

Writing Thank-You Notes



THE PURPOSE AND POWER OF THANK-YOU NOTES

Why Send a Thank-You Note

Sending a thank-you note may seem simple and antiquated. In reality, it is a critical tool in the interview process that is often overlooked by job-seekers. Resumes and cover letters may land you an interview, but a thank-you note can help distinguish yourself from the pool of candidates and ultimately get the results you want. A thank-you note puts you in the forefront of an employer's mind—giving you an advantage over other potential candidates. Even if you do not want the job, write a thank you note respectfully withdrawing your application.

Who to Send a Thank-You Note

The basic rule of thumb is to send thank-you notes to every person involved in the interview and to anyone else who helped you during your job search. This includes the interviewer(s), other personnel and assistants at the company who were especially helpful, as well as people who gave you referrals, advice, reference letters or were simply supportive during your search.

When to Send a Thank-You Note

Thank-you notes following an interview are ideally sent **within 24 hours after the interview** while the details are still fresh in your mind. If this is not possible, send thank-you notes no later than a week after the interview. If it is not feasible to send a thank-you to *everyone* you encountered during an interview, direct it to your host or the highest-ranking manager you met. Request that they extend your appreciation to the entire group. You may also want to send a thank-you note to an interviewer prior to the interview thanking them for offering you an interview.

When writing thank-you notes to other helpful people in your job search, such as networking contacts and individuals who served as professional references, send them as soon as possible. Promptness is crucial for a thank-you note to be most effective.

FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITING A THANK-YOU NOTE

1. Decide if e-mail or regular mail is more appropriate.

Send via e-mail if ...

- You are sending a thank-you before an interview to express appreciation and enthusiasm for the opportunity to meet with the employer.
- You are sending a thank-you note after an interview and you know the employer will be making a decision soon.

Send via regular mail if...

- Time permits.
- You sense that the other person would appreciate the formality of a letter on nice paper and received in the mail.

***Note:** *If using regular mail*, use quality paper and matching envelopes. Select a style that is simple and professional—avoid cute graphics and sayings. A blank card or simple “Thank You” on the front will do. Either handwritten or printed is acceptable. A handwritten note is especially ideal if you are only writing a few sentences. If your handwriting is good, it can be a nice touch. If not, consider word-processing.

***Note:** *If using e-mail*, remember that it is still professional communication and the following rules and tips still apply. No slang or abbreviated verbiage (ex— bc, btw, fyi, thx).

2. Date the note and use a formal salutation.

Always address your notes to a specific individual. If in doubt about the correct names, spellings or titles call the office.

Formal: “Dear Ms. Libby” or “Ms. Libby”

Informal: “Dear Renee” or “Renee”

3. Keep the note concise and friendly.

Your notes should be brief and easy to read. Eliminate extraneous words and make an effort to avoid sounding mechanical and obligatory. If a lengthier thank-you is necessary to discuss anything of importance that your interviewer neglected to ask, use the format of a business letter. For help with the business letter format, see the Career Services “Guide to Writing Cover Letters” which can be found online at: <http://www.mcdaniel.edu/5740.htm>.

Remember that you are thanking someone for what they did, so don’t make it a hard-sell pitch for what you want. A subtle, gentle reminder of your relevant skills and qualifications is acceptable, and even desirable. Just keep in mind the primary purpose of a thank-you. Also, if sending several notes, try to make each one original.

Use a thank-you note as an opportunity to:

- Remind the interview of who you are.
- Express sincere appreciation for the employer's time.
- Summarize a few key points from the interview.
- Reiterate your enthusiasm in the company and position.
- Reemphasize your strongest qualifications.
- Draw attention to the good match between your qualifications and the job requirements.
- Establish goodwill.

4. Sign it.

Use your first and last names. Avoid initials and make your signature as legible as possible.

5. Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!

Check spelling, grammar, and typos. Have someone you trust read over it with a careful eye before sending it off. A thank-you note can seriously hurt your chances and spoil your rapport if it is full of careless mistakes.

RESOURCES

Farr, Michael. Next-Day Job Interview: Prepare Tonight and Get the Job Tomorrow. Indianapolis: JIST Publishing, 2005.

“How to Write a Thank You Letter.” About.com: Job Searching. 28 August, 2008
<<http://jobsearch.about.com/library/howto/htthank.htm>>.

“Job Interviews—Thank You Notes.” About.com: Business Majors. 28 August, 2008.
<<http://businessmajors.about.com/od/jobsearch/a/ThankYouNotes.htm>>.

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SAMPLE THANK-YOU NOTES

Following an Interview:

August 28, 2008

Dear Ms. Renee Libby,

I want to thank you for interviewing me yesterday for the public relations assistant position. It was so nice to meet you and learn more about Cleo Communications.

The interview reaffirmed my enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for Cleo Communications. I am sure that my education and internship experiences will allow me to help you meet the goals of your firm's impressive public relations initiative.

As you requested, I will pass along a copy of my resume to you and your colleagues via e-mail.

Sincerely,

Kate Maloney

Kate Maloney
E-mail: kmmaloney@email.edu
Cell phone: 000-000-0000

Use formal greeting.

Express sincere appreciation.

Summarize a few key strengths.

Include contact information even if you think the employer already has it.

Reiterate your enthusiasm for the position and company.

Follow-up on anything you said you would do during the interview.

For serving as a professional reference:

August 28, 2008

Dear Dr. Terri Bailey,

I want to thank you for serving as a reference during my job search process. As someone I sincerely respect, I very much appreciate that you are willing to vouch for my qualifications.

As a result, I currently have two interviews scheduled in the coming weeks. I look forward to sharing my progress with you. Thanks again for your support and encouragement.

Sincerely,

Kate Maloney