

# **Quick and Quintessential Guide: Pitching Yourself to Employers with 7-Step Selling**

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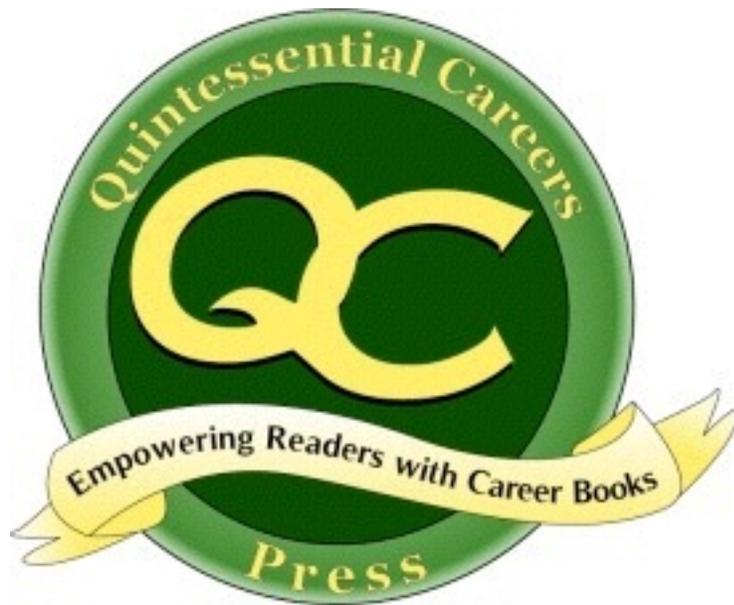
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Pitching Yourself to Employers with 7-Step Selling

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Scoring Big in Your Long-Distance Job Search

Online Portfolios: Your 24/7 Proof of Performance

Beating the Resume Black Hole

Career Success through Online Presence and Offline Essence

... and more to come

# Contents

## [Introduction: Overview of 7-Step Selling and Why You Must Develop a Target Market of Employers in Your Job Search](#)

### [Chapter 1: Generating Your Targeted Employer List](#)

- [Researching Employers](#)

### [Chapter 2: Optimizing and Qualifying Your List of Employers to Narrow Your Target Market](#)

- [An Employers “Psychographics:” How to Uncover Corporate/Organizational Culture](#)
- [One Company’s Spin on Corporate Culture](#)
- [Researching Employers through Informational Interviews](#)
- [Final Checklist for Narrowing Your Targeted Employers List](#)

### [Chapter 3: Approaching the Employer and Probing Needs](#)

- [The Approach – Before the Job Interview: Sleuthing Out Names](#)
- [From a Consultant: Tips for Identifying Hiring Managers](#)
- [The Approach – Before the Job Interview: Probing and Analyzing Employer Needs](#)
- [Sample Informational-Interviewing Needs Fulfillment Letter #1](#)
- [Sample Informational-Interviewing Needs Fulfillment Letter #2](#)

### [Chapter 4: The Approach and Needs Analysis – When It’s in the Job Interview \(the T and A Parts of GOTARZO\)](#)

- [Tell Me ... USP](#)
- [Next Step ... Analyze Needs](#)

### [Chapter 5: Revealing Storied Solutions](#)

### [Chapter 6: Zapping Objections](#)

[Overcoming Hiring-Manager Objections](#)

[Common Objections Raised by Employers in Job Interviews](#)

### [Chapter 7: Closing the Sale](#)

- [“Trial” or Soft Closings](#)
- [Harder Closings](#)
- [Hardest Closings](#)

### [Chapter 8: + Follow Up](#)

### [Afterword](#)

# **Introduction: Overview of 7-Step Selling and Why You Must Develop a Target Market of Employers for Your Job Search**

This book begins by explaining how a job-seeker can identify and narrow his or her target market. Telling a job-seeker to pinpoint and then refine his or her target market of employers is a scary prospect for most. A bigger universe intuitively seems more likely to result in employer interest. “If I send out my resume to as many employers as I can,” the mentality goes, “surely some of them will be interested in me.” But the opposite is true: The more you funnel the universe of employers into a laser-focused, precise, narrow segment of those who would love to hire you, the more successful you’ll be.

To understand the importance of target marketing in your job search, let’s first define a target market:

“A specific group of consumers at which a company aims its products and services,” says Entrepreneur.com.

Adapted for a job-seeker, that would be: “A specific group of employers at which a job-seeker aims his or her talents and services.”

Here’s what a target market is not (even though some marketers of products and services mistakenly define their target markets this way): “Anyone interested in my products or services.”

Here’s how the marketing process works for those marketers who define their target market as “anyone interested in my products or services:”

The marketer creates advertising or promotional material and then disseminates it to those perceived as “anyone interested in my products or services.”

This process may have a familiar ring to job-seekers because it is essentially the way most of them conduct their job searches:

The job-seekers creates advertising or promotional material – in the form of a resume and usually a cover letter – and disseminates it to those perceived as “anyone interested in ‘me as a product and the services I offer,’” typically employers who have posted vacancies on job boards or advertised openings in other media.

Smart marketers know that both of these approaches are backward. Here’s how consultant Vicki Brackett characterizes this backwards approach in Meridith Levinson’s article on CIO.com:

“If we were going to sell an energy drink, we wouldn’t create the energy drink and then go to stores hoping they’ll buy it. We’d first do research. We’d find out who would drink the energy drink, what they’re looking for in an energy drink, how it

would help them, how we'd get it to market, and what the packaging looks like. Once we understand that, we perfect the beverage and go to market.”

Just as no universal products appeal to all consumers, no universal job-seeker appeals to all employers. Neither jobs nor employers are one-size-fits-all. Savvy job-seekers survey the universe of employers to determine how to break the market down into a more manageable subset of employers that will be keenly attracted to what the job-seeker has to offer.

The proven strategy of target marketing enables the marketer or job-seeker to reach the customers/employers whose needs are most likely to be filled by the entity being marketed. That's a big reason to use target marketing in the job search – but just a few of the other reasons include:

- *It's more efficient.* Yes, target marketing requires a big investment in front-end research. But that investment pays off when the job-seeker is productively going on interviews instead of sitting on his or her posterior by the computer uploading resumes to employers who might be interested and waiting for hiring managers to call.
- *It targets the portion of the job market most likely to hire.* Huge number of jobs aren't advertised. Employers hold back on publicizing vacancies for all kinds of reasons, but if you can get in on the pipeline of an unpublicized opening, you'll have a huge advantage over the vast hordes responding to job postings and want ads.
- *Through target marketing, you'll be a better fit and happier with the employer at which you land than if you took your chances with answering ads.* Since you've carefully vetted each employer in your target market, you know you're a good match and you fit the organizational culture.

The outplacement firm Lee Hecht Harrison notes that 70 percent of its clients get new jobs through target-market methods, a figure consistent with other studies.

A targeted job search is clearly the way to go.

