Always Have a Sales Call/Job Interview Objective

*E*very good salesperson prepares a written objective before making a sales call. Good selling objectives, for example, include meeting all the decision makers, demonstrating the product and getting a product specified on a blueprint, and getting a purchase order. So too must every job seeker have a written objective for every interview. Your interview objective is precisely like a sales call objective. Knowing what you wish to achieve in every interview helps you shape your job-getting strategy and design your interview questions.

Good interview objectives include the following:

- To get the job
- To learn about other possible job opportunities
- To get invited to return for more interviews
- To get past any screeners to meet the real decision maker(s)
- To get an offer to work on a trial basis as an independent contractor (for, say, six to ten weeks)
- To get a consulting project
- To get a referral to another good company

At some point in your meetings with your target customer, it is not only appropriate but imperative that you present your objective and ask to make the objective happen. For example: "Mr. Fitzhugh, based on my research and based on what was discussed in some of

my interviews, it appears that your company is interested in how you benchmark in R & D innovation among your competitors. This issue is more a project than a full-time job. I am willing to take on the benchmarking task as a consulting project. That way we could learn more about each other, and you will get some valuable information. Why don't we give it a try?" Then wait until Mr. Fitzhugh answers.

Mr. Fitzhugh may hire you for the full-time job. Or he may hire you for the consulting project, which could lead to the full-time job. Or Mr. Fitzhugh could continue to demur. If so, Mr. Fitzhugh will most likely state his reason for not hiring you. This will be an objection you may or may not be able to overcome, but at least you now will know what the customer really wants.