

20 Questions with 2011 CEEdMA Service Award Winner Doug Thomas

On May 10th, at the CEEdMA 2011 Spring Conference networking dinner, Doug Thomas of Informatica was recognized as the winner of CEEdMA's very first Service Award, part of a new program to recognize excellence among CEEdMA members. Just before the Fall Conference, we caught up with Doug to learn more about his work, CEEdMA service, and what his Service Award win means to him.



1. Let's start with an easy question. How long have you been a member of CEEdMA?

Over 20 years.

2. You were there from the start. What got CEEdMA going?

Back in 1990, several of the computer companies were struggling to learn how to do certification. Novell was the only vendor that was doing it in 1990. Novell wanted to work with other computer companies to define an Industry accepted Job Task Analysis for network administrators. Seven companies got together at Novell's headquarters in San Jose to discuss the concept of an industry consortium. The seven companies decided it was a great idea and came up with 19 different topics we all wanted to discuss that day.

We decided to meet again to further discuss the concept. I was an employee of Sun Microsystems in 1990 and we did not have a certification program, but I thought it was a great opportunity for Education managers to share best business practices. I recruited all of my friends to attend the next meeting and the organization started to grow with enthusiasm.

3. What were the early days of CEEdMA like?

Typical Tuckman's model Forming and Storming. There was a disagreement on how the organization should be focused. One faction wanted to focus on the Certification Industry Job task Analysis and the other on computer education business trends. The latter won out as it was of the primary interest of the majority of new members.

4. Organizations come and go, but so far CEEdMA has stood the test of time, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. What do you think has helped CEEdMA stay relevant for so long?

We have focused primarily on the fundamental business of education within the computer industry. Our new members are first time education managers and this organization is a source of a ton of information. The sharing that goes on is excellent.

5. You're the Director of Education Product Development at Informatica. That's a nice title – what exactly do you do at work?

I manage the development of all education products for Informatica. Computer education is like any other business and EPD is the Research and Development arm of the business.

6. Has being a part of CEdMA made a difference in your job?

It has provided a benchmark for 90% of the education business decisions that I have made over the last 20 years. Plus I have made a lot of great friends with my direct competitors. One of the first things I have done after changing companies was always to find my new competitors and invite them to join CEdMA.

7. What does a Service Award winner do with his free time?

What free time? I am still working.

8. How important is member service to an organization like CEdMA?

The organization is by an all voluntary board. Without someone to step up and give back, the organization can't survive.

9. What opportunities are there for your average member to help out in CEdMA?

There are many ways the membership can help with the management. If you receive any benefits from the association, you should volunteer to co-facilitate a discussion at the conference. Volunteer to run for office. It is only a part time commitment for 2 years.

10. You've spent a lot of years on CEdMA's board of directors, and held many positions. What was your favorite position on the board?

Probably the early forming years as either President or Vice President.

11. How did you like being a board member and guiding the growth of CEdMA?

I loved being a part of it and was really excited to watch it thrive over the years.

12. Has your company been supportive of your participation in CEdMA?

Yes.

13. What did it mean to you to be the first winner of the CEdMA Service Award?

I was deeply honored.

14. Do you think you'll compete for other CEdMA awards, like the Innovation or Impact award? Maybe go for a trifecta?

I think other members deserved to be recognized first.

15. You've been with CEdMA since the beginning, so you've probably seen conference presentations on every subject imaginable. Do you still find value in attending the CEdMA conferences?

I do. There has never been a conference where I have not walked away with a least two new ideas. It has been amazing.

16. Will you be attending the upcoming Fall CEEdMA conference on November 7-8?

Yes

17. Do you participate in other CEEdMA events, like Special Interest Groups or Ask the Members?

Yes

18. With 20 years behind it, CEEdMA is probably a much different organization than when it was first started. What do you think CEEdMA will look like when another 20 years has passed?

It has changed but not that drastically. Unless Live ILT goes away entirely, I see the organization being very similar.

19. Have you found a special place for your award trophy?

On my mantle over my fireplace.

20. Do you have any advice or encouragement for future Service Award candidates?

Please consider giving back of your time so others can benefit.