

Follow-Up & Thank-You Letters

This is one of the most important, yet one of the least used, tools in a job search. It is used to establish good will, to express appreciations, and/or to strengthen your candidacy. A good rule of thumb is that everyone who helps you needs to receive a thank-you letter. When used to follow-up on employment interviews, thank-you letters should be addressed to the same person you sent the application to as well as to your interviewers. Also, be sure to send thank-you letters to your contacts who granted you informational meetings and to people who served as your references. Here are more tips on follow-up and thank-you letters:

- Make your letters personal and use them as an opportunity to reemphasize your strongest qualifications: reiterate your interest in the position, provide supplemental information not previously given, draw attention to the good match between your qualifications and the job requirements, and/or express your sincere appreciation.
- Every interview, whether informational or a job interview, should be followed immediately (within 24 hours) by a personal letter. It is a common courtesy to thank someone who gives you time and attention. (An informational interview involves you interviewing someone for information about their job).
- It reminds the potential employer of you, your skills, and your enthusiasm. The employer may need to be reminded for two reasons: 1) It is very difficult for an interviewer to remember each candidate in detail after speaking with the pool of 15-20 (or more) individuals in a day, and 2) If this is an office visit, you may be forgotten in the vast array of activities he/she attended that day.
- The letter is an opportunity to again present pertinent or helpful information about yourself that you may have omitted from oversight, lack of time, etc.
- It can be used to correct any misunderstandings or other unfortunate circumstances which occurred during your interview.
- Your letter can tactfully remind an employer of any promises made to you such as a second interview, interviews with others in the organizations, future interest in assisting you, etc.
- It may serve to further a networking contact or professional relationship between the two of you which may help you later in your job campaign, or even after you are employed. Additionally, since success in the working world is often predicated on people contacts, you may find yourself assisting the other person at some point in time.

Drafting a Thank-you or Follow-Up Letter

Your Name
Return Address
City, State Zip
Phone Number (Optional)
e-mail address (Optional)

Date

Name of interviewer
Inside address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. _____:

(Paragraph 1) Remind the interviewer of the position for which you were interviewed, as well as the date and place of the interview. It is always courteous to express your thanks and/or appreciation.

(Paragraph 2) Confirm your interest in the opening and in the organization. Highlight your qualifications and slant them toward the various points that the interviewer considered important for the job. If you have done anything since the interview which demonstrates your interest in the position, such as talks with alumni, faculty, research with people or in the library, etc., be sure to mention it.

(Paragraph 3) Include any information not presented before to supplement your resume, application letter, and the interview. You may have completed a term paper or a research project, or perhaps you have received some kind of recognition. If travel, location, or a similar subject was stressed during the interview, be sure to confirm your willingness to comply with these conditions.

(Paragraph 4) Close with a suggestion for further action, such as a desire to visit the employer's place of business or to have additional interviews at a mutually agreeable place and time. It often helps to end the letter with a request for a prompt response.

Sincerely,

(Written signature)

Full name, type

Sample Thank-you or Follow-up Letter

John Q. Student
2345 Mullan Road
Spokane, WA 99206

October 29, 2001

Ms. Carol Young
Piper, Hamilton & Young
3535 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20056

Dear Ms. Young:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me last Friday, October 27. I enjoyed meeting with you to discuss the summer associate program at your firm. Please extend my appreciation to Harold Piper and Mary Smith, with whom I also met that day, and also to Carl Jones for talking to me during the on-campus interview with your firm.

I am enthusiastic about the possibility of a summer position with Piper, Hamilton & Young because of my strong interest in international law. I enjoyed discussing international trade issues with you and was interested to learn about your work with several Japanese companies. I believe that I possess the research and writing skills that you are seeking in a summer associate and feel that I would be an asset to your program.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (509) 555-5555. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Written Signature)

John Q. Student