

After the interview- persistence and follow-up

Evaluate the Timing

After the interview, determine if the timing is right. Will you do the job? Is it the right time for this job?

The timing is defined in broad terms as:

You and the hiring company being on the same clock. *Do the stars lineup? Can you be hired now? Are you available to start in two weeks? Will it take too long to get a visa? Do you have other interviews you want to follow through on?*

Do I pull-out of contention or continue?

Decide in principle - do you want the job? If the answer is “no”, send a thank you note with a “thanks but no thanks” message.

Continuing with enthusiasm

Get the answer to questions that stumped you in the first interview

If you are interested in principle, then put every effort into preparing for future interviews. Write down what you learnt about the company and the interviewers’ that you did not know previously. Look up the answers to questions you feel you could have done better on. Think the questions through again and write down an improved answer.

Why is this important? Many times you will be asked in for another interview, and you may be asked the same questions, or given the opportunity to give clarification on a previous answer.

I use the “improve on the answer” tactic myself when conducting second interviews, to bring the winners to the forefront. Many times when conducting interviews, I would hear from a candidate “I know the answer but it is just not coming to me” or “I knew it but it has been a long time since I did that”. The test here is to ask the candidate if he has any questions from the previous interview that he would like to improve upon. The reaction you get from the candidate will demonstrate if the candidate is a constant learner, and if he is resourceful. Is he willing to make an investment in time and energy even though he has not been made an offer? Does he show the determination and curiosity to find the right answer, or give it some serious thought? It also shows his competitive spirit. Even though he may have perceived to have lost the first round, he comes back fighting and prepared for round two.

Frequently, I would have candidates enter the second interview, and say something like “here is the answer to that question that stumped me. I did some research and figured it out.” They would then hand me a detailed written answer. Even though in some cases the answer was not exactly the right answer, faced with a tough decision to make between two candidates, I would pick the one who made the effort to improve upon his answer over the candidate who got the right answer, but had not made any efforts to improve upon any of his previous answers. This type of “go get ‘em” attitude, taking the time to figure out and improve upon an answer, is a trait of a winner and companies prefer to hire winners.

How to respond to a request to produce a report or solve a problem?

Frequently you may be asked to produce a short report, or solve a problem. Make sure to jump on it as quickly as possible, and have it reviewed for accuracy. Make sure it is well laid out, and is free of spelling mistakes.

You may be asked to produce it quickly, and given specific instructions to follow. For instance, you may be asked to email your report as an attached PDF document to a specific person by 8:00 a.m. the next day.

When hiring a new recruiter, I would frequently send them home with the following instructions. “Write a one page answer to the following question, Why should ADV hire you as a recruiter? Send it directly to me. Here is my business card with my email address. Send it before 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning as an attached rich text format document.

I would receive some great answers; some would be off by a minute or later, some were over one page in length, some were in a word document format not RTF as requested, some might be pasted in text format in the body of the email and some candidates even copied other people that were involved in the interview. Why would these be an issue with a hiring manager?

It answers a few very important questions for a manager. Can the candidate take clear direction, follow through, and produce to a deadline? Obviously, if they fail in any area of these simple instructions, how will they perform faced with much more complicated issues, higher pressure and tighter deadlines?

Thank you calls and Thank you letters

We recommend that you telephone the hiring manager, as well as send a thank you letter. As an employer myself, I like to hear from candidates to determine how eager and enthusiastic they are about the position.

Your phone call should go something like this:

"Hello Mr. (or Ms.) _____ this is _____, I really enjoyed speaking with you _____ about the _____ position with your company. I believe I have a good grasp of your objectives for this position, and I believe I can excel at fulfilling them. As discussed at the interview, I have the following skills _____ and abilities, _____ to match your needs. I want to let you know that I want this position. I have given some thought to the challenge you are facing that you presented to me during the interview, and I believe you would benefit from hearing about the solution when you have availability to discuss it. Do you require any additional information from me, or would you like some clarification on any issues that may have come up for you after the interview? Follow up with...What is the next step, and when can I expect to hear from you?"

Every interviewing book in the world is going to tell you to send a thank-you letter. You would probably be shocked at the number of candidates who do not send a letter. Even those that do send one, wait so long that it is basically no longer effective.

Remember of course, thanking the interviewer or the interviewing team is important, but what is most important is that you highlight how, by hiring you, you will be the best person to solve their problems.

If you are indeed interested in the position, send a thank you letter indicating your level of interest and asking for the job. If you are not interested, send a thank you letter saying you are not interested. See 'Thank you letter examples' below. Send the letters by post rather than email. An email is just that an email, whereas a hand written letter addressed properly makes a much better impact, especially if your audience is a baby-boomer.

It is best to send a hand written thank you card that is appropriate for the purpose. Hand write the note if your hand writing is legible. If your handwriting looks like a baboon's on crack, type up the note and send it by mail. If you want the job, get the note out right away. Do not wait.