These steps of identifying and narrowing the market are part of a classical 7-step selling process that also includes approaching employers, developing and proposing solutions to them, handling their objections, closing the sale, and following up. This book describes a job-seeker sales system that adapts the seven-step personal-selling process.

Here is the original 7-step process:

1. Generate leads
2. Qualify leads
3. Approach the customer and probe needs
4. Develop and propose solutions
5. Handle objections
6. Close the sale
7. Follow up

I call my job-search adaptation **GOTARZO + Followup**. GOTARZO is an acronym in which the letters stand for:

- **G** is for Generate Your Targeted Employer List
  - **O** is for Optimize and Qualify Employers to Narrow Your Target Market
  - **T** is for Tell Me ... USP. In this adaptation, approaching the customer (employer) and probing needs are broken into two steps, in which Tell Me ... USP represents the first of the two.
  - **A** is for Analyze Needs.
  - **R** is for Reveal Storied Solutions.
  - **Z** is for Zap Objections.
  - **O** is for Obtain Closure.
- +
- **Followup**

Let's begin a chapter-by-chapter explanation of the process.

# Chapter 1: Generating Your Targeted Employer List

Your first step will be to develop a broad list of employers to possibly target.

In our article, *Job Targeting: A Better Way (than Job Boards) to Create Opportunity for Yourself*, Laura Levine Labovich recommends ending up with a list of 40 targeted employers. In this initial step of generating leads, it's best to start with a bigger list that you will optimize and qualify. You'll narrow this list down based on the guidelines in the next chapter.

For your initial pass at a list of targeted leads, include these three basic criteria, Labovich advises:

- **A specific geographic area (city, county, state, etc.).** If you are open to possibilities other than where you currently reside, you can conduct research on locales within the U.S. in [Sperling's BestPlaces.net](#), where you'll find a wealth of data, statistics, and comparisons about U.S. cities and counties. For developing a better understanding of locations outside the U.S, we recommend the [CIA World Factbook](#), which contains detailed snapshots, compiled by the U.S. government, of just about every country in the world.
- **Specific industry or organization size.** A good source of industry information is [Industry Portals](#), a listing of links to many different industries. The best print source is a U.S. government publication: *U.S. Industrial Outlook*, from the Bureau of Industrial Economics.
- **Job function/title.**

With these criteria, you'll be making a list of employers in your targeted geographic area that offer positions in your specific functional area in your chosen industry.

What if you are interested in more than one geographic area, industry, or job function? You can have more than one target market. You will need to develop a list of targeted employers for each one. It's perfectly OK, however, to focus on one at a time.

Many job-seekers already have a pretty good idea of the employers they'd like to work for, so this first list-development step is pretty easy. If you're new to the job market, though, or are a career-changer new to your prospective career field, list-making may be a bit more challenging. If you have no idea of what companies might be best for you, consider starting with media-generated lists of "bests" ... best companies for women, best private companies, best employee-owned companies, and more. Go to our [The Best Companies for Job-Seekers](#) section to take advantage of these short cuts.

Here are some additional methods for scoping out employers that meet your criteria:

*Ask Your Network.* Ask people in your network for suggestions on good places to work that are in your targeted geographic area that offer positions in your specific functional

area in your chosen industry. Ask family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, social-media contacts, customers, vendors, associates, members of professional organizations you belong to, and more.

*Attend Job/Career Fairs:* While career and job fairs typically feature organizations and companies that are actively recruiting prospects for vacancies, they are valuable for those developing an initial list of employers to target because they enable face time with actual employees. You can ask questions to learn more about these employers. Typically, you can also pick up plenty of company literature from the employers' tables and peruse them at your leisure.

*Check Out Online Job Sites/Job Boards, as well as Newspaper Want Ads.* You're not applying for jobs at this stage (unless you see an opportunity you can't pass up), but you can often get a good feel the types of positions an employer offers by scanning job boards. One other benefit of these sites is that many also include company profiles and other important information that you can use to gain an understanding of each employer. Go to:

- General Job Sites
- Industry-Specific Job Sites
- Geographic-Specific Job Sites
- Classified Job Listings Sites

*Review Corporate Career Centers.* Many companies, large and small, including just about all of the Fortune 500 companies, continue to build these corporate career centers – which often include job openings, guidelines for submitting job-search materials, and a wealth of information about the company (such as corporate culture, career paths, benefits, and more). See The Quintessential Directory of Company Career Centers, where we link to several hundred U.S., Canadian, and global public and private companies.

*Ask Recruiters/Headhunters.* You can ask these practitioners the same kinds of questions you would ask members of your network – suggestions on good places to work that are in your targeted geographic area that offer positions in your specific functional area in your chosen industry. Keep in mind that they are very busy and may not have time for casual conversations that won't help them fill their search assignments. Social situations may be your best bet. Recruiters also respond well to attempts to help them fill their assignments, so don't hesitate to recommend good people to them. You can find directories of headhunters as well as articles about working with headhunters in this section of Quintessential Careers: Recruiter Directories & Associations.

*Keep Your Eye on the News:* Certain organizational activities can signal that an employer will soon be hiring (or conversely, downsizing). While your mission in this step is to list favorable employers rather than drill down to opportunities, it's useful to have employers on your list that are likely to offer opportunities. So, watch for companies that may be expanding, undergoing a merger or acquisition, relocating, changing leadership at the top, or experiencing dramatic stock-price fluctuations. Be on

the lookout, too, for public news reports about problems and challenges an employer may be facing – perhaps problems you can solve. Literally thousands of media outlets are available, from national news and business publications to specialized industry-specific publications. A good source for finding media that cover your industry is [NewsLink](#).

## **Researching Employers**

The concept of employer research straddles both the list-development and list-refinement steps in job-search target marketing and is one of the most important skills a job-seeker can learn during a job-search. You'll mostly employ hard-core research during the list-optimization and refinement phase. The topic is included in this chapter because the research skills and resources may also come in handy in this initial step. We've provided an overview here of employer research, but for much more detail on resources, consider checking out our [Guide to Researching Companies, Industries, and Countries](#).

The quality of your research skills may make or break your job search. Commit to improving your research skills. You'll find that that research skills will not only help you in searching for a new job, but will come in handy in many other situations in the future.

Information is a critical commodity in job-hunting; the more you know and the easier it is for you to find information, the better your chances of success. Later in your job search, you'll find that employers value job-seekers who know key information about the company because that knowledge demonstrates your interest and enthusiasm for the company and for the job.

*Determine What Information You Want.* You are usually seeking two sets of information. The first set of information deals with general company information and may be of the most use during your development of your initial targeted-employers list. The types of information you might gather here include: products and services, history and corporate culture, organizational mission and goals, key financial statistics, organizational structure (divisions, subsidiaries, etc.), and locations (main and branch). You may also research the industry, key competitors, and countries where the company has offices.

The second set of information deals with employment issues, and includes such aspects as career paths and advancement opportunities, benefits, diversity initiatives, and other human-resources functions. These datapoints will be of interest to you as you narrow your list.

