

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE INTERVIEW

By Joan Lloyd



The interview is over. You feel terrific. The job is just what you've been looking for; the manager's style suits you well, opportunity abounds, and it's a good company.

If you settle back and wait, however, you could be missing an opportunity to stand out from the competition. Here are some things that could make the difference:

1. THE HOT-BUTTON THANK-YOU LETTER.

As soon as you get home, write a thank-you letter. Most generic letters simply thank the interviewer and rehash a few reasons why the candidate thinks he or she is the right person for the job. Instead, step into the interviewer's shoes and isolate the areas about which the interviewer had the most interest.

Once you've isolated those hot-buttons, ask yourself what you can offer that employer in those areas. After the anxiety of the meeting is past, you'll probably think of several things you could have added to the discussion. Identify accomplishments

and past experiences that tie most closely to the interviewer's interest area. Try to choose things that weren't mentioned in the interview, if possible. Have someone else proofread the letter, so every detail is perfect.

2. THE INSIDE REFERENCE.

If you know someone who works at the company, call that person and describe the interview. If the person helped you prepare for the interview with inside information, that person will want to know how it went. The insider may offer to put in a good word for you. This person also may be in a position to keep you informed about progress in the hiring decision. One word of caution, however: If the person applies too much internal pressure or is not a good performer, this strategy could backfire...so be careful.

3. THE WORK SAMPLE.

If the interviewer was interested in a particular aspect of your work, send samples of it with your thank-you letter. Many people miss this

opportunity to send concrete examples (samples of proposals, project summaries) related to what you discussed.

4. SHOW YOUR INTEREST IN THE INTERVIEWER.

Along with your letter, you may want to send an article about something the two of you discussed. A quick trip to the library to locate some pertinent trade journal articles is worthwhile, since the receiver will probably be grateful and recognize your initiative.



5. THE LAST SALES OPPORTUNITY.

Rather than calling the employer after two weeks to simply ask whether a decision has been made, use your follow-up call to convey enthusiasm and find out if you can provide anything else to help the manager make a decision. For example, if presentation skills are an important part of the position, ask if he or she would like to observe you delivering a short presentation.

6. PREPARE YOUR REFERENCES.

If you have been asked for references after the interview, the employer is interested in you. Notify your references immediately, if they are likely to be called. Explain what the job is, who the caller may be, and what you think the caller may be most interested in.

Recount some of the interview to your reference and mention the accomplishments in which the interviewer

seemed most interested. This will help the reference start thinking about how to answer questions. If there is a particular thing you want your reference to mention, by all means suggest it. The reference will probably be grateful for the reminder, since it may have been a while since you worked together.

Finally, if the interviewer seemed concerned about any particular area, discuss it with the reference and talk through possible ways to address it.

In the job-hunting game, follow-through can make a big difference in your final score.

Joan Lloyd has a solid track record of excellent results. Her firm, Joan Lloyd & Associates, specializes in leadership development, organizational change, and teambuilding. This includes executive coaching, 360-degree feedback processes, customized leadership training, team assessment, and teambuilding and retreat facilitation. Joan also provides consulting skills training for HR professionals. Clients report results such as: behavior change in leaders, improved team performance, and a more committed workforce.

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