

🏠 / CT Entrepreneur Says “Hello, Hartford!”

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Hello Consulting Founder Robin Zaleski deliberately chose Hartford as her home when she moved from Litchfield County 16 years ago. MetroHartford Alliance Content Manager Nan Price spoke with Robin about the benefits of living, working, and networking in downtown Hartford.

NAN PRICE: Why Hartford?

ROBIN ZALESKI: I originally came to Hartford in 2004 for a Director of Marketing job with the Hartford Club. I had been working in the regulated natural gas pipeline industry in New Haven County for about 11 years and I needed a change. The marketing position was a great way to jump feet first into a new city because, right away, I was meeting a lot of Hartford-based people—many of whom I remained friends with even after I left that job in 2006.

When I came to Hartford, I knew I wanted to live downtown. I had lived in suburbia. I had lived in the country. I wanted to live in a more urban environment where I could walk out the front door and go to restaurants, the museum, and the library.

I’ve always been a very social person. So, for me, a city environment provides a shortcut to meeting as many people as possible, being around people, and still being able to tuck away when I need to recharge my batteries.

NAN: How has networking and meeting new people shaped your career?

ROBIN: There’s a certain atmosphere in cities. They’re already infused with a sense of connectivity because you’re surrounded by so many people. The jobs I’ve had from the Hartford Club onward—including starting my own business—were all through networking with the amazing people I’ve met.

NAN: Tell us about starting your own business. When did you get that spark?

ROBIN: It was something that had been in the back of my mind for a while. I knew I wanted to dictate my own time, projects, and key performance indicators (KPIs).

I launched Hello Consulting in July 2019 after I’d connected with someone who asked if I would be interested in doing some consulting. I already had that concept, but that’s when I first took the leap and then everything else seemed to fall into place.

I don’t mean to make it sound so easy! I had built a network of people, both professionally and personally. So, when I shared what I was doing, I got a whole bunch of referrals from folks I knew from being Chair of the South Downtown Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, having been on the Board of Hartford Children’s Theatre, and my years back at the Hartford Club.

NAN: How are you finding clients and how are they finding you?



ROBIN: My niche market is Connecticut-based service providers like law firms, accounting firms, and independent insurance agencies that are all great at doing the thing they do—but they’re not necessarily great at selling their services or the customer service associated with maintaining their clients. The companies I work with are small

businesses, about five to 20 people. They’re small enough to be nimble and make the changes needed but also large enough that they’re able and willing to pay someone to do some consulting and not try to figure everything out on their own.

Every client I’ve gotten has been through networking and referrals. Also, before COVID-19, I’d go to many events and just talk to people.

I’m very comfortable talking to folks—especially those who own a small business. I feel it’s such a huge part of who we are. It’s different than working for big corporations. We identify more with what we do because it’s so much of who we are.

When you’ve taken that leap of starting a business and want to grow, you want to nurture that baby. So, I’m excited to help small business owners with their pain points. If it’s not something I can do, I’m happy to refer them out to someone else I know through my network who can help them. A rising tide lifts all ships.

NAN: What do you enjoy most about living and working in Hartford?

ROBIN: There’s so much going on here and there’s room for everybody—both in business and in the arts. Basing my business in Hartford is like my opportunity to help grow Hartford and share the message of Hartford. I love being involved in my neighborhood and being involved with different boards and organizations, including the Bushnell Park Foundation and the Hartbeat Music Festival. I’m grateful for the connections I’ve made through those organizations.

Part of the beauty of Hartford is it’s a small city with so many people who are truly invested professionally, financially, and mentally in making Hartford better. There are so many talented people here. I feel like we’re all here to help Hartford grow.

Learn more about Hello Consulting





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Innovation Destination Hartford

The Hartford Region is a robust destination to start, grow, and build businesses. IDH supports the region's startups, entrepreneurs, and business owners in their efforts to enhance our local economy.

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