*Know Where to Find Company Information.* Probably the single best resource of company information is the company's Website. You can find the company site by trying to type the company name in your browser. For example, if you were trying to find information on Aetna, all you need to do is enter [www.aetna.com](http://www.aetna.com) and you're at the company's Website. However, not all companies have such obvious Web addresses, so the next easiest thing to do is go to your favorite search engine, such as [Google.com](http://Google.com), and

type the company's name in the search box. Then simply follow the link to the company's Website.

Sometimes the information you'll find on a company's Website is limited. While the trend is certainly for companies to place more and more information on their sites, private companies (not traded on any stock exchange) tend to have less need to provide sensitive information. What can you do in these situations? The next best solution is to read outside reviews and profiles of companies.

Among the two best sources for gathering information on public companies are [BusinessWeek Online: Company Research](#) and [Hoovers Online](#).

Finding information about private companies – and the vast majority of all companies in the U.S. are private – is a bit trickier. Two good sources are the [Forbes Largest Private Companies](#) list and [The Inc. 5000](#) list of America's fastest growing privately held companies.

If you are interested in working for a non-profit organization or association, the best research tools to use include the resources we provide in our [Volunteering and Non-Profit Career Resources](#) and [General Professional Organizations and Associations](#).

## Chapter 2: Optimizing and Qualifying Your List Employers to Narrow Your Target Market

For a job-seeker, qualifying leads means narrowing down your list of employer targets based on those employers and jobs for which you are the best fit.

One way to optimize and qualify your list of leads is to ask questions aimed at more precisely defining target market of employers. A few to get you started:

- What kinds of employers have hired you in the past? With what kinds of employers have you had your most successful experiences? What employers are similar to your current employer (if you feel you are a good fit with your current employer.)
- Your “competitors.” What employers hire people like you – your friends, members of your network, people you admire, people whose job you wish you had, people with similar qualifications?
- What employers are likely to hire employees with the features and benefits you offer?

Next, adapt to your targeted employer list the criteria marketers of consumer goods and services use. A significant focus for marketers defining their target markets is demographics. Not all all aspects of demographics apply to how a job-seeker might refine a list of target employers, but some do:

- **Age:** Would you rather work for a startup or an established organization?
- **Location:** As we’ve already seen, location is an important factor in developing a list of employers to target.
- **Occupation:** Again, we’ve seen that organizations on your target list need to offer positions that fit your occupation.
- **Gender:** Does one gender predominate in the organization? How does the organization treat members of your gender?
- **Income level:** The employer equivalent here is the organization’s economic stability. Is it struggling or doing well?
- **Marital or family status:** Is the organization a good fit for workers who are married and/or have families? Do its policies promote family life and work-life balance? Or is it more suited to singles who are expected to work long hours?
- **Ethnic background:** Does the organization embrace diversity? How are members of your ethnic group treated?
- **Size:** Do you fit better in a small, medium, or large organization?
- **Education level:** What level of education is typically required of people hired in the kind of position you seek?

### An Employer’s “Psychographics:” How to Uncover Corporate/Organizational Culture

Marketers narrowing their target markets also consider the psychographics of the segments they wish to target, consisting of such elements as:

- Personality
- Attitudes
- Values
- Interests/hobbies
- Lifestyles
- Behavior

Among employers, the closest equivalent to consumer psychographics is corporate/organizational culture.

Increasingly career experts are talking about the importance of employee-employer fit. A major component of that fit is organizational culture, with the idea that the degree to which the employee “fits” the culture can make the difference between job-search success and failure.

What is corporate culture? At its most basic, it’s described as the personality of an organization, or simply as “how things are done around here.” It guides how employees think, act, and feel. Corporate culture is a broad term used to define the unique personality or character of a particular company or organization, and includes such elements as core values and beliefs, corporate ethics, and rules of behavior.

Corporate culture can be expressed in the company’s mission statement and other communications, in the architectural style or interior decor of offices, by what people wear to work, by how people address each other, and in the titles given to various employees.

How does a company’s culture affect you? In many, many ways. For instance:

- The hours you work per day, per week, including options such as flextime and telecommuting.
- The work environment, including how employees interact, the degree of competition, and whether it’s a fun or hostile environment – or something in between.
- The dress code, including the accepted styles of attire and traditions such as casual days.
- The office space you get, including characteristics such as cubicles, window offices, and rules regarding display of personal items.
- The training and skills development you receive, which you need both on the job and to keep yourself marketable for future jobs and employers.
- Onsite perks, such as break rooms, gyms and play rooms, daycare facilities, and more.
- The amount of time outside the office you’re expected to spend with co-workers.
- Interaction with other employees, including managers and top management.

How do you uncover the corporate culture of a potential employer? The truth is that you will never really know the corporate culture until you have worked at the company for a number of months, but you can get close to it through research and observation.

You can pick up initial clues about an organization's culture during the other research you're doing to build your list of target employers. Review the company's annual report, Website, and other materials. Some companies even discuss their corporate culture on their Website – such as:

- [Southwest Airlines](#), a major airline company.
- [Microsoft](#), a technology and software development company.
- [Synaptics](#), a worldwide developer of custom-designed user interface solutions.
- [Coca-Cola, Inc.](#), one of the world's leading beverage companies.
- [General Electric](#), a global infrastructure, finance, and media company.
- [W.L. Gore & Associates](#), a fluoropolymer technology company.

Other Websites, such as [WetFeet.com](#), provide key information and feedback from company employees. WetFeet offers “expanded coverage” for certain companies, which describes the company's culture and lifestyle.

The bottom line is that you plan to spend a lot of time in the work environment – and to be happy, successful, and productive, you'll want to be in a place where you fit the culture. A place where you can have a voice, be respected, and have opportunities for growth.

Remember, too, that from an external perspective, culture translates into “reputation.” The descriptions that current insiders provide about culture may be very different from the way the company is perceived by outsiders and discussed by those who've left the organization. Get a good handle on the reputation of the organizations on your list.

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## **One Company's Spin on Corporate Culture**

Would you like to work in a hostile, high-pressure, cubicle-laden dot-com labor camp with lousy benefits, bitter, talentless managers, and buzzing, green-tinted fluorescent lights?

Oh wait. That's someplace else.

Would you like to work in an open, airy, truly stylish converted warehouse with relaxed, competent coworkers and managers that not only care about your well-being and job satisfaction, but work continuously to improve it? Would you like to set your own hours, banish your suit and tie in the deepest corner of your closet, and bask in the creativity of well-humored individuals who actually come to work (and leave) in a good mood? Do you want to work for a company that encourages Nerf launcher fights, allows total freedom in decorating your workspace, and provides solid health, dental, and financial benefits? Would you like to never, ever see another cubicle again?

– From Auragen Communications, Inc.

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## **Researching Employers Through Informational Interviews**

As we've seen, lots of great tools are available for researching companies – especially with the ease of using the Internet for conducting company research. But can you imagine a better way to research a company than to visit that company and talk to people who work there? Can you conceive of a better way to gain inside information that will help you with refining your target list of employers? Visiting companies and talking to people who work there is the idea behind informational interviewing.

