

Write Winning Thank-You Letters

by Wendy S. Enelow

Monster.com Contributing Writer

Writing powerful thank-you letters is not just a formality. Thank-you letters are marketing tools that can have tremendous value in moving your candidacy forward and positioning you above the competition.

Although much of what you include in your thank-you letter may have already been communicated during your interview, there is nothing more effective than the written word to etch those thoughts into your interviewer's mind.

Overcome Objections

If during an interview there were specific objections raised about your candidacy, use your thank-you letter to respond to and overcome those concerns. Demonstrate that the concerns are not an obstacle but an opportunity and you're fully prepared to meet the challenge.

Example:

You're interviewing to be an executive for a well-established company in the Midwest. Although you're extremely well-qualified, the CEO is concerned you've never lived in the area and have no network of local contacts. Eliminate those concerns by explaining your network of professional contacts is nationwide and, in fact, you know John Doe of Local Company X, have a long-standing relationship with an economic development director in the area, etc. These contacts will only serve to expand the company's already-established network.

Reiterate Your Expertise

If the company communicated its specific needs, issues or challenges, use your thank-you letter to demonstrate how you can meet those needs.

Example:

You've interviewed to be the CFO of a distressed company in need of immediate action. It needs a candidate with proven success in fast-track turnarounds and revitalizations. Highlight your experience in turning a company around and showing profitability.

Highlight Your Core Professional Competencies and Successes

If the company communicated its ideal qualifications for a candidate, use your thank-you letter to outline how you meet or exceed each qualification.

Example:

You've interviewed for the position of EVP of technology and product development with a high tech venture, and company officials have clearly communicated four essential candidate qualifications. Help them see that you have those four qualifications by providing an overview of your career highlights.

How Long Should Your Thank-You Letter Be?

Of course, as with anything else in a job search, there is no definitive answer. One page is the norm, depending on the amount of information you want to communicate. Letters certainly do not have to be only one page.

Remind yourself that you already have the company's interest or you wouldn't have been interviewing, and use your thank-you letter as a tool to communicate valuable information. The entire job search process is marketing and merchandising your product — you. There is no reason why writing thank-you letters should be any different than any other of your job search activities.

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