It is okay to be original if the job lends itself to it. For instance, if you have applied for a Head Baker's position in a cake shop, bake a cake from scratch, write on the cake "I want the job" and hand deliver the cake.

Thank you letter examples:

Dear X,

Thank you very much for considering me for the position of Contracts Manager with your company.

Please do not consider this as being presumptuous on my part, but rather as a simple courtesy. I must withdraw my application at this point in order to respect your time and effort. While I believe the position and your company offers a great deal to a potential employee, I am no longer in a position to move forward should you have had an interest in pursuing my application further.

If I can be of assistance to you in any way, please call me. I hope we can keep the lines of communication open for a future opportunity, and if you would like some referrals for this position please do not hesitate to call. I am pleased to help you out.

I wish you and your company well and look forward to speaking to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Signature

Thank you letter example:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you yesterday, and talk about opportunities at xx company. Everyone that I met with was kind and knowledgeable. From the beginning, I was at ease discussing my past experiences and future opportunities.

I was very impressed by what I saw, and heard. I hope that you were, likewise, impressed. I feel that xx company is everything that I have been seeking in a company. The company has an aggressive attitude, a family atmosphere, reinvests its earnings and gives all involved the best chance for success. I feel that xx company will be able to provide a great opportunity. I look forward to further discussion about my role with xx company.

Best Regards,

Be persistent and follow- up your Thank you letter.

Be persistent. Call again, and follow-up the call with another letter a few days apart. Find any reason to follow-up again - a holiday, some new information - whatever. You want to make sure that you stay in the forefront. It could be weeks before they end their interview process. Chances are, unless you make 3 touches, you will not be remembered. Be persistent, but not a pest.

Example of a 2nd thank-you and follow-up letter

I wanted to wish you all at xx company a Happy New Year.

Again, I want to let you know that I was very glad to visit and interview with xx company. I was hoping to have received some positive feedback by now.

The level of your operations impressed me. I believe the company has a great prospect for growth in the future. I would like to reiterate my strong interest in joining you at xx company, and hope to return soon as part of your team. I have given this much thought over the holidays. My wife is also excited about the potential relocation, and opportunities with xx company.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I am hoping to hear back from you shortly.

Responding in a timely fashion to requests for references or additional information.

If you are asked to produce information like transcripts and/or references, generate the information quickly. Remember, have your references checked independently prior to releasing them. Call us at 1-888-277-8798 to have your references independently checked. If the employer has to chase after you, this reflects badly on you; doubly so if you sent a thank you letter stating you want the job, are eager to get started.

Your references will be asked questions similar to the questions that follow on the next page. Make sure to choose references who know you well enough to be able to answer these types of questions.

If you have given it your all, hold your head high. Sometimes you just don't click! The factors just don't line up and come together; be it the chemistry, the fit and/or the timing. The bottom line is - you either click or you don't. If you click, you usually get the offer. Don't blame yourself if you don't get the offer. Sometimes one of the three clicking factors, chemistry, fit or timing is just not there, and all the interview preparation in the world can not change that. Anthony Carter said it best,

“It's not up to me. I'm leaving it up to them. I did everything I could do with the time I was given. Hopefully I made a good impression on them, but it's a business, and they have to do what they have to do, and I need to do what I need to do.”

Reference Inquiry

1. What is your relationship to the candidate?
2. What are/were his/her major responsibilities?
3. Compared with other employees with similar responsibilities, How does his/her job performance rate along the following gradient scale,
Outstanding /above average/ average/ below average?

Why did you choose that particular rating?
For obvious reasons the answer to this question is very important

4. Was supervision required? Please describe using these parameters - no supervision, average supervision, or close supervision
5. What are/were his/her attitudes towards work? Please describe the Quality, and Volume/Production of work he puts out? What are his strengths? What are his weaknesses?
6. What about his/her technical competence? Can you describe any notable achievements or special contributions?
7. What about his/her interpersonal relationships with co-workers? How did he/she get along with peers/subordinates/supervisors?

The answer to this is critical. You could be the most brilliant rocket scientist but if you can't work with anyone, its game over.

8. Why did the candidate leave your employ or why do you believe he/she is considering leaving?
9. Would you rehire or hire the candidate if the situation presented itself?

The answer here is also critical if it is for a positive reason. For instance, because you have outgrown the company - that is OK. If on the other hand, he/she would not rehire you because of a negative reason - that is the kiss of death.

10. Perhaps I did not ask questions that would have revealed important information about Mr./Ms xxxx. In your professional opinion, can you please share any positives or negatives about Mr./Ms XXX, that I should be made aware that would affect his/her job performance?

I feel when asking this question it is important to say "In your professional opinion". Everybody loves to be called a professional since they feel an immediate sense of importance, and a responsibility to offer an opinion. Usually the negatives will come pouring out here. Have your reference checker dig deep here because this is where he/she will elicit the negatives if they did not get them earlier in the reference check.

11. Are there any comments you would like to add? Or is there anything I should know that I neglected to ask?