Informational interviewing, a subset of networking, is just what it sounds like – interviewing designed to produce the information you need to determine if a given employer is a good fit for you and to break into that company. It involves spending time in a focused conversation that provides key information you need to boost your career or launch a new one. The term “informational interviewing” was invented by Richard Nelson Bolles, author of the best-selling career book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Bolles refers to the process as “trying on jobs to see if they fit you.” He notes that while most people screen jobs and companies after they've already taken a job, informational interviewing gives you the opportunity to conduct the screening process before accepting a position.

An informational interview is not the same as a job interview, but it is probably the most effective form of networking there is, as well as the most effective way to research employers. A job-seeker who conducts informational interviews with several companies may discover an excellent fit within an organization's culture and decide that would be a wonderful company to work for. The job-seeker can then glean the information needed to develop a strategy for entering the career and organization of choice.

Informational interviewing is one of the best ways to research companies because of the depth and quality of information the practice provides. Those who conduct informational interviews learn about the needs of the company or department that is the subject of the interview. Armed with knowledge about these needs, the job-seeker can later approach the company with a description of how he or she can meet the needs, as we'll see in the next chapter.

The job-seeker can also gain valuable insider knowledge about how to break into and succeed in the chosen company or companies. Consider a future job interview in which your competition is someone who has conducted an informational interview with someone in the company at which you're both interviewing (and you haven't). Which one of you do you think will have the edge in the job interview?

You can learn more about the logistics and mechanics of informational interviewing in our Quick and Quintessential Guide: [The Best-Kept Networking Secret](#) and our [Informational Interviewing Tutorial](#). See the next chapter for guidelines on finding names of people to interview in your targeted companies.

Here are questions you can ask in an informational interview about the culture of your interviewee's company or organization:

- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- What do you like most about this company?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- Why do customers choose this company?
- What is the company's relationship with its customers?
- How optimistic are you about the company's future and your future with the company?
- Has the company made any recent changes to improve its business practices and profitability?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
- What systems are in place to enable employees to give management feedback and suggestions?
- How does the company make use of technology for internal communication and outside marketing? (Use of e-mail, Internet, intranets, mobile devices, videoconferencing, etc.)?
- What other technologies are integral to the company's operation?
- How would you describe the atmosphere at the company? Is it fairly formal or more laid-back and informal?
- Do people in your department function fairly autonomously, or do they require a lot of supervision and direction?
- What are the people like with whom you work?
- How would you describe the morale level of people who work here?
- Do you participate in many social activities with your coworkers?
- Is there a basic philosophy of the company or organization and, if so, what is it? (Is it a people-, service- or product-oriented business?)
- What is the company's mission?
- What can you tell me about the corporate culture?
- Is the company's management style top-down, or do front-line employees share in decision-making?
- Is there flexibility in work hours, vacation schedule, place of residence, telecommuting, etc.?
- What's the dress code here? Is it conservative or casual? Does the company have dress-down or casual days?
- Can men wear beards or long hair here?
- What work-related values are most highly esteemed in this company (security, high income, variety, independence)?
- Are there opportunities for further training and education? What kind of training program does the company offer? Is it highly structured or more informal?
- Does the company encourage and/or pay for employees to pursue graduate degrees? Is there a tuition reimbursement program?
- Does the company offer an employee discount on the products or services it sells?
- What's the best thing about the company?
- How does the company evaluate your job performance?

- How does the company recognize outstanding accomplishments of its employees?
- What does the company reward?
- Are there people within or outside the organization that the company holds up as heroes?
- Does the company observe any rituals, traditions, or ceremonies?
- What is the typical job-interview process at the company? How many interviews do candidates generally go through before being offered a position?
- What does the company do to foster innovation and creativity?
- How are decisions made – and how are those decisions communicated to the staff?
- What role does the person who gets this position play in decision-making?
- Does the organization emphasize working in teams?
- What are the organization’s priorities for the next few years?
- Are there established career paths for employees in this position?
- What 10 words would you use to describe your company?
- What’s it really like to work here?
- Around here, what’s really important?
- How are employees valued around here?
- What skills and characteristics does the company value?
- Do you feel as though you know what is expected of you?
- How do people from different departments interact?
- How do people get promoted around here?
- Around here what behaviors get rewarded?
- Do you feel as though you know what’s going on?
- How effectively does the company communicate to its employees?

### **Final Checklist for Narrowing Your Targeted Employers List**

Have you narrowed your list to 40 employers to target? Let’s ask one more set of target-market questions, adapted from a list posed by Mandy Porta on Inc.com, to ensure that you’ve truly qualified and optimized your targeted leads:

- Are there enough employers that fit my criteria?
- Will each targeted employer truly benefit from what I have to offer? Will they see a need for it?
- Do I understand what drives my target employers to make decisions?
- Can the employers afford my services (my desired salary)?
- Can I reach these employers with my message? Are they easily accessible? Do I have the contact information I need to reach the right hiring decision-makers? (If not, the next chapter will help).

You also need to ask a few “me first” questions. Since you are optimizing your list to contain employers that are the best fit for you, there’s little point in including organizations that don’t offer the benefits and opportunities you need. Thus, you will likely want to research such questions as:

- What kinds of perks and benefits does each employer offer?
- What are the professional-development opportunities?

- What opportunities for advancement exist?
- How much travel might be required?
- Does the organization pay relocation expenses?

## Chapter 3: Approaching the Employer and Probing Needs

You've generated and qualified your target list of employers. Now, it's time to start thinking about approaching employers and probing their needs (so you can, at some point, convince them, that you are the person to address their needs).

You have two choices about when to conduct this approaching and probing process – before you seek out job interviews with the employers on your list or during the course of interviewing with employers on your list. You will be better prepared with information to sell yourself to employers if approach and probe before going on job interviews. The timing you choose, however, will likely be dictated by the timeline of your job search. If you are not in a great hurry to land a new job, take the time to conduct this final and productive form of research.

### **The Approach – Before the Job Interview: Sleuthing Out Names**

To approach employers, you need the names of hiring managers. To be truly effective in your targeted search, you can't approach employers by titles; you need to target specific named individuals on your employer list. It's not easy to identify names of hiring managers. They are rarely revealed in want ads and job postings because employers are typically inundated with hundreds – even thousands – of resumes for a single opening, some from applicants who aren't remotely qualified. Hiring managers don't want to also be bombarded with time-consuming phone calls from job-seekers. Still, most – not all – hiring managers respond well to contacts from qualified, resourceful job-seekers who show their enthusiasm for joining the manager's organization.

