

EXCLUSIVE: Rippe launches business strategy firm



By Steve Watkins – Staff Reporter, Cincinnati Business Courier
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A member of the prominent Rippe family has launched a firm that helps businesses resolve the numerous issues that crop up in planning for their company's success.

"Business owners want to work in their business, not on their business," Kate Rippe, who founded Rippe Financial Group, told me.

Rippe, the sister of investment banking firm RKCA partner Brent Rippe and daughter of accounting firm Rippe & Kingston co-founder and entrepreneur the late Joe Rippe, launched Rippe Financial at the start of the year.

She previously worked at Northwestern Mutual and elsewhere doing financial planning and corporate finance.

"I broke off because I wanted to focus on business planning," she said. "We saw a gap in the market. We come from an entrepreneurial family, and there's a gap in planning for small and mid-market businesses. Business owners often ignore issues like retirement plans or executive retention plans until they become near-fatal flaws. I'm passionate about making sure they don't hit those walls."

Rippe operates out of the RiverCenter building in Covington. She already has 32 business clients. Most came over after she had worked with them in her previous roles, but she has also added nine clients since January and has meetings scheduled next month with four others.

Her client businesses are diverse but tend to be small and midsized firms. The largest has \$200 million in annual revenue, but a typical company has between 20 and 120 employees. She works with one that has just eight employees and is a startup that isn't even generating revenue yet.

Rippe Financial provides a variety of services, including educating employees about their benefits and working with companies on their employee retirement plans, employee incentive plans, employee retention strategies and helping owners plan their exit from the company, but the main thing it provides in many cases is bringing all of a company's advisers to the table. It helps to get CPAs, attorneys, financial advisers and others together at one time.

"We think of planning as a team sport," Rippe said. "When you get everybody at the same table, you uncover a lot of gaps in your plan."

Rippe has one other employee for now but plans to add several other people who have already indicated interest in joining her, she said.

There's plenty of potential competition from accounting firms, investment advisory firms and others, but Rippe believes her firm separates itself from the pack.

"I'm the daughter of an accountant and I'm going to marry an accountant," she said. "But this is all we do. We're updated on new ideas that we can bring to the table."