

Post-Interview Thank You Letters

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POST-INTERVIEW THANK YOU LETTERS

Should I write a thank you letter?

Yes! You should write a thank you letter after every interview at the employer's place of employment. This applies to all interviews whether they are a first, second, third, or fourth interview. It does not matter whether they call it a "screening interview," a "preliminary interview," or a "callback." You are expected to write a thank you letter and failing to write one can hurt your candidacy.

When are the other times I should write a thank you letter?

You should always write a thank you letter after a screening interview on campus. A well-done thank you letter can further your candidacy and help you obtain a call-back interview.

Aside from job interviews, there are other occasions that require thank you letters when building your career. If a professional took time to meet with you, you should write a thank you letter. For example, a professional that agreed to an informational interview should receive a thank you letter for taking the time to meet with you.

Why?

The self-interested reason – and perhaps the most motivating one – is because it might make the difference between a rejection letter or a job offer. Employers have come to expect thank you letters and the absence of one may make a negative impression. A thank you letter can help demonstrate that you are enthusiastic about the position, that you have "follow-through" and complete tasks, and that you treat others well and would treat the firm's clients appropriately.

Besides, like many of our mothers told us, you should write a thank you letter because it is the polite thing to do. Employers do not have to interview you and they may have arrived early, stayed late, and billed less that day in order to interview you.

To Whom do I write?

Write a thank you letter to each person who conducted an interview with you. If more than one person interviewed you, individual thank you letters should be sent to each of them. If you dealt with a Recruiting Administrator, Office Manager, or other person who acted as your "guide" for the interview or who set up the interview, a thank you letter should be sent to that person as well.

If you are sending a thank you letter to multiple people at the same firm, **make sure each letter is unique**. Often, the firm will keep a file on you and collect all of your thank you letters into that file. It could be embarrassing if the Hiring Partner realizes you sent identical letters to five people at the firm.

When must I send the letter?

Send the thank you letter promptly after the interview. If the letter does not arrive shortly after the interview, the employer may have already made its decision before the letter arrives. Write the thank you letter(s) the same day of the interview while details are still fresh. Mail the letter the same day or the day after the interview. This serves two purposes. First, hopefully the letter will arrive before any decisions have been made. Second, a timely thank you letter tells the interviewer that you are likely to be a diligent employee who will respond promptly and appropriately to client requests.

How do I write a thank you letter to an employer?

The rules for thank you letters are similar to those for cover letters.

Key tips:

- ❑ **Your letter must be typewritten and not handwritten.** Typewritten letters are more professional and easier to read. (Plus, thank you cards for handwritten notes are often cutesy and unprofessional.)
- ❑ Use the same letterhead that you used on your resume and cover letter. (Review the resume and cover letter handouts for a discussion of letterhead.)
- ❑ Use good quality paper, the same paper used for your resume and cover letter.
- ❑ Use a typewritten envelope.

Format:

The format of a thank you letter is the same as any business or professional letter. It should contain the following elements:

- ❑ Date
- ❑ The Inside Address (person's name, title, firm/business/organization and address of the person to whom you are writing)
- ❑ Salutation
- ❑ Body of the Letter
- ❑ Closing and Signature

Make sure you spell the recipient's name correctly and use the correct title. Collect business cards of the people you meet on your interview to refer to later. If you do not have a person's business card, check the name and title elsewhere – correspondence you received, the firm's website, etc. It is appropriate to call the firm and ask the receptionist for the correct name spelling and title if you cannot locate it another way.

Proofread your thank you letter carefully. Just like a mistake in a resume or a cover letter, a mistake in a thank you letter communicates that you are sloppy with details and can eliminate your chances for a job with that employer.

What do I write about?

A thank you letter should be short and accomplish two main goals: 1) thank the person for the interview, and 2) refresh the person's memory about your candidacy by personalizing the letter. While there are only so many ways to say "thank you," your letter should not be a form letter. Instead, refer to something specific about the conversation you had with the recipient or something specific about what they did for you (e.g. gave you an office tour). By using these specific examples and varying word choices and sentence structure, each letter will feel personal.

Expect to write a one or two paragraph letter. First, express your pleasure at having had the opportunity to meet the interviewer. Then, mention one or more topics discussed. If you had a good reprieve with the interviewer based on a particular topic, or discovered a common interest, this should be mentioned. (E.g., "I always enjoy speaking with a fellow violinist.") If applicable, thank the person for special tasks they did. For example, thank the Office Manager for setting up the interview and providing you with firm literature. Close the letter by thanking them for considering you for the position.

Checklist

- I wrote a thank you letter to everyone I interviewed with
- I personalized my letter(s)
- My letterhead matches my resume
- I used a professional closing
- I proofread the letter
- A trusted person (such as a CSO Team member) reviewed and proofread the letter
- I used good quality paper in white or off-white that matches my resume
- I used a laser printer
- I signed my name to the letter
- I prepared a type-written envelope

Sample Thank you Letter to Interviewing Attorney

WILMA LEXINGTON

901 First Street; Los Angeles, California 90016
(213) 970-0900; wlex@aol.com

September 9, 2003

Katherine L. Brooks, Esq.
Parker, Ames, Roth & Ford
9007 N. Bedford Drive, Suite 200
Beverly Hills, California 90212

Dear Ms. Brooks:

Thank you very much for the time extended to me yesterday. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and your associates at Parker, Ames, Roth & Ford and learning more about your firm's history and future plans. Your description of the recent Epstein litigation was particularly interesting to me because of my intent to pursue a career in media law and new technology. Thank you again for considering me for an associate position with your firm.

Sincerely yours,

Wilma Lexington

Sample Thank you Letter to Recruiting Administrator

STEVE PEDERSON

Email: steve@hotmail.com

18714 Angel Street
Pacific Palisades, California 91207

[work] 213-739-4271
[home] 310-461-9832

September 23, 2003

Mr. Kevin Jones
Recruiting Administrator
Carson & Paulson, LLP
433 Third St., Suite 2100
Los Angeles, California, 90071

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview with your firm. I enjoyed meeting with you and the attorneys at Carson & Jones. I appreciate your efforts in coordinating the interview and providing me with information about your firm. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very truly yours,

Steve Pederson

Sample Thank you Letter for On-Campus Interview

Mary J. Smith

901 First Street • Los Angeles, California 90016 • (213) 970-0900 • mjsmith@yahoo.com

October 12, 2003

Vicky Arneson, Esq.
Morris, Morris, & James
2900 Century Blvd. East, Suite 1200
Los Angeles, CA 90067

Dear Ms. Arneson:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with your firm during the On-Campus Interview Program at Southwestern Law School. I enjoyed meeting you and discussing your firm's business and entertainment practices. I plan on registering for the Beverly Hills Bar Association event you mentioned. Thank you again for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mary J. Smith