So how does the job-seeker find out who the hiring manager is? This question represents one of the most perplexing dilemmas in contemporary job-hunting. It can, indeed, be difficult to find out the name of a specific individual to approach. But there are ways to identify hiring managers. It sometimes just takes some plucky and persistent detective work:

*Make a phone call.* The most straightforward way is to simply call the company's main switchboard number and ask the name of hiring manager for the type of job you're interested in. The worst that can happen is that the person answering the phone won't tell you. The second-worst thing is that the person will tell you to communicate with Human Resources. If that happens, ask the name of the human-resources director. If you get that name, file the name away in case all your other strategies fail. Also try calling after business hours. If you have a good idea what the title might be of the hiring manager for the position you seek, you may be able to match a title with a name when you listen to the employer's automated voicemail directory.

*Ask for help.* Steve Levy, principal of outside-the-box Consulting, suggests a variation on calling for information. Writing in [CollegeRecruiter.com](http://CollegeRecruiter.com)'s Ask the Experts feature, Levy advises: "Call the main number and say the following in a calm, soothing voice, 'Hello,

maybe you can help me out for a second?’ The person on the line will almost always respond by saying, ‘Sure. How can I help you?’ Why? Because our normal human reaction when someone asks us for help is to offer it. And there you have it – the start of a conversation rather than an opportunity to be rejected.

“Next step is to ask for the person in charge of the function in question,” Levy continues. “But what if the gatekeeper offers an objection – ‘I’m sorry, but I can’t divulge the name of the manager of finance.’ Your response should be ‘That’s not a problem.’ Why? Because you’ve just validated what the person told you. ‘I understand your position but can you suggest another way for me to contact the person?’ extends the dialogue and may even convince the gatekeeper to let down his or her guard. If the person doesn’t budge, say ‘Thanks for the time. By the way, my name is Anita Job. What is your name?’ Write down the person’s name and call again the next day using the person’s name as an opener, ‘Hello Bob, maybe you can help me out for a second? This is Anita Job – we spoke yesterday.’ Get the picture?”

Be persistent, Levy advises: “On the second or third call (it could take many calls to develop the relationship with Bob), rather than talking to the hiring manager directly, ask for this person’s email instead. The lesson here is be prepared to take the time to develop the relationship rather than expect the gatekeeper to bend to your immediate needs.” See more of Levy’s tips for locating hiring managers [at the end of this section](#).

*Use LinkedIn:* Research the [Company pages](#) on LinkedIn. Identify people in your own LinkedIn network who are inside those companies or who have connections. Ask them for LinkedIn introductions to the people you need to be talking to in your targeted companies.

*Tap into your network.* Show your target list of employers to members of your network and ask if they know anyone in those organizations, advises Laura Labovich. Then ask for an introduction. If you’ve done as much networking as you should as part of your job-search efforts, you may find it relatively easy to get names. Joining professional organizations is one of the fastest, easiest ways to learn names of hiring honchos in your target companies. Let’s say Company X is on your targeted-employers list. If you’re a proficient networker, chances are you know someone who works at Company X – or someone who knows someone else who works for Company X. In that case, you can simply get in touch with your network contact and ask who is the best person in Company X to approach. Consider using your inside contact as a referral name in an email overture:

Dear Mr. Smith:

Your marketing director, Tina Jones, suggested I contact you about how I can contribute to brand-management initiatives in your company.

You could even ask your friend Tina to hand-deliver your letter and resume to Mr. Smith.

*Become a proficient researcher.* If you take Chapter 1's suggestion to learn as much as you can about how to research companies, there's a reasonable chance you will uncover information about the best person to contact. Visit the company's Web site. Enlist assistance from a reference librarian at your public or university library.

You can also conduct research directly with the employer by calling the company's public-relations or investor-relations department to ask questions that may lead you to the name of a hiring manager.

*Use the company Web site in conjunction with job postings.* Look for job postings with vacancies with the employers on your targeted list (your purpose is research and finding names, not applying for jobs at this stage). If a job posting gives only an email address, use it to lead you to the company Web site, which will probably have a phone number. For example, the job posting gives the e-mail address [HR@CompanyX.com](mailto:HR@CompanyX.com). Type [www.CompanyX.com](http://www.CompanyX.com) or simply CompanyX.com into your browser, and you will probably get to the company's site. Search on the site for the phone number of the department in which you're seeking the name of a hiring manager.

### **From a Consultant: Tips for Identifying Hiring Managers**

Steve Levy suggests these tips for finding names of hiring managers to approach:

- Do a Google search for conferences in your industry or field and look for speaker bios.
- Conduct a Google search on: "@xyzcompany.com +manager" and see what pops up.
- Find the magazine with the highest readership for your industry or function. Go through six months' worth of issues and write down the name and title of every person quoted.
- Share university alumni chapter contacts with your friends.
- You know those business card bowls that so many restaurants use for meal giveaways? While you're standing there waiting to be seated, take a handful of cards and start looking at names and job titles.
- When networking rather than ask for referrals to people who work in your area, ask for referral to the "five best business people you know."
- Scour conference proceedings for names of hiring managers.

### **The Approach – Before the Job Interview: Probing and Analyzing Employer Needs**

To make the strongest possible case for why an employer should hire you, you need to know as much as possible about the employer's needs so you can present yourself as the candidate who can meet those needs. One of the best ways to learn about needs before you ever go on a job interview is a technique we're already introduced –informational interviewing.

One of the most powerful aspects of informational interviewing is the opportunity the practice affords to find out about the employer's needs. Every need discovered is an

opportunity. During your informational interviewing, be alert to company weaknesses, problems you could solve, gaps you could fill, situations you could improve. In seeking members of their workforce, after all, employers look for those who can fulfill their needs. Informational interviewing gives you an opportunity to uncover and tap into an organization's needs – often even before the company has planned to fill the need. It's a priceless technique because you not only describe yourself as the perfect person to meet the need, but you make yourself a shining star in the employer's eyes for showing concern for the firm's well-being. You put yourself on the team.

Here are questions you can ask about the company's needs:

- In what areas do you perceive there to be gaps in personnel in this company? If the company had unlimited resources for creating new positions, in what areas should those positions be created?
- In what areas do you see the company expanding? Do you foresee the opening of new markets or greater globalization? Do you predict development of new products and/or services? Building of new facilities?
- How can employees prepare for any planned changes at the company?
- What obstacles do you see getting in the way of the company's profitability or growth?
- If you needed someone to assist you in your job, what tasks would you assign to your assistant?

Informational interviews are the best way to learn about employer needs, but they're not the only way. Here are others:

- The easiest is to pull them right out of the job posting you plan to respond to. Most postings will describe what the employer needs in the person hired for the position.
- Get a handle on the competitive nature of the industry (or industries) that your list of companies operate within. Within the competitive environment you might be able to spot trends that are either opportunities or threats for your prospective employers.
- Scan news items online and in print about the companies on your list, especially if they are large, as we saw in [this part](#) of Chapter 1.
- Ask members of your network, especially organizational insiders who work for your target employers, what problems, challenges, and needs they observe. Ask them what kinds of positions the employer could fill or create to address its challenges.

