

# Following Up After the Interview



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RCCTA Resource Center for  
CareerTech Advancement



# Following Up After the Interview

Now that the interview is over, you can go home, kick back, and wait for the employer to call you, right? Wrong. Now is the time to evaluate the interview experience—while it is fresh in your mind. Think back over what you did well, what caused you to stumble, and what seemed to make an impression on the interviewer. Pull out the job search tracking system and record pertinent information about the interview and the employer. Note dates for follow-up calls and contacts.

Write a thank-you letter immediately to express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview—and to remind the employer of your interest in the job. Be sure to express confidence that you would do a good job for the employer and would be a productive employee. If the interviewer is reviewing files and resumé a day or two later, unable to decide among several qualified applicants, a well-written and considerate note may tip the scales in your favor.

The next step is to use the post-interview self-check instrument (at the end of this chapter) and review the meeting step by step, writing down your honest observations as you work through the form. You might even want to go over your written analysis with a placement specialist or a friend who helped you practice interviewing. This can help you polish areas you feel were a little rough, practice techniques with which you were not comfortable, and help develop answers for questions that caught you off guard.

If any of your personal “networks” give you leads which result in interview opportunities, take time to drop a personal note in the mail thanking the person for their help. It reminds them that you are still job hunting. It might also provide another lead, and it is just good manners.

How soon after the interview should you call to check about a hiring decision? The day of the interview is too soon, but you don’t want to wait weeks, either. At the end of the interview, ask the interviewer when the employer anticipates making a decision. If you have not been notified by the day after the date given to you, call and politely ask whether a decision has been made. If no candidate has been chosen, you can remind the interviewer that you are still interested in working for the employer and would appreciate continued consideration. If you are told that someone else has been hired, thank the person for the information and ask that your resumé be kept on file for other openings.



## ***Sample Thank-You Letter***

Date:

Person's Name  
Employer's Name  
Address  
City, State Zipcode

Dear (name):

Thank you for the time you and the other members of your staff gave me on (put date of interview here). I appreciate the opportunity to interview for the position of (put position applied for here).

I was very impressed with (put employer's name here) and the people with whom I had the pleasure of talking. As I mentioned at the time, I have training in (list a couple of skills here), and I believe my experience in these and other areas would be an asset to your organization.

If you require an additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Again, thank you for your time and for the opportunity to interview with you.

Sincerely,

(Your signature goes here)

Your Name  
Your Email Address  
Your Phone Number

## Interview Evaluation Form

Use this form for each interview you have to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Check the boxes and provide additional information as needed to help you prepare for future interviews.

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_ First Call-Back Date \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- Arrived on time
- Dressed appropriately
- Greeted the interviewer properly (handshake)
- Polite and friendly with the people you came in contact with
- Stated your qualifications well
- If not, list ones you should have mentioned: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Had a fresh copy of your resume
- Did the interviewer review your resume? \_\_\_\_\_
- Was your personal background discussed? \_\_\_\_\_
- If so, what specific points were discussed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What skills did the interviewer comment on? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Were those skills a part of your resume? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the general impression of your resume? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Provided list of references to interviewer
- Special problems discussed by the interviewer, such as handicaps, transportation problems, etc., that you may have \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Good eye contact with the interviewer
- Posture and mannerisms (comments)
- Stated your desire and interest in working for this employer \_\_\_\_\_

- Did you at any time feel that you had the job? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Did you at any time feel that you had no hope of getting the job? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Stated your interest in part-time or temporary work if no full-time employment is possible
- What was discussed the most? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Was there anything the employer disliked? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What was of particular interest to the interviewer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Did you ask for the job? \_\_\_\_\_

# Responding to the News

## If You Got the Job

Once you are offered the job, you should get answers to some basic questions:

- What day do you start work?
- To whom do you report and at what time?
- Do you need to bring any tools or supplies with you the first day?
- What kinds of activities should you expect the first day or two (orientation, on-the-job training, etc.)?
- What kind of dress is appropriate?
- Where should you park as a new employee?
- Do most employees bring lunch, do they go out, or is there a cafeteria on the premises?
- Should you be prepared to pay union or association dues immediately?



You may come up with other questions. The point is to take time to ask them before you show up for your first day of work. As difficult as it may seem to get hired, it can be very easy to be “un-hired.” Most people are hired for their ability to do the job, but are let go because they can’t or won’t work well with other people, are not willing to be coached or directed, or are unmotivated. People problems become productivity problems, which turn into profit problems. People who are unable to get along in the workplace are often let go. Other reasons that new hires lose their jobs include chronic tardiness or absenteeism, and lack of production, either through simply not being there or through lack of effort.

