

## **How to Ask for Feedback**

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Imagine if on your way out of the interview, you were handed a critique of how you did, detailing what went right, what went wrong and how you could improve your skills for the next time you meet with a potential employer.

There is just about no chance that would ever happen. But when you follow up a few days later, you can try to gain some sort of feedback.

You may find it difficult to get a straight answer when you ask for comments on your interview. How should you respond when you ask for feedback and get an answer like, "We have identified a candidate with experience that more closely matches our current staffing needs?" What is it about the other candidate that matches so closely?

The interviewer will not normally reveal what eliminated you. Most HR departments have policies against giving out interview information, because they fear discrimination claims if a candidate misinterprets the feedback. But, every once in a while, an interviewer will divulge some useful information.

Sometimes the criticism isn't easy. An interviewer told one sales candidate that her failure to shake hands with the panel upon completing the interview was held against her. Another candidate was informed that her personality did not fit the company culture, leaving her to feel as though there was something wrong with her personality.

Don't let policies or criticism deter you. Be prepared to hear the truth if you do get someone willing to give you pointers — no matter how harsh.

### **Six Rules to Follow When Asking for Feedback**

1. Be sure to relay your disappointment in not getting the offer and say that you would be interested in interviewing if anything opens up. Emphasize that this company is still your top choice.
2. Politely ask if there is any feedback that would help you improve your chances in your next interview. Was there anything in particular that could have helped your chances of winning the job offer?
3. Listen carefully to any advice and take notes. Do not argue or defend yourself. You are asking for feedback, not a chance for a rebuttal.
4. Keep your discussion short. Ask one or two follow-up questions, and then end the conversation.

5. Thank your interviewer for the feedback and the chance to improve your skills. Reiterate that if another opening comes up, you would be interested in interviewing.
6. Take the advice given and think about changing some of your techniques to improve your next interview.

If you can't get feedback, try rating your own performance. If you feel you could improve your skills or style, prepare and practice so you can go into your next interview with renewed confidence. Remember, you can learn and improve from every interview experience, whether or not you receive feedback.

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