

## The ADVOCATE

### Service offers job-hunt training

By Michael C. Juliano

Staff Writer

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In response to the rash of layoffs at area companies, OperationsInc., a Stamford-based human resources firm, has launched Job Search Essentials, an outplacement service to help companies find other employment for their workers.

David Lewis, president and founder of OperationsInc., said companies typically provide similar help to outgoing executives. "What's been absent here is a comparable service for the smaller individual," he said.

Lewis said compensation for the service may come from the employer or through a shared payment between employer and employee. Employees also may seek his service on their own.

Lewis said the service, priced at \$349 per person, includes two 45-minute sessions with a career counselor, designed to focus on a worker's needs, and two 90-minute sessions covering 10 areas, including interviewing skills, applying to jobs online and marketing oneself to employers. "In this market, you have to build a better mousetrap and beat the next guy," he said.

Lewis said he has offered this kind of service to friends over the 22 years he has been in the human resources industry, but this is the first time it is being formally offered by OperationsInc.

"I have been the unofficial resource for a lot of my friends and co-workers if and when they found themselves in a job search," he said. Lewis said he's been providing services to people in the financial services industry, which he said has been hardest hit with layoffs. "It'd be safe to say we're talking in the hundreds," he said of the number layoffs in the region, declining to give specific numbers to protect the privacy of his clients. "The community in the hedge fund and investment advisory area keep a low profile."

Lewis said that Job Search Essentials also includes resource material with information on sample resumes and cover letters, Internet job boards, area employment agencies and other job-seeking tools. The program also offers a copy of "Ultimate Secrets for the Job Seeker," a guide written by Chris Russell, founder and chief executive officer of [www.allcountyjobs.com](http://www.allcountyjobs.com).

Lewis said he keeps the cost for his service low by leaving out amenities provided by some outplacement services, such as a cubicle and a desk with a phone. "Our argument is you don't necessarily need all of them," he said. "They need some advice and direction on what's the best way to conduct their job search in this job market."

According to a report from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the employment outlook for metropolitan New York will deteriorate as Wall Street's woes reverberate throughout the economy. The report, released this month, is consistent with an Oct. 15 report from New York City Comptroller William Thompson, who predicted the city would lose 165,000 jobs, including 35,000 in its financial industry, over the next two years.

Maureen Mackey, co-founder of Darien-based Mackey & Guasco Staffing Associates LLC, will offer advice on staffing firms as part of Job Search Essentials and said she will teach clients how to stand out in the job market. "If you haven't tried for a job in 20 years, it can be a daunting task," she said. "I'm here to give real, true advice in what they can expect in Fairfield County's job market."

Lisa Mercurio, director of the Fairfield County Information Exchange at the Business Council of Fairfield County, said the unemployment rate for Stamford rose from 4.5 percent to 4.8 percent from March to September, with 200 people losing their jobs. Norwalk's unemployment rate increased from 4.5 percent to 4.8 percent during the same time period, resulting in 170 job losses, she said.

"The region has been in a tight labor market, and like the rest of the country, the number continues to tick upward," Mercurio said. "That's something we're watching to see where that will go."