increasing opportunities for our neighbors living with disabilities so that they can live independent, productive and happy lives.”*

– Terry Long, President & COO  
Community Residences

*Detail Nominee's  
Awards and  
Milestones:*

At age 26, Zizos designed a strong, yet seemingly unconventional business plan – it was from this vision that she founded Live Wire Media Relations in December of 1998 – a boutique media relations agency that would perform outstanding work, and earn big results, in a non-bureaucratic environment. She has been profiled in the *Washington Post*, *Potomac Tech Journal* and the *Washington Business Journal* several times, praising her accomplished business sense and attitude.

Her efforts have earned national recognition through industry awards on behalf of her clients. Because of this, Live Wire was honored as one of the Top 26 Privately Owned PR firms in the Washington metro area by the *Washington Business Journal* in 2005 and 2006.

Moreover, Zizos was honored as a distinguished Alumna of Eastern Kentucky University in 2004, and was bestowed the distinguished title of “Kentucky Colonel” in 1991 by the then Governor of Kentucky, Wallace G. Wilkinson.

Aside from founding Live Wire, one of Zizos’ proudest moments occurred when she was just a teenager, a fact that makes one wonder what lies ahead for this talented woman. At 19, she became the first Congressional Head Page in American history, appointed by Tip O’Neal, then Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Because of her success that summer, she became acquainted with Congressman L. Stokes who later nominated her for an overseas Congressional Appointment.

Through the Foreign Affairs Committee, she was sent to South Korea where, based in Seoul, she edited speeches that would be presented before the United Nations.

And she was just 20 years old.

### *Detail Professional Accomplishments:*

Referred to as “The Comeback Kid,” in the September 1, 2006 *Washington Business Journal* article, Zizos is unrelenting in her pursuit for success. She started her company at 26, and saw phenomenal results. On the firm’s one-year anniversary, Zizos secured software titan PeopleSoft (now part of Oracle) as a client in 1998 and as a result Live Wire took off. Focusing on fully servicing PeopleSoft, Live Wire grew rapidly, however did not diversify. When the technology-bubble “burst” in 2003 and profits were dwindling, PeopleSoft decided to reevaluate its marketing strategy and sought a new PR firm with greater international capabilities. This meant the loss of nearly 90 percent of the firm’s business, valued at close to \$2 million.

Most would feel defeated by this collapse. But, Zizos refused to see the fruits of her labor slip away. She rebuilt the firm gradually and carefully, and now has ten employees, with no one client equaling more than 15 percent of the firm’s billings.

The re-birth of Live Wire is Zizos’ proudest professional accomplishment.

Now the company is making 250% more in revenue since 2006 and growing. A testament to her business acumen, Zizos has never seen a day of debt, choosing to spend only within her means – and making it work. Live Wire is now on track to secure revenues of \$1.65 million in 2007, proving that Zizos’ vision and her formula for success works.

### *Educational Background:*

Zizos has a bachelor’s in journalism from Eastern Kentucky University and a master’s in public communications from The American University in Washington, D.C. She is an adjunct professor at The American University and George Mason University, which helps her to continue her learning as well as her work with a new generation of students and shape their education with her expertise.

*“From the day she arrived on the Eastern Kentucky University campus, it was obvious that Chryssa Zizos was a woman who meant business. So it was no surprise that Chryssa very quickly earned a reputation as one of the Capital Area’s most promising young professionals. This dynamic and determined businesswoman exhibits an undying passion for life, a strong drive to excel, a keen sense of what works in the business world and a steadfast commitment to excellence in all her endeavors.*

*What Else Should  
You Know?*

*Most importantly, Chryssa is a compassionate and caring person, as the scholarship fund she established at ECU attests. We are honored to call her an alumnus of Eastern Kentucky University."*

— Joanne Glasser,  
President  
Eastern Kentucky University

Hailing from a family of entrepreneurs, Zizos has always been focused on pursuing her own goals and shaping the business community to accepting her individualized style of doing business. Chryssa has advised and worked with power players across the globe, from the actor gone politician Arnold Schwarzenegger to David Rubenstein, founder of The Carlyle Group to Anne-Marie Slaughter, Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

*"Chryssa is the kind of leader who inspires the people around her to go that extra mile to push her clients and her company to success. She thrives on new challenges and is that rare business executive who knows how to harness the talent and energy of her employees to transform her company's vision into value for its clients."*

— David Englin  
Delegate, 45th District  
Virginia House of Delegates

*"I've been lucky enough to work with Chryssa many times and I've never seen her give less than 110 percent in any situation, for any client large or small. Dependable, enthusiastic, and very, very smart, she most certainly means business!"*

— Peter Piazza, Editor  
Security Management Magazine