

Two Words To Boost Your Career: Thank You

By Rosalie Maggio

Beginning with the "thank you" for your first job interview and ending with the "thank you" for your retirement party, your career can benefit enormously from simple notes of gratitude written along the way. Frequent, well-written thank-you notes can foster professional success in unimaginable ways, and they are especially important after a job interview.

The Mechanics

Thank-you notes should be printed on letterhead stationery or personal-business stationery, or - for a little warmer tone -- handwritten on fold-over note cards. You can simplify the process by sending an email thank-you message (more on this later), which is not as distinctive as a handwritten note but far better than no message at all. As you're writing, don't worry about being creative or clever or profound. People are so charmed to receive thank-you notes at all that they are seldom very critical. "Thank you very much" are words that everyone likes to read.

After the Job Interview

An essential job-seeking technique as well as a gesture of courtesy is to thank the people who interview you. Write a note immediately after the interview and before a decision has been made.

1. State what you liked about the interview, the company, and the position
2. Emphasize briefly and specifically your suitability for the job.
3. Address concerns about your qualifications that came up during the interview.
4. Mention any issue that you didn't have the opportunity to discuss. But primarily say thanks.
5. If you felt you had a particularly friendly interview, you might close with a sentence or two referring to something you talked about unrelated to the interview (like sports, common interests, or family).

Keep in mind that several people spent time setting up the appointment, doing the paperwork, interviewing you, and doing the paperwork again. They'll appreciate a little recognition.

A few letter-writing experts dislike the "thanks again" that concludes so many thank-you letters and notes. However, it is a popular and benign way of reminding the reader of the purpose of your note. If you like it, use it.

A Sample Note

A sample thank-you note for a job interview might look like this:

I enjoyed this morning's discussion of the research position you want to fill. I was pleased to know that my advanced degree is definitely an asset, and I was impressed by the team spirit among the other employees I met. Thanks so much for your time and for the congenial interview.

Other Factors To Consider

You can email your thanks, but in most cases, it's not as impressive. The point of a thank-you note is that it is personal and somewhat formal. However, if the company you're interviewing with tends to do business by email and if most of your contacts have been through email, then it's definitely the way to go. Once you're hired, you'll want to send thank-you notes -- or notes of appreciation, which is almost the same thing -- to the interviewers, your new boss, and anyone else you dealt with throughout the interview process. Saying thanks is one of the least expensive, easiest strategies in creating a favorable environment for yourself wherever you go. Harvey Mackay, founder and chairman of the Mackay Envelope Corporation and bestselling author of "Swim with the Sharks (Without Being Eaten Alive)," says, "Anyone too busy to say 'thank you' will get fewer and fewer chances to say it."