You can then use your new-found knowledge of the employer's needs to pave the way to an actual job interview. Following are cover letter samples that show how to use the needs-fulfillment approach of conducting employer research using informational interviews:

## **Sample Informational Interviewing Needs-Fulfillment Letter #1**

Sid Ross  
1201 Heddison Rd.  
Hollywood, FL 33022  
954/555-9278

March 30, 2014

Roger Zwanger  
Eastwood Manufacturing  
1111 Pine Way  
Pembroke Pines, FL 33022

Dear Mr. Zwanger:

I enjoyed chatting with you last week during our informational interview. I recall our discussion about the difficulties you've been having in meeting your production schedules. I've been giving considerable thought to your dilemma and have come up with some ideas. I wondered if we might be able to get together again so I can share my thoughts with you.

As you know, I am foreman at Supplee and Co. I've developed a highly effective scheduling system; we have not missed a deadline in seven years. I'd really like to bring the scheduling success I've developed there to Eastwood.

I'll give you a call next week to see if we can arrange a time to continue our conversation.

Sincerely,

Sid Ross

## **Sample Informational Interviewing Needs-Fulfillment Letter #2**

Cynthia Phillips  
4455 South Coast Hwy  
Laguna Beach, California 92651  
949/555-4894 or 949/555-4397

March 25, 2014

Claudia Stevens  
Stevens Realty  
959 Orlando Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Dear Ms. Stevens:

Andrea Kirkwood suggested I contact you about a position in your real-estate office. When I interviewed Ms. Kirkwood six months ago to obtain information about a career in real estate, she mentioned that the agency would like to enhance its Web presence and bring it in-house. I'd like to combine my interest in real estate with my knowledge of Web design to help you create a Webmaster position in your office. I've even sketched out some preliminary ideas on how your Website could be improved, and I'd love to get together and show them to you.

While I have recently begun training for my real-estate license, I've been art director/graphic artist at PacificWeb for more than two years, having begun my Internet designing career by working with numerous local and national companies. With these assignments, I've more than proven my creative problem-solving abilities.

I am convinced that it would be mutually beneficial for us to meet so I can show you my ideas for your Website. I will contact you in 10 days to arrange an interview. Should you have any questions before my call, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thanks so much for your consideration.

Cordially,

Cynthia Phillips

## **Chapter 4: The Approach and Needs Analysis – When It’s in the Job Interview (The T and A Parts of GOTARZO)**

Now you’re at the point where you can finally begin to interact with your target market of employers and pitch yourself to them.

Your goal is an interview, which you will attempt to arrange through networking, cold-contacting the employer with a resume and cover letter (or possibly just a letter), or responding to a job posting/want ad.

Let’s assume your sales materials – also known as your resume and cover letter – have resulted in being called for an interview. You’ve been invited to make your sales pitch. Indeed, let’s re-imagine your interview as a sales call.

First some rationale for thinking of job-seeking as a sales process: “Would you expect a good salesperson to be reactive and passive, depending on [the customer] to ask the right questions to make the sale?” asks Eric Kramer, whose book, [Active Interviewing](#), is an excellent resource for thinking of interviews as sales calls. “By thinking and acting like a salesperson,” Kramer writes, “a job candidate becomes an active participant in the interview as opposed to a passive participant hoping for the right questions.”

Let’s now recall our our GOTARZO acronym and look back at the “T” portion ...

### **Tell Me ... USP**

One of the first things you want to do in the interview is make a short pitch for yourself to set the scene, to create a framework for how you fit in with the employer’s organization.

This pitch should include your [Unique Selling Proposition](#), a common term in marketing, sales, and advertising. Your USP is your capsule description of what makes you uniquely qualified for this job. What can you bring to this job that no one else can?

Your USP should be tweaked for every job you interview for. In the following example, the job-seeker highlights a particular skill, project management, that his research has told him is important to the employer:

I demonstrated my strong project-management skills when I led a project team in exceeding all expectations while implementing an outside vendor’s system for online scheduling, time/attendance, and payroll. Not only did we crush our two-month deadline, but we also reduced payroll discrepancies. We then slashed in half the time spent scheduling employees and resolving timesheet-related issues, and cut time devoted to reports. The icing on the cake was earning a special certificate from the vendor for improving efficiency.

How do you introduce your USP in a job interview? Early in the vast majority of interviews, the interviewer will ask, or rather demand, “Tell me about yourself.” That’s your opening for your pitch or USP. Here’s a succinct example that leaves a memorable impression (from our article, [Closing the Job Interview](#), by Carole Martin):

“I have two skills that are distinctly different but that define my personality. I am a very good pianist and an excellent ‘computer guy.’ I’m known for my love of keyboards.”

What if the interviewer doesn’t ask you to tell about yourself? Whatever the interviewer’s first question is, begin your response with a phrase something like:

“I would be happy to respond to your question, but would you mind if I tell you a little about myself first?”

It would be a rare employer who would not allow you to do so.

### **Next Step ... Analyze Needs**

Every good salesperson knows that he or she has to discuss the customer’s needs so he or she can explain how the product will meet those needs and solve the customer’s problems. But whether selling yourself or any other product, you would seem quite ignorant if you just walked into the sales call blindly and demanded, “Tell me what your needs are...” You can, however, ask questions like “What do you see as the greatest challenge for this position?” and “What qualities do you see as most important for this position?”, suggests Deborah Walker in our article, [The Job Interview as Sales Call Three Essential Interview Skills](#).

To truly delve into the employer’s needs, of course, it’s best to have done some research, as we saw in the [previous chapter](#).

Armed with your research, you can clarify organizational needs and problems and discuss them with the interviewer in greater depth. Again, you may be wondering how to initiate this part of the conversation. Early on in the interview process, when you are asked a question, Kramer advises saying something like, “Would it be OK if we talked about the job requirements first so I can be more targeted with my answers?”

Then, you can introduce the needs discussion with a phrase something like...

I notice that the job posting for this position mentions that the new hire would be building a company Website; can you elaborate a bit on that need?

OR, another example:

When I conducted an informational interview with your colleague Sally Smith a few months ago, she mentioned the difficulty the company has been having in meeting production schedules. Can you talk about that issue?

## Chapter 5: Revealing Storied Solutions

I'll bet you've guessed what comes next in the interview/sales pitch. Once you've discussed what the organization really needs in the person hired for this position, it's time to describe exactly how you can meet those needs.

I recommend you use story form to tell how you can meet needs and solve problems. Stories work because they are memorable, attention-getting, and perfect for making an emotional connection. A classic story formula is to describe the situation you found yourself in, tell the action you took to address the situation, and present the result.

Transitioning from the needs-analysis part of the interview into the part where you Reveal Storied Solutions, you might say something like:

“I know I can help you meet that need because I did the exact same thing for my previous employer” – and then tell the situation -> action -> result story of how you accomplished the same thing for your past employer.

