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Thank You Notes

Companies differ in their expectation of a thank you note after an interview. In some offices, interviewers take offense at the absence of a note and malign negligent interviewees. In other offices, politeness is a superfluous rather than central part of the culture. Rather than spending your time deciphering the expectations of your interviewers, invest in making the thank you note clinch your candidacy.

You should consider the content of your thank you letter as carefully as you considered the content of your cover letter.

In addition to showing appreciation for the time of the interviewer and establishing another point of contact, your thank you letter should include a reaffirmation of your particular value to the company now that you have more information about the job. Use the note to market yourself. By referencing specific concerns and needs of the company as expressed by the interviewer, you show the interviewer again that you paid close attention to what she said. By citing particular ways in which you can address those needs and concerns, you do the work of connecting the job requirements with your job skills. Making connections between yourself and the job not only fortifies your aptness for the position, but it also tangibly demonstrates your interest in the position. The greater care you take to customize the note, the more personally it will affect the interviewer. For this reason, it is also helpful to comment on something specific that you appreciated about the interviewer or what she said. (Note: be sure that your comments are appropriate and professional.)

If there is something important that you forgot to mention during the interview, you think there might have been a point of miscommunication, or the interviewer indicated concern over some aspect of your qualifications, you can address these in the thank you note. When doing so, be certain that your tone is positive, forthright, and confident.

Consider a sample thank you note:

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday. Your dedication to ensuring that clients receive what they need from

XYZ Consulting in the timeframe they need it is admirable and makes me confident that I would fit into the culture at XYZ.

After speaking with you, I reflected on some of the skills and qualities you indicated are most important in this position: analytical acuity, project management, flexibility, and the ability to establish strong relationships with clients. In my experience as project manager overseeing the delivery of complicated knowledge management systems to five major clients, my success depended on these same skills. You mentioned that miscommunication between XYZ and your clients periodically causes glitches in providing services. Since I am adept at developing a strong rapport with clients, understanding their objectives and expectations, and keeping communication lines open, I would immediately add value to the team at XYZ.

In short, Pat, I am convinced that the Director position would be a good career move for me and that I would contribute to the success of XYZ. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Doe

The thank you note communicates respect for the employer and reaffirm your case as a candidate. Thank you note reminders:

- Send the note within 24 hours of the interview if you send it via the mail service and 48 hours of the interview if you send it via email.
- Send one note to each person who interviewed you. The interviewers will likely compare your notes.
- Make the note personal, but professional.
- Keep the tone positive and confident.
- Keep the note brief; use your words economically.
- Refer to specific things that the interviewer said during the interview.
- Reaffirm how you can add value to the company.
- Be certain that there are no grammatical or spelling errors in the note.