

On Thank You Notes

OK, so here we are at the final step in our process. You have worked hard getting your head on straight, figuring out who you are and what you bring to the party. You developed a good marketing strategy and materials because you succeeded in getting an interview.

You believe the interview(s) went reasonable well and you definitely are interested in the position. So now what do we do.

Remember that this is not just a perfunctory note but is a significant part of your overall job search strategy. We need, change that to we must write a series of thank you letters. Remember that your strategy has to show how you uniquely fit the requirements of the position and that you hold a competitive advantage over other candidates. So now we have to prove that proposition.

Step 1.

Make certain that you have the correct names and titles of everyone you interviewed. If you didn't get their business cards, call the receptionist and get the information. Don't wing it! You cannot afford to be wrong. While we are going to send a thank you note to *everybody* we interviewed we are also going to want to send a thank you to the administrative assistant that set up the interviews with you. Nobody ever thanks her so you are going to stand out from all the others and she will make certain her boss knows that she did such a good job that she received a thank you note.

She just may tell her boss what you did and or put your note in your file and put your file on top of the file. Anyway you cut it, you cannot lose.

You may have been subjected to a panel interview. Even if there was a person in the room that appeared to be paying little attention, be sure that person is included with your thank you notes. She or he is probably the decision maker!

Step Two.

Prepare a thank you letter that is no longer than one page. Look at our examples as well as search for other examples of good thank you letters. Now when are you going to do write this letter? Well don't argue with me because you are going to write it immediately after you finish your interview. And I mean immediately. You will have planned ahead and brought with you a supply of thank you notes so that you can write them from your car (or nearest coffee shop) immediately after your interview. Why not? That is when you are still pumped and everything is still fresh in your mind.

Step Three

So what are you going to say? We'll start with thanking the interviewer for the time they spent with you and expressing your opinion that you enjoyed the discussion with him/her. Next we must demonstrate that you were listening and this is not some mechanical, canned response. Reiterate the key points from your discussion. Demonstrate an understanding of where the company is going. This is about showing that you were listening, understanding and appreciating their plans and priorities.

Step Four.

Link your accomplishments to those objectives showing that you have the ability to deal effectively with their issues. In fact, it is a good idea to bullet point your accomplishments to make sure the points made in your interview are reinforced. Make sure you include something personal that was a point of discussion in your interview. This assures the recipient that you were listening and that it is a personal note.

Step Five.

Think through your close carefully. Sum up and restate your interest in the position and why it is of interest to you. Express your appreciation one more time for the time taken to discuss this opportunity with you.

General Comments:

After writing your letters, check them yourself for spelling, punctuation and grammar. One mistake here and all your previous hard work goes down the rat hole. The question that we normally receive is what about sending the thank you note by e-mail. There are many reasons that e-mail may not go through, so why take a chance? If your handwriting is atrocious you might then type them.

Following writing your letters you are going to take them back to the company and leave them with the receptionist, asking her to make distribution. Think of the impact that such a fast response will have with the principals. But there is another reason. We never know when the decision will be made or how it will be made. Casual conversations during the next several hours or days could swing the vote. Why not have your points in there first?

Be sure your language and style is strictly professional. This is no time for funky or strange approaches. Some feel that very different or "creative" approaches make them stand out. That very well may be the case but in the way that will not be to your benefit.