

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

What you do after the interview is just as important for your job search as the interview itself and the entire preparatory research before the interview. You want more interesting job duties than you currently have, right? You want a job with more responsibility! Then you must make it clear to yourself that the human-to-human conversation that you held during the interview is a part of a more extensive dialogue between you and your potential employer. It begins with the first contact between you and the company and will continue until all questions have been asked and answered and clarified satisfactorily by both parties.

### **HOMEWORK**

That means that you will have three homework assignments after each interview:

1. Write down brief notes
2. Written inventory of the information which has been received and must still be obtained
3. Write a thank-you letter to your interviewer as a part of the continued job application process

Many job-seekers fail to do these follow-up assignments and thus unnecessarily prolong their job search through their laxness. Because you would like to indeed get your new job as quickly as possible and without any unnecessary efforts, we want to examine in detail what these three homework assignments entail.

#### **1. BRIEF NOTES**

That means that you carefully maintain your job planning information sheet. Each interview should end with an explicit agreement or an unspoken understanding as to what the ongoing process will entail, i.e. when you will hear from your potential employer, whether he is interested in your candidacy or when he will expect an answer from you regarding your interest in the position

(follow-up). The most important information should be entered on your information sheet so that you can at all times quickly know where you stand with your job search with each of the companies you visit.

## **2. THE INVENTORY OF INFORMATION**

This should include both your impressions and feelings as well as your conclusions that are based upon the interview. It should also include a summary of the information received and a list of questions to which you still need an answer.

## **3. THE THANK-YOU LETTER**

In order to underscore what importance this letter will have for you, we want to briefly examine how most interviews end and what the candidates will do or not do afterwards.

Way too many interviews end with rather vague understandings having been reached. This also occurs even in those cases where both the interviewer as well as also the candidate are genuinely interested. Thus, let's assume that we could watch what 100 randomly selected candidates that are interested in a job position do after the first interview after they have been told that they would hear from the company again in two or three weeks. How many of them probably go home and just start waiting? Based upon our experiences, at least 90 of them do exactly this. If their phone doesn't ring after three weeks, approx. six or seven will call in order to ask about «the status of things» or to get some idea of their chances of getting the job. Only approx. three percent do what they actually should be doing.

What should **you** now do? Actually, you shouldn't need to even ask this question since the title of this section is «The thank-you letter».

Experts who have attentively followed the entire process of changing jobs for years may have differing opinions about unimportant points, but almost all agree that the thank-you letter after the interview is by far the most neglected aspect of the entire process. Most candidates realise that a few words of thanks should be written after each interview, but almost nobody actually does it. A brief letter to the person whom you met suffices in which you thank this person for the interest shown in you and that he took the time to provide you with information about the company and its needs.

Some words as additional elaborations upon any theme which was of particular interest to your interviewer could be very beneficial. Some experts also recommend that you indicate in a brief summary why you believe that you are qualified for the job position that was discussed. That's what the experts say, but we now wish to even improve upon their recommendation.

Imagine for a moment that you are in the following situation: You are the Sales Director of **Super Soaps AG** and have had a very interesting first sales meeting with the buyer at wholesaler **XYZ**. He hasn't given you an order and also not led you to be hopeful that you will receive an order. However, he has told you that he wants to give a larger order to a single soap company and that you would be hearing from him again. In this case, would you return to your office, sit on your chair and wait three weeks for the phone to ring? Certainly not!

If you are taking your job duties seriously as the Sales Director of **Super Soaps AG**, after you return to your office, you will write a thank-you letter to the buyer that he devoted his time to you and provided you with detailed information about his company's needs and plans. Moreover, you would tell him that the matter was so important for you that you would quickly provide additional clarifications in order to make possible a new meeting after a couple of days. In addition, you could submit a detailed offer which precisely corresponds to his wishes.

If this is now the correct approach for selling soap, why should you be satisfied with a less professional marketing of yourself, your skills, talents and possibilities? You shouldn't be satisfied!

Thus, when the first interview has ended with the recommendation that you go home and wait for two or three weeks «until you hear from us», proceed intelligently as follows:

- After you have written down your notes and information as we have just discussed, take some time in the evening to discuss the matter with your spouse, a close friend or your outplacement consultant. The rehashing of all the new information which you received during the interview will help you to determine the most important points.
- Sleep on it. During a tranquil night, your subconscious will mull the questions and compare the most important points of the interviews with your own deeply held preferences and reservations so that you will awake the next morning with a new relationship to the problems and with some new ideas as well.
- If your feeling is as positive on the following morning as on the previous evening, then your thank-you letter will follow the example enclosed on Schedule 1. The value of such letters is that a portion of the initiative for the ongoing process falls into your hands. Where it actually indeed should belong if we assume that you are taking seriously the task of marketing yourself.
- Next, you should do more research work. If you had prepared well for the initial interview, then you came to the interview with some knowledge about the company and if the interview went well, you now know a lot more. Now, you will have the opportunity to supplement this information through all possible additional data, opinions and comments. You will find them in various sources: In the company's annual report, from their customers, suppliers or competitors, from editors of trade journals, from banks, from suppliers of credit information, etc. The more information you can collect the more ideas and questions your mind will product that you can use during your next interview. Write them down immediately when they enter your head, above all if you have ideas about what the company could do in order to improve its situation and – even more importantly – what **you** could do for the company if you get this job.
- When you can assume that the thank-you letter based upon the model on Schedule 1 has received your interviewer and after you have prepared for the second interview as we discuss in more detail below, reach for the telephone!