Using the example from the previous chapter about the problems meeting production schedules, you could say:

I can help you solve that problem because I did the same thing for my current employer. I'm the project manager at the company, where we had been falling farther and farther behind in our scheduling. [Here you're describing the Situation.] I've developed a highly effective scheduling system. [You're telling the Action you took.] We haven't missed a deadline in 7 years [You've stated the Results you achieved.]

You can finish by saying: “I'd love to bring the same scheduling system to your company.”

## Chapter 6: Zapping Objections

Once you've discussed several needs and Storied Solutions, as well as responded to the interviewer's other questions, it's time to find out what obstacles might prevent you from being hired. It's crucial to identify and remove any doubts or questions an employer has about you, especially compared to other candidates.

Anyone who knows even just a little about sales knows that the key to success is in overcoming objections and then closing the sale. This chapter shows you how you can do the same in the job interview – and how using this technique will take you one step closer to the job offer. In sales, it's a proven theory that if you can overcome all your prospect's objections, he or she will have little choice but to agree to your offer. And while you are not doing the exact same thing for the same reasons, the logic holds that if you can overcome all the objections of the hiring manager, then you'll be more likely to move on to the next step in the process.

This is the Zap Objections stage of the interview as sales call. As the interview winds down, the interviewer may reveal objections to hiring you, but that's increasingly rare because employers are terrified to volunteer any information that might get them sued.

What do you do if no objections are raised? It might not mean that none exist, so it's best to probe to uncover any – again, because it's much better to get them out in the open and address them than to let them sit, clouding your future. You can ask the interviewer outright, “Now that you know more about me, can you see any issues that would stand in the way of my success in this position?” or, as Deb Walker suggests, “Is there any reason you wouldn't consider inviting me back for second interview?” Here's where the interviewer will probably voice any objections. He or she might say for example: “I'm concerned that you might be a job-hopper because you haven't stayed very long in any of your jobs.”

You need to be ready by anticipating and countering objections the employer might raise.

### Overcoming Hiring-Manager Objections

Overcoming objections can be done in a number of ways, but the keys are to acknowledge the interviewer's objection, understand the true cause of the objection, and respond with enough information to defuse the objection. It's best to anticipate these potential objections before the job interview so you can practice your responses.

What are some common objections an interviewer might bring up? They might include your seeming overqualified, not fitting into the team, or your having been fired from a past job. The lack-of-sufficient-experience objection is common. My partner's great dream after he got his master's degree was to work in magazine publishing in New York City. When he interviewed for a marketing-research position at the *New Yorker* magazine, he was told they really wanted someone with more experience. He zapped

that objection by describing his master's thesis, which was a survey about how various magazines conducted market research. Although he did not get that job, he was hired soon after when a member of the market-research staff went on maternity leave.

When the employer has some lingering doubts as to whether you have sufficient experience (or perhaps your experience is in a different field), your goal is to show exactly how – regardless of the time spent or where it was spent – you have the skills to get the job done. One great tool for this objection is a career portfolio, in which you not only can tell the story of how you are qualified – but show it as well through examples in your portfolio. [Read more tips in this article: [Underqualified? Ten Tips to Inspire Employers to Take a Leap of Faith.](#)]

See below for additional common objections raised in job interviews.

### **Common Objections Raised by Employers in Job Interviews**

*“I’m concerned you have too much experience for this position.”*

This comment is the most loaded of objections because it can mean one of several things – and it is your job to discover which one is meant. The good news is that if you got the interview, your qualifications make you an attractive candidate. Most often, this comment conceals a concern about your age, attitude, or motivation. Obviously, the interviewer cannot ask your age, but someone with a lot of experience is often older, and the employer may have some concerns about fit, especially if the rest of the department is younger. Older workers also sometimes put out a vibe that because of their vast experience they know it all – and are seen as having an attitude problem. Finally, if you have years in the same type of position, some interviewers will question your drive and motivation to move ahead (incorrectly assuming that everyone wants to do so). [Read more in this article: [Fighting the Overqualified Label: 10 Tactics for a Successful Job-Search.](#)]

*“I’m not sure we can pay you the salary you are seeking.”*

Related to the over-experience comment is the salary issue. Employers are always concerned about salary – and hiring employees that best fit their budgets – so the employer may be interested in you, but has a nagging question about affording you. In this case, it's important to defuse the objection without giving away too much information so that you still have leverage if you do get the job offer. [Learn more in our [Salary Negotiation Tutorial.](#)]

*“I’m not sure you would fit into the team.”*

So many jobs require workers to participate in one or more teams that it seems inconceivable that a job-seeker would not have experience working in teams, but if for some reason you do not have much experience in teamwork, you must demonstrate that you understand the importance of teams in the workplace and how you can be a team player. Demonstrating your knowledge of the organizational culture will also be a plus in this situation.

*“I’m concerned about the number of jobs you’ve held in such a short period of time.”*

If you have had an unusual number of jobs in the last few years, some interviewers will raise the job-hopper question, so you need to be able to explain the logic of your job history. It's important to note that even though employers are not as loyal to their employees as in the past, they still expect employees to be loyal to them.

*“We really like you but are just not sure where you fit.”*

The good news about this objection is that you have won half the battle because the employer likes you and wants to hire you, but is simply unsure of how to best utilize your skills. The key to your response has to be having the confidence in yourself and the knowledge about the employer to explain clearly why you are a fit for the position you are interviewing for.

*“Were you fired from your last job?”*

Unless the employer has inside information about you – or you are currently unemployed while job-hunting – this should not be a common objection. However, if you have been downsized or fired from your last job, you should at least anticipate this objection. It's pretty common to be defensive about the subject since no one likes being fired – even if you were let go simply because your job was eliminated – so you need to put that behind you when responding to this objection. [Learn more in this article: [Getting Fired: An Opportunity for Change and Growth.](#)]

In attempting to overcome these objections remember to not dwell on the objection, but instead, once you are sure you understand it, turn it around to overcome it. If you do have a weakness that the interviewer has uncovered, find a way to turn it into a strength. For example, if you have been fired from your last job, find a way to showcase how the experience has given you new insight into ensuring your boss knows the contributions you are making.

And for those who do not have experience in sales, one piece of warning. While it is helpful to think of the interview as a sales call, do be careful not to overdo it – to not oversell yourself to the point where you actually turn the interviewer off about your candidacy. You need to walk the line between being too modest about your accomplishments and fit with the organization and talking too much about yourself.

Finally, always remember that the interview really is a conversation between two parties who are both trying to showcase their best points. Your goal is to leave the interview knowing you did your best to sell your unique mix of skills and accomplishments while overcoming any objections raised by the interviewer.

## Chapter 7: Closing the Sale

Once you have made your salient points about how you are the perfect candidate for the position and zapped any objections from the interviewer, your final step is closing the sale. Experts differ on how direct job-seekers should be in closing the sale. Some say they miss opportunities if they don't come right out and ask for the job. Others say a hard sell doesn't work in this situation.

At a minimum, you should ask about the next step in the process, how many other candidates there are, and an estimate of the timetable for completing the process – what some marketers might call the trial close, where you are feeling out the interviewer.

