

Interview Thank You Letter

RECAP THE INTERVIEW Immediately after the interview, start the follow-up procedure. Answer these questions:

- Whom did you meet? (names and titles)
- What does the job entail?
- What are the first projects, the biggest challenges?
- Why can you do the job?
- What aspects of the interview went well? Why?
- What aspects of the interview went poorly? Why?
- What is the agreed-upon next step?
- Where is the employer in their hiring cycle, when will a decision be made?
- What was said during the last few minutes of the interview?

Probably the most difficult—and most important—thing to do is to objectively analyze what aspects of the interview went poorly. A person does not get offered a job based solely on strengths, and those would be easy enough to answer. On the contrary, many people get new jobs based on their relative lack of negatives as compared with the other applicants. So it is mandatory that you look for and recognize any negatives from your performance. That is the only way you will have an opportunity to package and overcome those negatives in your follow-up procedure and during subsequent interviews.

The next step is to write the follow-up letter or e-mail to the interviewer to acknowledge the meeting and to keep you fresh in his or her mind. Sending a follow-up letter also shows that you are both appreciative and organized, and it refreshes the urgency of your candidacy. But remember that a canned follow-up form letter could hurt your chances.

COMPOSE THE LETTER Write a follow-up letter to be sent as an e-mail or as a traditional letter. The follow-up should make four points clear to the employer:

- You paid attention to what was being said.
- You understand the job and can do it.
- You are excited about the job, can do it, and want it.
- You have the experience to contribute to those first major projects.

USE THE RIGHT WORDS AND PHRASES IN YOUR LETTER Here are some you might want to use:

- “Upon reflection,” or “Having thought about our meeting . . .”
- Recognize—“I recognize the importance of . . .”
- Listen—“Listening to the points you made . . .”
- Motivation— Let the interviewer catch your enthusiasm. It is very effective, especially as your letter will arrive while other applicants are nervously sweating their way through the interview.
- Impressed— Let the interviewer know you were impressed with the people/product/service/facility/market/position, but do not overdo it.
- Challenge— Show that you feel you would be challenged to do your best work in this environment.
- Confidence—There is a job to be done and a challenge to be met. Let the interviewer know you are confident of doing both well.
- Interest— If you want the job (or next interview), say so. At this stage, the company is buying and you are selling. Ask for the job in a positive and enthusiastic manner
- Appreciation— As a courtesy and mark of professional manners, you must express appreciation for the time the interviewer took out of his or her busy schedule.

MENTION THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE YOU MET at the interview whenever possible and appropriate. Draw attention to one of the topics that was of general interest to the interviewers.

ADDRESS THE FOLLOW-UP LETTER to the main interviewer. Send a copy to personnel with a note of thanks as a courtesy.

DON'T WRITE TOO MUCH. Keep it short—less than one page—and don't make any wild claims that might not withstand close scrutiny.

SEND THE LETTER WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS of the interview. If the decision is going to be made in the next couple of days, e-mail the letter or hand-deliver it. The follow-up letter will help to set you apart from other applicants and will refresh your image in the mind of the interviewer just when it would normally be starting to dim.

PUT IN A TELEPHONE CALL to the company representative if you do not hear anything after five days. Reiterate the points made in the letter, saying that you want the job (or next interview), and finish your statements with a question: "Mr. Smith, I feel confident about my ability to contribute to your department's efforts, and I really want the job. Could you tell me what I have to do to get it?" Then be quiet and wait for the answer.

THANK YOU LETTER EXAMPLE

January 5, 2009

Michael Ticino
Chair, Search Committee
Department of Philology
Forrest University
Scanton, MI 20245

Dear Michael,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to interview me for the Office Coordinator position. It was a pleasure meeting with you and the committee this morning. Please extend my thanks to Robert, Leslie, and Paula. I walked away from the interview with great enthusiasm about the work accomplished by your department.

I understand the importance of flexibility and am willing to go the extra mile to get the job done well and on time. I also work well under pressure and am able to maintain a professional demeanor in stressful situations. My strengths include strong organizational and computer skills, the ability to prioritize my work load and to set and meet deadlines. I believe these qualities make me especially well-suited to assume the responsibilities of your position.

Additionally, I have experience in most aspects of office management including training, supervising and evaluating staff and student assistants. I would find it a joy and challenge to manage your talented staff.

I am confident you will be pleased with my ability to manage the workflow of your office in an efficient and timely manner if I am chosen as the successful candidate for this position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Michaela Pike