## REJECTIONS

According to the law of probability, the majority of job applicants receive letters that state «... we're sorry, but you haven't been selected». If a company has interviewed seven candidates for a job position, at least six-even perhaps all seven-will receive a rejection letter. That means that you will have to deal with a number of such letters on any job search. But you shouldn't be discouraged! Carefully read through the lines of the rejection letter and study all notes which you made after the interviews. Even if it is a rejection letter, the opportunity exists that you may nonetheless be invited to a second interview if you call again and say politely that you – from person-to-person – would like to have some more information about the reasons that led to your rejection. In a second interview, new perspectives can be unexpectedly obtained. **A “no” today doesn't mean a “no” forever and a “no” from a division doesn't mean a “no” from the entire company.**

Another form of rejection after a promising interview can be: ... Silence! At the end of the interview, you and your interviewer were equally interested in a cooperation. Now days and weeks have passed without any contact whatsoever from your interviewer. What should you do?

If you have taken the aforementioned steps (thank-you letter, evaluation of information, etc.), then this question shouldn't torment you. However, if this is indeed the case, a polite telephone call as below is certainly permitted:

«... Some time ago, we had a very interesting interview in your office about ... . Possibly, you have since written me a letter which I haven't received yet, but I would nonetheless like to confirm my interest in your company and the job position that we discussed. I would be very glad to learn even more about the job position. Assuming that I am still being considered for the job, it would be very important to me if we could have another interview ....».

## PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

A company which is seriously interested in your candidacy will possibly request that you spend some hours or even an entire day with their independent psychologist. Psychological tests are widely considered to be an important part of the hiring process; presumably, you won't be able to avoid them. If such tests

are conducted in a professional manner, it will be very difficult to object to them. However, ask the prospective employer or the psychologist whether he would be willing to provide you with certain information. If the answer is no, why not? Explain to him that you have already undergone various tests (assessments) within the parameters of outplacement consulting.

## **SECOND INTERVIEW**

The second interview is certainly a ray of hope during your job search. Perhaps, you asked for a second interview in your thank-you letter or the company invited you to a second interview on its own. In any case, it is a positive sign that the company wishes to devote time to you for another interview.

The assessment which you wrote down after your first interview will provide you with a good point of orientation. The list of unresolved questions will also now be useful. Essentially, you will now try to receive additional and more detailed information. You will now possibly meet some new people, perhaps the boss of your future superior, one or two of his colleagues or some divisional leaders with whom you would cooperate. In any case, you can justifiably expect that you will now receive information which would have been unsuitable for the initial interview. During the second interview, you will sometimes also receive some clues about your chances of getting the job; that is to say, how many candidates are still under consideration. In some cases, you will even be told whether you are the second or first choice on a list of three, but that is seldom. Probably, you will never receive information about the competing job applicants. Thus, you must continue doing your homework until a final decision has been made and the job has been offered to *you* – or to someone else.

Now, you may possibly be able to draft a description of the job position as **you** see it. This job description which you will take along to your second interview should consist of three sections:

- The first section can be very short. Specify the function that was discussed.  
Example: Technical Manager of Company XYZ
- The second section should likewise be kept short: From your perspective, describe why the company could be interested in you (as a managerial candidate, to increase efficiency, new structure, etc.)
- In many cases, the third section is not longer than one A4 page. It should describe how you see the job duty and how you wish to embrace it

This third section is not intended as a programme of action for the company. You don't want to tell the company what it should actually do. Rather, it is a programme which shows how you would like to be integrated into the various spheres of job duties in order to become completely familiar with the problems and how you will be able to look for and find solutions.

These statements have five different purposes:

1. They will help you to place the most important information that you have collected into a context and to compare such information.
2. They provide a good main theme for your second interview. For these reasons, you should neither send it to your interviewer nor place it on his desk as reading material.
3. They clearly document your interest in the company and the open job position.
4. You show the company's management that you have a thoughtful approach and that you know what you are talking about.
5. All in all, they can help you to receive the job you want and keep you from accepting a job that you don't want.

**MODEL THANK-YOU LETTER**

Schedule 1

Felix Muster  
X Street 3

8000 Zurich, Date

Tel. +01 / 231 24 56

Mr.  
Max Jones  
Technical Management  
Company XYZ  
P.O. Box 1234  
3000 Berne

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for the time you devoted to me yesterday during the initial interview. Our meeting resulted in strong interest upon my part in your company and in the open job position. I would be glad to learn even more about your company and the open job position than was possible yesterday owing to time constraints. Certainly, it would be beneficial to receive another interview whereby I can also provide you with more information about myself and my previous job duties.

I will take the liberty of calling your secretary in a few days to set up another interview.

Sincerely,

Felix Muster