When you report to work, be careful about immediately aligning yourself closely with any particular group or individual. Make friends with as many other workers as you can while you take time to observe the work environment. By taking a little time, you may save yourself from accidentally being associated with someone who is seen as a negative influence, and you may make an impression on the leaders as someone who is friendly and who can work easily and well with a variety of people.



Here are some important points to remember:

- Life is unfair. If something doesn’t happen the way you want, say to yourself, “So what? Now what?” Take the next steps to make things better.
- You’re usually about as happy as you decide to be. Every morning when you wake up, you can choose to spend the day thinking and acting positively or negatively. Either way, you’re going to be just as tired when you go to bed that night, but you’ll be a lot happier if you’ve been careful to stay as positive as possible.
- Learn from other people’s mistakes (without gloating over them) and from their successes (without being jealous). You won’t live long enough to make all the mistakes or accomplish every goal yourself.

- Learn to set goals, small and large, short-term and long-term. Every goal doesn't have to be accomplished your first week at work. The most successful and fulfilling goals can take time to accomplish.
- Take responsibility for your behaviors. Every decision has a consequence. Don't be too shy to take credit for a good result, but never avoid taking responsibility for a mistake you created.
- Learn constructive ways of disagreeing with your supervisors or coworkers. It's okay to not always agree with authority figures, but learn to express yourself in a tactful way. Focus on the issue and not on the person, using language appropriate to the workplace.



It is just as important to do the right things to keep a job as it is to do the right things to get that job in the first place.

### ***If You Did Not Get the Job***

You may have to go through many good interviews before being offered a job. Job hunting involves more turn-downs than thumbs-up. So, how should you feel? First, remember that not getting the job does not necessarily mean you are not qualified. You may have been just as qualified, but others had more experience or the employer knows another applicant's references personally. These are things you cannot control.

Second, go back to your post-interview rating sheet and review your impressions of the interview. Were there problems that you were aware of when you left the employer's office? Were there questions that you were not able to answer as well as you would have liked? This is the time to review and re-think any part of the interview with which you are not 100 percent satisfied. Fix any problems before you sit down in front of another potential employer.

Third, carefully examine the reasons employers give for not hiring somebody. A list appears below. Be honest with yourself. It can be painful to admit the need to change anything about yourself, but a little self-improvement can go a long way.

#### **General Reasons**

- Was not prepared for the interview
- Typos and errors on correspondence (resume, cover letter, thank-you letter)
- Filled out the application incompletely and carelessly
- Resume didn't "sell" candidate
- Talked too little
- Had a less than professional social media presence

#### **Poor Appearance**

- Under-dressed, too casual
- Hair was inappropriately styled
- Applied for a job wearing cut-offs or old jeans



- Was unshaven and in need of a bath
- Wore too much makeup or jewelry
- Overdressed for the type of job
- Did not wear proper shirt or shoes

### Poor Attitude

- Talked critically about former employer
- Blamed others
- Was sarcastic during interview
- Appeared extremely nervous
- Seemed indifferent to being hired
- Felt the world owed him/her a living
- Displayed a feeling of inferiority
- Not receptive to new ideas or alternatives
- Had poor manners
- Overemphasized question of age
- Was unfriendly



### Poor Work History

- Had too many short-term jobs
- Could not back up claimed experience or skills
- Criticized past employers and co-workers
- Left gaps in work history with no explanation
- Changed job without good reasons

### Poor Interview

- Asked for an unrealistic wage
- Talked about personal problems
- Talked too much
- Was late for the interview
- Undersold self
- Focused too much on benefits
- Became argumentative
- Seemed not really interested in working
- Did not have a clear understanding of job requirements
- Stressed need for a job, not interest and capacity to do job
- Tried too hard to make an impression
- Stated a willingness or ability to do anything
- Evaded answering questions



You can't get everything right all of the time. Everyone has a bad day or doesn't get things just right every time. Review what you can do better next time, rethink your strategy, and go at it all over again.



## ***If the New Job Doesn't Work Out***

Some employers find that their new employees don't have the technical, interpersonal, or productivity skills they advertised. Employees may find that the employer they signed up with looked better from the outside than from the inside. If you find yourself in that situation, the worst choice you can make is to pack up and walk out. Even if you eventually leave this job, you should consider several steps first.

