

THE INTERVIEW WENT WELL, NOW WHAT?

BY THERESE DROSTE

The thank-you note is a necessary tool for any job hunting strategy. But should you send it by email or snail mail, handwritten or typed? In this fast-paced computer age, the question baffles even the most sophisticated job hunters. Follow these guidelines to help you through the maze.

EMAIL THANK-YOU NOTES

How did the company initially contact you? If you have always corresponded with them via email for setting up the interview and answering questions, then by all means send an email thank-you note as soon as you return from an interview. However, make sure to follow it up with a typed note to show that you are not Mr. or Ms. Casual. Email thank-you notes have one clear advantage over their snail mail counterpart: They can put your name in front of the interviewer on the same day -- sometimes within hours -- of your interview.

SNAIL MAIL

If the company you interviewed with is formal and traditional, use snail mail to send your thank-you note. Should it be handwritten or typed? Typed is standard. Not only will you show that you are business-like, you'll also prove you know how to put together the salutation, format a letter and sign off. Executives want to know their administrative assistants can do this, since writing letters for your boss will be a big part of your job.

Handwritten notes are appropriate if you'd like to extend your thanks to others in the office that helped you out. For example, if a receptionist, assistant, office manager, or other person involved with the interviewing process was especially helpful -- say they took you to lunch or guided you from office to office -- then a handwritten note is a nice gesture to show your appreciation.

WHAT TO SAY

Most important is what you say and how you say it. A standard thank-you note should accomplish several things:

1. Thank the person for the opportunity to interview with the company.
2. Recap some of the conversational highlights.
3. Clarify any information you needed to check on for the interviewer.
4. And most importantly, plug your skills. Use the last paragraph as the chance to state, "The job is a good fit for me because of XYZ and my past experience in XYZ."

Interviewers have short memories. A thank-you note is your final chance to stand apart from all of the others who want the same position.