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Thank You Letters

What is the purpose?

Sending a thank you letter after an interview not only shows professionalism and courtesy, but it also gives you an opportunity to stand out from other candidates. Surveys show that more than 50% of interviewees fail to follow up in this manner, which can give those that send a thank you a significant edge.

Throughout your job search, you will have many occasions to write a thank you letter. Not only are these letters appreciated for the moment, but they may leave the foundation for future employment. Do not overlook interviewers, secretaries and networking contacts when you write these letters. Thoughtfulness will never work against you.

After the job interview, write a thank you letter immediately, because it let's them see you are appreciative, excited about the job, and organized. It reminds the interviewer you paid attention to what was said during the interview. The thank you letter will allow you to include something you may have forgotten to say. Finally, thank you letters can provide another reason for the interviewer to contact you about your candidacy. The more specific you are in your thank you letter, the more it will be valued.

Guidelines for Thank You Letters

- Always send the letter or note within 24 hours of the interview
- Handwritten notes are more personal; whether letter or note, keep it short
- Address the follow-up letter to the main interviewer or write more than one note
- Address the letter/note to Dear Mr. or Ms. rather than using his/her first name
- Write about something specific that was discussed in the interview which makes you unique and qualified
- Spell everything correctly
- Put your return address and adequate postage on the envelope
- Use an attractive stamp. Studies indicate that eye-catching stamps result in greater sales in direct-marketing
- Use good quality blue or black ink
- Don't oversell yourself by using clichés
- Use the name you were called at the interview for your signature when writing the note by hand
- Type your formal name, then sign your conversational name if you are typing a letter
- If you don't hear anything after five days, put in a telephone call to the company
- Don't enclose another copy of your resume

The Three Basic Parts

In the first paragraph, thank the interviewer for the chance to meet with them to discuss the job. Make some reference to your positive impressions of the job. It is generally a good idea to include the date on which the interview occurred.

In the second paragraph, offer some new information or additional reasons for the employer to be interested in you for the job. This is your chance to highlight your individual strengths and show why you are the person who should be hired. Try to personalize the letter by referring to some topic or common interest you discussed during the interview; and thus avoiding a restatement of your cover letter.

In the last paragraph, state again your appreciation, and offer to provide more information and a statement that you look forward to hearing from them. Make it clear that you are willing to come in and discuss the job further, if necessary.