However, if you truly feel the interview was a good one, that you are a great fit for the position, and that you have overcome all the interviewer's objections, you should ask for the job. Best case, you'll get the offer; worst case, you'll be told you need to wait.

In any case, a number of closings are possible. Here are examples, ranging from soft to hard sell.

### **“Trial” or Soft Closings:**

- Can you tell me about the next steps in the hiring process?
- What's your estimated timetable for when you'll be making a hiring decision?
- Is there any other information that I can provide that would convince you that I am the right person for this job? – *From our article, [Closing the Job Interview](#), by Carole Martin.*

### **Harder Closings:**

- From what you have been telling me about this position, and from what I know about your company, I know that I have the right mix of experience and education to bring value to this position. Based on past experiences I can “ramp up” quickly and be on board with projects within the first few weeks. – *From our article, [Closing the Job Interview](#), by Carole Martin.*
- I'd like to stay in touch and follow up with you in a week or two to see how the process is going and where I stand. How do you prefer that I communicate with you – email or phone? – *From our article, [Closing the Job Interview](#), by Carole Martin.*
- What challenges would you have me tackle first on the job? – *From our article, [The Job Interview as Sales Call: Three Essential Interview Skills](#), by Deborah Walker.*
- I'm excited to have learned through this meeting that my qualifications are an excellent fit for this position. Based on that knowledge, I'm enthusiastic about coming on board.
- I'm confident that I can hit the ground running in this job, and I believe I've shown my ability to do just that in all my past positions. When can I expect to learn of my status?

- I have long admired your organization and consider you in the forefront of the industry. The plans for the future you've outlined in this meeting simply affirm your position of leadership and vision. I want to be part of that vision – and part of your team – because I strive to excel in my career.
- [Use this one only if it's true.] Although I recently received a job offer, I wanted to go ahead with today's interview because, frankly, I'd prefer to work here. Today's meeting has only confirmed my preference for your organization over the one that made me the offer. When are you likely to decide on a candidate?

**Hardest Closings:**

- When would you like to schedule our next meeting? – *From our article, [The Job Interview as Sales Call: Three Essential Interview Skills](#), by Deborah Walker.*
- When can I start?
- Perhaps I can show you that hiring me would be the right decision by offering to work on a probationary basis. I could make it easier for you to decide by demonstrating my skills in action. I am convinced you won't regret taking my qualifications for a test drive.
- Are there any other materials I should bring when I come back for the second interview? – *Adapted from our article, [The Job Interview as Sales Call: Three Essential Interview Skills](#), by Deborah Walker.*

## Chapter 8: + Follow Up

Follow up is truly vital to your job-search success. Your job is not done once the job interview is over; first, you must send thank-you notes to all the folks you interview with, and second, you need to follow-up with the hiring manager and continue showing your interest in the organization.

Be proactive and consider follow-up a strategic part of your job search process. Follow-up can give you just the edge you need to get the job offer over others who interviewed for the position. Use these follow-up strategies to continue to show your enthusiasm and desire for the position, but don't make it seem as though you are desperate.

As we saw in the previous chapter, ask at the end of the interview when the employer expects to make the hiring decision.

Be sure you've obtained the correct titles and names of all the people who interviewed you. (Ideally, you will have asked for each person's business card.) If you're unsure about any names or spellings call an administrative assistant at the organization to ask.

Write individual thank you notes or letters to each person who interviewed you – within two business days. Each letter can be essentially the same, but try to vary each a bit in case recipients compare notes. Don't ever fail to send a thank you – even if you are sure the job is not for you. And do write thank-you notes after every interview, even when you've been invited back for second, third, and further meetings.

Don't worry so much about hand-written versus typed thank you letters, but don't make a mistake by sending it through the wrong medium; make sure you know the best method of reaching the employer, whether by postal mail, email, or fax.

In your thank-you letter, show appreciation for the employer's interest in you and remind the employer about why you are the perfect person for the position. See [sample interview thank you letters](#).

Avoid errors (misspellings or typos) in your thank-you letters.

Alert your references – if you have not done so already – that they may be getting a phone call from the employer.

Don't stop job-hunting, even if you feel confident that you will get a job offer. Continue to interview and attempt to find other opportunities.

Don't sit back and wait for the job offer. Follow-up with a telephone call to the employer within a week to 10 days (or sooner, if the employer had a shorter timetable) to ask about the position. Continue to build rapport and sell your strengths during the phone call.

But how does a job-seeker follow-up without sounding desperate or becoming a nuisance?

Call the hiring manager. If the hiring manager is avoiding your calls, it could be a bad sign – but not necessarily. If you cannot reach him or her because his secretary is screening calls, consider calling during lunch time or after business hours – where you may be lucky enough to catch the manager, or at least be able to leave a voicemail message. And since you have an email address, send an email follow-up.

How do you not sound desperate? Well, first, don't act like it. I actually think following-up about once a week is not unreasonable. Calling every day is a warning sign to employers. But, here's something more important than the frequency – the content of your conversation. Whenever you do call, have a topic of interest to discuss first – perhaps the employer was in the news (about a new product, sales growth, or something else positive) or perhaps you have news (such as completed more training or some accomplishment)... and once you have discussed the news (and shown your continued interest in the organization), you can casually ask about the status of the job opening. If you do get a job offer from one of the other leads you are pursuing, by all means call the hiring manager and let her know – doing so could backfire on you, but it might also hasten the hiring process if you are the top candidate for the position.

Be patient. The hiring process often takes longer than the employer expects. Employers have had the luxury in the last few years to stretch the length of the hiring process up to many months beyond the initial interviews. Regardless of whether the job market is strong or weak, follow-up is key for job-seekers. Continue to follow up, especially if the employer asks you to. Remember the adage about the squeaky wheel getting the oil. Just don't go overboard and annoy or bother the employer.

Don't place too much importance on one job or one interview; there will be other opportunities for you.

Don't burn any bridges if you do not get a job offer. And do try and turn the situation into a positive by bringing the interviewer(s) into your network, possibly even asking them for referrals to other contacts.

## Afterword

The beauty of an ebook is that it can easily be updated and revised. I plan to do that with this book.

I welcome your crowdsourcing help in making future editions of this book even better. What question went unanswered and what suggestions do you have? See a typo or other error? Want to suggest a resource?

I welcome all input and feedback. To contact me with your feedback and suggestions:

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## About me

Katharine (Kathy) Hansen, Ph.D., creative director and associate publisher of Quintessential Careers, is an educator, author, and blogger who provides content for Quintessential Careers. Kathy, who earned her PhD from Union Institute & University authored *You Are More Accomplished Than You Think*, *Tell Me About Yourself*, *Dynamic Cover Letters for New Graduates*, *A Foot in the Door*, *Top Notch Executive Interviews*, *Top Notch Executive Resumes*, and the books in the Quick and Quintessential Guide series; and with Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D., *Dynamic Cover Letters*, *Write Your Way to a Higher GPA*, and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Study Skills*.

