

Interviewing Skills

Simple Rules for Following Up After an Interview



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If you've ever done a web search for advice or tips on how to nail every step of the interview process, you've probably heard this before: **make yourself stand out**. This is usually pretty good advice, and when employers are interviewing several people for one position they are looking for one candidate who "stands out." But the tip itself is a little vague, and if you don't carefully consider the way in which you plan on making yourself "stand out" it may actually hurt your chances of getting a job. So here's a little advice on **post-interview etiquette** and a few ways to help you stand out the right way.

When you make contact with a potential employer or someone doing recruiting on behalf of an employer, it's good practice to **thank that person for their time and attention**. This shouldn't be anything very long. It can be as simple as a brief email saying: "Thank you for your time and consideration. I am very much looking forward to hearing back from you soon." By doing this you've shown the person in charge of hiring that not only do you actually appreciate the time they took to contact or interview you, but that you are really interested in pursuing this job opportunity. **Don't forget, you are interviewing the employer as much as they are interviewing you**. Potential employers know, and expect, that as you find out more details about the position through the interview process, you are making a decision about whether or not this job is going to be a good fit for you. And when there are multiple people being interviewed, **employers take into consideration how much interest and enthusiasm a candidate shows**.

Sending a thank you email is the easiest and most convenient way to follow up after an interview, for you and the employer. You can even send it immediately after your interview if you'd like. Some people choose to send a thank you email early in the evening to ensure that it's going to be one of the first things that person sees the next business day. Either way, be sure you send something. If you decide to wait, make sure you don't wait any longer than a few hours. This will help you as a candidate stay on the interviewer's mind (in a positive way) and hopefully at the top of the list.

If it's a position you want very badly, you may be thinking, Enthusiasm? No problem! I've got plenty of that! But be careful, because **going over the top with follow-ups could end up hurting you** in the long run. For instance, if you feel the urge to call the interviewer personally to tell them exactly how much you want the position - avoid doing so. Such an approach could backfire. Calling the person in charge of hiring to tell them something you didn't mention during the interview or just to say thank you may not be received well. Remember, if they're looking to fill a position and interviewing several people, they are likely very busy and may not appreciate that much time being taken out of their day for something that can easily be done via email. Also, a mistake some people make is going over the top trying to "butter up" the individual in charge of making hiring decisions. **Avoid doing anything like sending funny or silly greeting cards loaded with compliments, or sending presents like balloons or food**. Silly as it may sound, these are things that people have done before in an effort to "stand out." And while it may seem like a good idea at the time, it could really make a person stand out in a bad way. It's a mistake that could cost you a job offer, but an easy one to avoid.

Let's say the interview goes well, you follow up promptly with a thank you email, and it's been a few days or a few weeks since you've heard back from the person who interviewed you. What now? A lot of people get nervous about checking back with an interviewer because they don't want to seem pushy or annoying. Truth is, it's okay to check in. One way to take the guessing out of how long you should wait before you check in is asking what the next steps are following the interview. **It is perfectly fair to ask an interviewer what to expect after your interview is over**. They should usually be able to give you a good idea of when you'll hear back from them about the job, whether you got it or not. Knowing what to expect can take some of the anxiety out of waiting and gives you a clearer idea of when to ask for an update. For example, say you have an interview and when you ask what the next steps are the recruiter says you should hear back from them in about a week. If it's day 9 and you haven't heard anything, it's okay to reach out to that person. Just like the thank you email, keep it polite and brief, for example: "Hi Jeremy, I hope your week is going well. I was wondering if you have made any decisions regarding the store manager position or if there was any other information I could provide that would help your decision making process." What if you forgot to ask about next steps? How long should you wait before contacting them? In general, **waiting a week or two before contacting an interviewer is perfectly acceptable**.

If you want to learn more about succeeding in every step of the interview process, check out [Career Tutorials](#) for step-by-step information on topics like resumes, cover letters, salary, and more.

