

Writing a Thank You Letter

A thank you letter is one of the most important components of the interviewing process. This simple gesture can speak volumes about your interest in the position, degree of polish, and true appreciation for the opportunity to interview. Most business people consider the thank you note a basic part of business etiquette.

Several types of follow-up responses exist. For example, you may handwrite, type, or e-mail your thank you. Which one you choose will be based upon several factors, including the culture of the company for which you interview, the position for which you applied, and the personal characteristics of the interviewer.

Be Genuine

Perhaps the single most important thing to remember when writing thank you notes is to be genuine. A sincere, personal note of thanks is actually quite rare from job applicants. Therefore, a well written, true expression of gratitude can make you a particularly memorable candidate.

Individualize

Your letter should be a message of thanks from you as an individual to another individual. If your letter sounds like it could have been written by anyone to anyone for any position, then it will be perceived much like a “limp handshake.” Mention something from the conversation with the interviewer if an interesting topic arose. However, be prudent when adding anything other than “thank you” in your letter. Now is not the time for a hard-sell pitch of your skills. Remember, this is an expression of gratitude to the interviewer – not a forum to discuss your skills and abilities.

Typed vs. Handwritten

Traditionally, the thank you note has been hand-written. If your handwriting is good, it can contribute to personalizing your correspondence. However, if your handwriting is poor, typing the correspondence is perfectly acceptable. In addition, if the impression from the interviewer is strictly formal, then typed would be more appropriate. The important thing is to never appear **too** formal while maintaining professionalism.

Paper and Envelopes

Thank you note cards with matching envelopes are appropriate for use as long as you stick to a simple card without cute graphics and sayings. High-quality stationery paper with matching envelope is suitable as well. Both can be found at stationery stores and greeting card shops.

E-Mail

For most situations, e-mailing your thank you may be seen as too impersonal. However, exceptions do exist. If you are interviewing with a high-tech company, the interviewer may expect your response electronically. If, when interviewing, you get the sense the interviewer prefers electronic correspondence over paper, e-mailing would be appropriate.

Where and When

Finally, a thank you letter should be sent to each individual with whom you interviewed. This should not be a copy of one letter to all but an individualized correspondence. Thank you notes should be mailed within 24 hours of the interview.

If you need additional assistance with thank you letters, visit a Career Counselor at the CDC.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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