

Follow Up Letters (Thanking Employers)

Letters expressing your appreciation for an initial or second interview have been known to make or break an employers' decision about a candidate. For example, if two candidates are on equal footing after an interview, an employer may select the candidate that sends a letter over the one who doesn't. Most consider it a common courtesy, a way to differentiate you from the pack, and proof that you're really interested in the position.

Sending your follow up letter within 24 hours of the interview is the best practice. If you interview with more than one person in a session, you need not send a letter to each individual person, but rather a main contact person, or the hiring partner, and request that your appreciation is conveyed to all involved.

Emailing a follow up message should only be done in the case that a decision on whom will be selected for a job will likely be rendered before a letter from you could be received by the employer. Otherwise it is best to send a "snail mail" letter.

Writing Tips

Write the follow up letter as a standard business letter. Use good quality stationery. When drafting the letter, try to establish a personal connection to your correspondent; this can be done by mentioning subject matter that you discussed in your interview. Perhaps a topic you discussed reminds you of an interesting article or research you have come across. By taking brief notes during or immediately after the interview, you will not forget subjects that were discussed.

Tailor your letter to the culture of the company and the relationship you established with the person who interviewed you. If you feel the interviewer and the company call for a formal business letter, send that. If your rapport with the interviewer dictates a more personal touch, send a handwritten note.

Generally, a thank you letter has three basic parts:

1. Start by thanking the interviewer for taking the time to talk with you. It is generally a good idea to include the actual date on which the interview occurred.
2. Reaffirm your interest in the firm by pointing out particular issues brought during the interview that appeal to you. Try to personalize the letter by

referring to some topic or common interest you discussed during the interview.

3. Close the letter with another word of appreciation, an offer to provide more information and a statement that you look forward to hearing from them. Resist the temptation to sell yourself by reiterating your resume strengths. Keep it short and to the point.

Beware! Candidates on the verge of being hired have been removed from consideration because they sent sloppy, poorly written thank-you letters, riddled with typos, misspellings, and grammatical errors. Writing skills are important in many jobs, and employers do not want to have to teach candidates remedial skills. Spell check, proofread, and have someone else read over your letter before you send it.

Why Write a Follow-up Letter

- Shows that you are courteous, knowledgeable and professional
- Demonstrates your written communication skills
- Helps to make you stand out in the minds of the interviewers
- Elevates you above competing candidates who didn't bother to write thank you letters
- Gives you an opportunity to reinforce your good points
- Allows you to include something important you forgot to mention during your interview
- Confirms your understanding of topics discussed and helps to avoid misunderstandings