

ACEware “Keeper of Flame”

(Characteristics of an employee leading the implementation and use of ACEware (Student Manager and ACEweb)

The ultimate responsibility/role of a Keeper of the Flame (KOF) is to work to make sure that their ACEware Software is being fully implemented and utilized to advance the unit’s mission!

The KOF may (or may not) be responsible for EVERY element of software implementation, but they should be making sure that the right stuff happens (the software is functioning well and that every feature that could serve the unit’s mission is being used).

An incomplete list of tasks/roles includes:

- To understand and have (as much as possible) knowledge of the unit’s mission and priorities. *You might think of this as the captain of the ship. If you are going to steer the ship, you should probably know where the ship’s passengers should end up!*
- Having regular meetings with all ACEware users, to get feedback, monitor for issues/errors, identify user knowledge gaps, announce new features, and watch for new business situations that may require some changes in how ACEware is setup and configured. *(particularly critical in larger operations)*
- Function as the primary contact with ACEware (under normal procedures, the KOF would be the main staffer calling in/talking to ACEware regarding ACEware operations.
- Regular updates of the Software (new SM8.EXE’s and ACEweb updates)
- Monitoring system preferences (the “Edit Preferences” in SM and INI settings in AW) *As new features are added, often there are NEW preferences added and the Preference MUST be turned on before users can use a new feature.*
- Staying current on new features and bug fixes in the software
 - Subscribing to Forum, ListServ, Newsletter, attending Webinars and ACEware Annual conference.
- Developing and updating Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) guides
 - Example of an SOP at <https://www.aceware.com/customers/guides.shtml>
- Seeing that software users are as well trained as possible *(tons of resources on web site, encouraging listserv participation, attendance at webinars, newsletter subscription, possibly ACEware hosted public or private training, attendance at the ACEware Annual Users’ Conference)*
- Creating new user accounts (this role SHOULD be shared w/others)
- Ensuring that NEW users are on-boarded (again see ACEware website: New Users)
- Monitoring codes: Assigning new ones as required and DE-ACTIVATING ones that are no longer used. (the Data Cleanup area under TOOLS is great for this)
- General system maintenance
 - Packing the database
 - Working on Data Cleanup (several tools are available)
 - Critical issue is regular use of the “Combine Names” tool
- Is able to modify reports (or tasks another staff person to learn report writer)
- Is able to create/edit/decipher queries (again - or delegates to a staff person)

- Whether they can modify reports or not, KOF should be a “Report Consultant” or “Report Ombudsman.” Being aware of the available reports in the system, reports available from the ACEware web site (what tables are available from each report area, and what fields are available). Open Online Help and search: Report Guide.
- Understands and is generally familiar with the organization of the ACEware data tables and field structures (i.e. knows what the NAMES table is and what the fields are in that table. –OR- Knows where in the Online Help guide (*all of this is in the online help*) s/he can go to get that info. In their role as Report Consultant, this knowledge is most helpful.
- Knows about the ACEware Error logs (err.txt in the manager folder) and periodically reviews the logs to watch for recurring problems.
- Monitors Report use:
 - Deactivates or deletes unused, duplicate, or nonworking reports
 - Periodically runs the Report by frequency (*see Deadbeat/Additional reports*) to see if a user report should be “Promoted” to the Default Report
 - Monitors queries to delete dups or broken ones
- Bottom line: We’re suggesting that the KOF indeed is a renaissance person... one who can leap tall buildings with a single bound! However, what’s important is NOT that the KOF can answer/solve/fix/do XXX, but that they understand enough about the problem and how ACEware works to:
 - Recognize that there is a problem and
 - Can search for a solution within the ACEware resource set or
 - Can describe this problem to their ACEware Technician.

So, what would a perfect KOF look like? Skills wise?

First of all, this person **does NOT need to be an IT guru**. It’s more important that the KOF understand your “Business!” While obviously knowledge of ACEware is needed, and strong interpersonal skills (organizational effectiveness skills is a +), it’s as equally important that you use your ACEware software to “Do the right things” than doing the inappropriate jobs/tasks/procedures right!

The unit’s size will have a lot to do with the actual nature of the job. The smaller the unit, the less need for formal structures (though SOP’s are still critical), and the more likely you may have distribution of the above roles.

One of the best KOF’s we’ve seen is an associate dean, who (besides doing his “Regular” dean stuff) took the effort to learn about the software, how it worked, and was able to really focus on the effective and efficient implementation of ACEware! Most smaller units (under 12-15 staff) have the KOF responsibilities shared between some staff or tacked on to one staffer’s (bless his/her soul) regular job.

There are several larger units who DO have an IT “Type” assigned as KOF, BUT those IT folk who end up being effective KOFs take the initiative to be sure they understand what is happening, program wise, mission wise, activity wise, within the CE unit they are serving.

OK on to the skills list:

- ✓ Problem Solving skills
- ✓ Has a keen interest in learning new things (a Lifelong Learner)
- ✓ Good Communication Skills
- ✓ Has an inclination to enjoy working with software programs. *(The caveat here is that you don't want someone who gets so involved in the intricacies of the software that s/he loses focus on using the software to get stuff done.)*
- ✓ In spite of having said that hard core IT chops are not required, having an understanding of databases in general (or a willingness to learn basic database concepts and operation) is definitely a requirement. General coursework, study or experience in database management, doing reporting with databases (using queries, filters, modifying reports, etc) would be valuable.
- ✓ Good interpersonal skills
- ✓ Knowledge of how groups work (organizational behavior savvy)
- ✓ Able to follow written instructions
- ✓ Excellent attention to detail.
- ✓ Ability to multi-task.
- ✓ If responsible for ACEweb, would be helpful to understand HTML and CSS.

Conclusion:

The bottom line is that the KOF (or the shared KOF's) at your ACEware Software location should understand your mission, **and your software**, and can help you set up/manage/utilize/customize the software to help you fulfill your mission.