## **Offer of Better Pay Elsewhere**

Sometimes, a difference in pay is large enough to make the decision to quit easier. On the other hand, if your current job pays health benefits or contributes to a retirement account on your behalf, make certain the new job would do the same. If it doesn't, that factor alone may be a good reason to reconsider a quick exit. If the new employer is far enough away that a move would be required, figure out how long you would have to work to make up for the expense of moving. If a move really will pay off in actual income, give your current employer a chance to meet the pay increase. If he or she has invested time and additional training in you, it may be possible to leverage your position as a desirable employee and get a raise or promotion that would allow you to stay where you are. If your employer can't meet all or part of the offer, decide how to say goodbye so you'll be on good terms with your current employer in the future.

## **Harassment or Discrimination**

It is important that you think carefully about the circumstances and be sure that any behavior in question is really harassment or discrimination. Sexual, racial, or age-related harassment, for example, is language, action, or a pervasive atmosphere that causes you discomfort specifically because of your gender, ethnic group, or age. Your employer is bound by law to address any genuine harassment, so if you decide that is what you are dealing with, check the personnel manual to find out what steps to take. If there is no personnel manual (smaller employers may not have one), talk to a trusted supervisor to find out how to handle the situation.

Discrimination is a different issue. When you don't get opportunities for promotion, are passed over for raises, or are always given undesirable assignments specifically because of your gender, race, or age, you may be in a discriminatory situation. Before taking action, make certain you are on solid ground and that you really are just as qualified as others who seem to get a better deal. If everything goes the way it should, the problem will be handled and the workplace will become more comfortable. If not, then you have a decision to make. You might choose to take your grievance to the next level, which might even

be civil court. Be aware that real lawsuits are different than they appear on television. In real life, they drag on and can result in additional difficulty or success, depending on the resolution to the case. You might choose instead to end your relationship with the employer and move on. If that is the case, you can still say goodbye gracefully.



## Negative Atmosphere

A negative atmosphere could be a range of situations. Perhaps you feel you're not given credit for work you've done, or you're blamed for problems you didn't create. Maybe you think your boss doesn't trust you, or you perceive other employees as dishonest. It could be that your suggestions always seem to be dismissed, or you just don't fit in with the other employees.

Situations such as these may be more perception than reality. The only way you'll know for sure is to sit down and talk reasonably with your supervisor or a trusted co-worker. If you choose to do so, be sure to phrase your concerns or feelings in "I" messages rather than "you" messages. For example, say "I feel as if people who have worked here a while don't think I can handle my work independently," rather than "You treat me like I don't know anything."

Calmly discussing an uncomfortable situation isn't fun, but it could salvage a good job by making the situation better. If that doesn't happen, you still have the option of moving on, and you will at least have tried to make your situation better.

## How to Say Goodbye

If you aren't able to work out any problems that are making it hard for you to keep going to your job, it might be best to move on. Remember not to simply walk away. It is important to handle this decision as well as you handled the interview process.

First, give notice verbally and in writing. It is customary to give at least two weeks' notice. Some occupations, such as work involving confidential research or manufacturing techniques, can require anyone resigning (or being terminated) to gather his or her belongings (sometimes in the presence of security) and leave the premises immediately after giving notification of leaving.

Follow the proper chain of command by notifying your immediate supervisor first, then moving up the ladder according to the employer's policy. Be as positive as possible, framing your reasons for leaving in terms of opportunities for advancement and growth rather than unhappiness with your current situation. You may need or want to do business with this employer again. You may be asked or required to do an exit interview. Again, phrase your reasons for leaving in terms of opportunity and advancement. If you are asked to fill out a form giving your reasons for leaving, do not vent about your dissatisfaction; write as positively as possible without being fake.

As you write your letter of resignation (see example on the next page), thank your employer for the opportunity to improve your skills and for any other benefits you can add. In addition, offer to help train a co-worker or a new employee about your duties and responsibilities. Never burn a bridge you may want or need again. During your remaining time on the job, keep a positive outlook, work hard, and keep your conversations focused on your work.

## ***Sample Letter of Resignation***

January 15, 2017

Mr. Bill Blossom, Manager  
Dogwood Plant Store  
732 S. Adams  
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Mr. Blossom:

I have enjoyed working for your company for the past two years. My fellow employees have provided support and encouragement, and I believe I have learned a great deal during my employment that will help me be successful in the future.

It is with mixed feelings that I submit my resignation, effective two weeks from today, Tuesday, January 29, 2017. I have received an offer of employment that I believe will provide me greater financial security as well as more opportunities for advancement. I will, however, miss the camaraderie of my fellow employees and the personal concern you have given my development as a productive member of your team.

If you choose, I would be happy to provide orientation to the individual hired for my current position. I would like to help make this as smooth a transition as possible for your business.

Cordially,

*Jon Doe*