

Thank You Letters

Why Write A Thank You Letter

You have put together the resume, the cover letter and gone through the interview - congratulations! Don't stop now - there is at least one more step before you are through. The thank you letter can not be neglected in today's competitive market. You need an edge over the other candidates and you can increase your chance of being hired by writing them - by marketing yourself to them one more time. The bottom line is that less than 10% of interviewees ever follow-up interviews with thank you letters. If you do, you rise that much higher to the top of the candidate pool.

How To Write A Thank You Letter

You should plan to send a thank you letter as soon after the interview as possible. To be most effective, it should arrive prior to the final hiring decision. A thank you letter should say much more than "thank you". Here are some of important points you may want to include:

- **Express Enthusiasm**

Convey your interest in and enthusiasm for the organization and the position for which you interviewed. Try to be specific about why you are interested and how you are a good fit for the organization.

- **Address Unresolved Points**

Address any issues or questions that came up during the interview that you feel you did not fully answer. This letter is your last chance to make a positive impression on the interviewer.

- **Be Sincere**

The letter must be genuine, unique, and sincere - assure them you recognize the importance of the meeting and appreciate their time.

- **Personalize It**

You may be one of several interviewees in a short time period - you need to set yourself apart from the other candidates so they will remember you when you leave. In your letter, highlight a key point from your interview that you believe the interviewer will remember, and therefore remember you. Additionally, if you meet with several people, be sure to send them all thank you letters, each one a bit different; you may not know exactly who in the group will be making the decisions. This will also force you to remember with whom you interviewed.

- **Make One Last First Impression**

Interviewers, especially if they are interviewing several people in a short time period, will typically only remember 3-5 things about you. Choose 3-5 points about your candidacy - the best you have to offer - and highlight it in your resume, your cover letter, the interview, and finally, in the thank you letter.

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Should I Send It Typewritten, Handwritten or via Email?

There are many opinions about the presentation style of a thank you letters. We generally recommend *typing* the letters in a standard business-style format (much like your cover letters), triple-checking for typos and grammatical errors. You are being evaluated as a professional and typing it confirms that this meeting was important enough to take the time to present yourself in a professional manner.

There are times, however, when it may be appropriate to send a *handwritten* thank you letter. If someone you know "pulled some strings" to get you the interview or there was a mutual acquaintance of some kind; if you personally know the interviewer; or if the interviewer was an alumni. Many students choose Oswego State postcards or stationary from the bookstore. Be sure your handwriting is legible and neat. If you need to expand on some of the issues presented in the interview, then a more lengthy, typewritten letter is better. Generally speaking, we recommend that you type your thank you letters.

Sending thank you letters via *email* is fine as long as it fits the "culture" of the organization and is used appropriately. If an employer has an email account on his business card or is a technology-based employer, sending the letter this way may be appropriate. Be sure there is no doubt as to the email address (you may or may not be informed that the message was undeliverable). Format your letter with all the same formalities as a regular thank-you letter. Email tends to make us a bit less formal and you do not want the note to be overly friendly. Try to keep the message to one screen length; employers appreciate brevity. Hard copy will generally be placed in a file, whereas email has a tendency to be read quickly and deleted. You may consider following up the email letter with hard copy.

Sample Typed Thank You Letter

445 Scales Hall
SUNY @ Oswego
Oswego, NY 13126

Mr. Jack Sayer
Director, Human Resources
XYZ Organization
987 Main St.
Anytown, NY 12870

Dear Mr. Sayer:

Thank you for meeting with me this past week to discuss my candidacy with XYZ Organization. I would like to reiterate my interest and enthusiasm in working as part of your counseling staff. After speaking with you, I can see how the crisis intervention and communication skills I developed while working as a hotline counselor would enable me to make effective contributions to XYZ Organization.

I appreciated your insight into the mental health field and I am highly impressed with how XYZ has continued to be on the cutting edge of national research and therapy methods. Additionally, I enjoyed sharing our common interest in tennis and deep sea fishing.

I look forward to the next step in the recruiting process, and will call you, as we discussed, in two weeks to follow up on my candidacy. Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Teresa Miller