



Network to Work Meeting

October 2018

RESOURCE DOCUMENT – *FOLLOWING UP*

Following Up to Achieve Success in the Job Search

A. What is Follow Up?

A critical step in finding a job is following up. A follow up is a thank you, a reminder, or a final summary of why you're the right fit for the position. It should be done after applying for a job, having a job interview, networking or meeting an employer at a job fair, Network to Work meeting, etc.

A hiring manager receives hundreds of applications and resumes and conducts dozens of interviews. You will likely find yourself among a crowd of other applicants who have presented strong applications or had solid interviews. Your post-application email or post-interview thank you is the final chance you have to differentiate yourself from that crowd.

Following up on job applications is a great way to show your interest in a company and keep your name at the top of the hiring manager's mind. Even if it doesn't lead to an immediate hire, you'll make a great impression that could pay off down the line.

Following-up after a job interview allows you to thank the interviewer for his or her time while also showing you have a genuine interest in the job. It provides another opportunity to demonstrate how you are a good match for the position. This is also the case in following up on a job application. Follow up can also show your potential to be a responsible, professional, valuable member of their team. However, the wrong style of following up could reflect negatively on you.

B. Why Follow Up?

What is the benefit on following up with a hiring manager after submitting an application or interviewing? Why should you do it?

- **They like it.** Evidence suggests that 75% of hiring managers genuinely appreciate it. In their eyes, it shows you respect their time and effort.
- **The extra mile.** Following up also shows you will go the extra mile. It's the last step in the process, and some people consider it to be unnecessary. However, if you stay in touch, that little extra bit of effort can make a huge difference.
- **People need reminders.** A hiring manager may see a resume that looks promising but then forget about it as new applications come in, and it may then even get lost in their inbox. However, the hiring manager is much more likely to check a resume, and even remember it, if he or she receives a follow up email.
- **It leaves a distinguishing impression.** As mentioned, a hiring manager might get hundreds of resumes and conduct a dozen or more interviews. An email, letter, or card gives one more point of contact to help you stand out in their minds. Furthermore, a follow-up communication that highlights that you've done some research (by congratulating the company on a recent achievement, asking a relevant question about the industry, etc.) is a great way to set yourself apart from the monotonous slew of job applications and resumes.

C. Following up on a Job Application:

One of the most important reasons to follow up on a job application is to ensure that it has been received and hasn't gotten lost in the pile. Following up can help you make certain your application materials are in the hands of the proper person. Furthermore, an employer with a huge pile of applications might only skim each one for a few seconds. However, if the employer has your application along with an email follow-up, hopefully, the employer will remember your name better.

Also, employers are looking for workers who are genuinely excited about the position, and following up is one of the easiest and most effective ways to demonstrate just how interested you are. **A good, well-written email can make you look smart, professional and enthusiastic about the job,** and shows a tenacity that is often noted and rewarded.

Finding work can be a difficult task, especially because applicants are competing with people who are just as qualified, if not more qualified. So, to tip the odds in your favor, always send an email after submitting each application, making sure it is fine-tuned and specific to the position and employer.

- **When to follow up?**

- In general you should follow up *no sooner than* a week after submitting your resume.
- If two weeks go by and you haven't received any response to your application, you definitely must follow up.
 - This isn't being bothersome or pestering, rather, it is being professionally assertive.
- If you have a job offer but are still waiting to hear back from your dream employer, follow up with that dream employer right away. Tell them:
 - You've received another offer;
 - You're ready to turn it down if you are still in the running;
 - The date you are expected to respond to the offer.
- Before you follow up, look again at the job posting to see if the employer has made any specific statements about following up, and if so, honor them! Sometimes employers explicitly state that they do not want you to reach out to them to ask about your application status at this stage. In other cases, the exact due date for applications is provided in the job ad. Following up before the due date or contrary to the employer's requests will be rude at best and at worst will hamper your chances of landing the job.

- **How to Follow Up on a Job Application in 6 easy steps:**

1. **Use your connections:**

- Go through your contacts to see if you know anyone from the company. If you do, ask them to inform the proper hiring manager about your application, or to put you in touch with someone in charge of the recruitment.

2. **If you lack connections, get the hiring manager's contact details:**

- First look to see if contact information is provided in the job listing.
- If not, check the company's website for the hiring manager's email address.
- If it's not there, call the company's front desk and simply ask.

3. **Write a follow-up email directly to the hiring manager.**

Email should be your first approach. Few professionals have time to field phone calls. Emailing recruiters and hiring managers shows greater respect for their schedule because they can process and respond on their own time.

Furthermore, don't send an old-school, snail mail letter. In the digital age, good communication is fast communication. Paper letters may fail to reach the recipient or even be tossed as junk mail.

Here are important pointers for your follow up email:

- Make an effort to get the hiring manager's name and greet him or her with a title such as Mr. or Ms. (Make an effort to get the hiring manager's name.)
 - If you can't get the name, address the email to the "Hiring Manager" or "Human Resources Manager".
- Use a clear subject line, specifically mentioning the job title. For example: *"Following up on a job application for [position title]"*.
- Include these points:
 - **Restate your interest** in the position and why it excites you;
 - **Reiterate and be specific about why you are the perfect fit** for the job.
 - Don't make the hiring manager do the work of determining your fit.
 - Spell out how your background and skills in XYZ fits into the XYZ role that is being advertised.
 - A boring and generic statement such as, "I've applied; please let me know if you feel I am a good fit" will be counterproductive.
 - **State what you believe you can contribute;**
 - **Mention your relevant skills,** work experience and education.
- Be polite, humble, and brief in your message.
- In your closing, be sure to include your contact information, including phone number and email address.

