



# JUST ASKING

BY MARY KLEST

## What are the five most important job search skills everyone should master?

We asked Jim Zalesky, president and job search adviser at the Barrington Career Center.

With the average management position lasting only two to three years and a shaky economy causing income interruptions, job search skills may be as important as career training when it comes to protecting your professional future.

“One of the biggest mistakes people make when looking for a new job is not being prepared,” Zalesky says. Here is his to-do list for job seekers:

- 1. Communicate well.** Have an up-to-date résumé and a well-written cover letter. Verbally project what you can do and why you want to do it. Describe your achievements using a situation/action/result scenario.
- 2. Define your target.** Know what you’re aiming for. That way others can help you hit it.
- 3. Network for life.** Share experiences; give and get advice from others. Include professional and personal contacts in your network.
- 4. Fit in.** How you sit, dress, and walk all convey powerful nonverbal messages.
- 5. Demonstrate you want the job.** Do your homework. Be enthusiastic and confident.

For the uncertain, he advises making a list of five to seven past professional achievements. “By looking at those achievements you’ll find what you’re good at, what you like to do,



*Jim Zalesky, president and job search adviser at the Barrington Career Center*

and what you can get paid for.”

The Barrington Career Center, located at 400 Hart Road, is currently serving record-breaking numbers of people since its founding in 1994. Job changers, underemployed, laid off, and unpaid workers meet here on Tuesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. or 10 a.m. for networking sessions. They practice their “elevator speech” and share job leads, résumés, and the names of target companies.

Interviewing workshops are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Sessions with job search advisers can be made by appointment. Computer stations and sympathetic ears are always available at the center, though a dictum enforced by the all-volunteer staff is “No whining.”

Zalesky retired from a successful career as an executive in the financial industry two years ago. He still remembers how devastating a past job loss was for him. Now he says, “I’m a lucky guy. When I retired, I wanted to give back. I didn’t stumble onto the Career Center. I always enjoyed mentoring. It makes me feel good when I can

help people.” He also communicates well, knows what he wants, keeps up his network, fits in at all levels, and shows that he loves the job.

With such a master at the helm, the Barrington Career Center hopes to extend its services to anyone who needs them. “An employed person can buy a car, go out to dinner, and support the local economy. It’s a win-win situation,” he says.

The center relies on \$50 annual membership fees, donations from alumni, and contributions from businesses for its budget. A recently revamped Web site ([www.barringtoncareercenter.com](http://www.barringtoncareercenter.com)) includes a membership directory, list of services, calendar of events, and job opportunities. Make sure to check it out — chances are a first job search is not likely to be your last.