SAMPLE EMAIL:

Hello [Hiring Manager's Name],

A week ago I applied for the position of [position title]. I would like to confirm that you have received my application and to kindly ask you if you could provide me with your decision timeline.

I am very enthusiastic at the prospect of joining your team and leveraging [*spell out your specific skills, knowledge, and experience*] to help you [*speak to the benefit you'd bring to the company*].

Please let me know if you need any more details about my application. I look forward to speaking with you and sharing my ideas on how to help you with [your upcoming challenges – be specific].

Kind regards,

[Your signature]

[Your LinkedIn profile, if you have one] [Your phone number and email address]

4. If no response to your email, make a follow-up phone call.

If another week goes by without a response to your email, then you can follow up again with a phone call.

- Begin with asking if it's a convenient time for the hiring manager to speak with you.
- If not, ask when you can call them back.
- Then—base your phone follow up on the sample script below:

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALL SCRIPT

Hello [Hiring Manager's Name]. My name is [Your Name]. I submitted my application for the [XYZ] position two weeks ago. I just wanted to make sure you received it and to let you know that I'm still interested in the position. I'd love to talk with you about how I can help you with your upcoming challenges. If you need any additional information, please let me know. I can be reached at (phone number and email.)

5. Don't Get Creepy

- Unless the hiring manager set a response deadline and failed to keep it, don't follow up more than twice.
- Accept the fact that a given company might not be interested in you and just move on.
- Calling or emailing every day or, worse than that, showing up in person to ask about your application will surely discourage the company from hiring you.

6. Keep Job Seeking

- Even if you think you've found a perfect job for you, don't give up on applying to other companies while waiting for the response.
- Don't obsess over one job posting. No matter how great a candidate you are, you might not make it for reasons beyond your control.

• **Final Thoughts**

Every interaction with a recruiter or hiring manager is part of the interview process – email, phone call, voicemail, or in-person meeting. So however you choose to follow up after a job application, ***treat it like the opportunity to display your communication skills that it is.*** As part of the interview process the hiring manager assess a candidate's communication skills. Therefore, carefully proofread your emails and make notes in advance of calls so that you can always speak with poise.

Following up on job applications might feel awkward, but it's expected of you. Don't think you're "bothering" the hiring manager - you really aren't. In fact, a proper follow-up can dramatically boost your chances of landing the job.

D. Following up after a Job Interview:

After a job interview, it's always a good idea to send a thank-you note or email to the individuals you met with. This is standard practice for job seekers. Ensure that you thank the employer for an interview within 24 hours, as waiting any later than this makes your "thank you" ring hollow. In addition, employers may be looking to make a fast decision, so you need to keep your name on their radar.

Try to be creative in your follow up. Look to touch on your conversation. If you spoke about a certain issue, an article or book or an upcoming event, send them information that touches on the topic. This will show that you are thinking about the business and were truly engaged in the conversation."

- **Six Useful Tips**

Follow these general tips to make your final pitch a quality one.

1. **Stand out, but don't be desperate**

- The goal is to stand out – not to take a desperate shot in the dark hoping a hiring manager takes mercy on you. Remember to be grateful and express interest again in the position, but avoid coming across as unduly flattering.
- Use this as an opportunity to remind them of how great of a fit you'd be for the job. Furthermore, if you need to expand on something, add information, or correct something you said, now is the time to do so. Address those parts of the interview where you feel you could have responded more competently.

2. **Be specific**

- Specificity is important; don't just act like you're saying hi, tell them why you're getting in touch. Be confident. "Just checking in" sounds like you're waffling, and it's cliché corporate-speak. You aren't "just checking in," you're reminding them why they need you. Be sure to thank everyone who interviewed you also, not just the hiring manager.

3. Follow up in a Timely Fashion

Being timely is critical. If you are thanking an interviewer more than a few days after the interview, it will seem like your response is late. Get your email or note to your interviewer fast.

4. Add value to your response

Did you discuss industry information? Send an article link. By making your follow up more than just a “thank you” you are showing that you’re not just nice – you’re useful.

5. Don’t be careless

- Don’t write a follow up email on your phone. You’re more prone to make - and miss -errors. Whenever possible, sit down at a computer and give it your full attention.

- Also, keep your email or letter professional in tone, even if you are trying to show individual personality. Don’t use emojis, inappropriate jokes, or other things of that sort. Even if it’s cleverly done or humorous, it also looks tacky.

- Finally, and this should be obvious, pay attention to word choice. Avoid canned and cliché phrases or patronizing insider lingo.

6. Customize Your Correspondence:

Make personal connection. Make sure you have tailored your message to the interviewer. Using a template is fine, but you need to ensure that you’ve taken the time to personalize the message and made it relevant to the specific hiring managers you’ve spoken to. Make sure your interviewers won’t be disappointed when they compare notes by customizing your message for the recipient.

- **Sample Post-Interview Thank you Email:**

TO line: Leave empty until you've completed, spellchecked, and proofread the message. Where possible, have a friend or family member check it before sending.

Subject: Thank you for the [Job Title] position interview on [date]

Body:

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name]:

Thank you very much for your time today [or yesterday or the date] to interview me for the position of [job title]. I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about this job, to meet you and [names of other interviewers], and to see your facility [or offices, location, etc.].

(Reference anything you said that seemed important to the interviewer. For example:)

As we discussed, I believe there are many things a personal care attendant can do to meet the unique care and socialization needs of a client. Keeping a client safe, well cared for, and engaged would be a top priority for someone in this job, and I would love the opportunity to bring my personal values and creativity to this position.

(Reference the "connection" you may have made. For example:)

I enjoyed finding someone else who attended UVM and also roots for the hockey team. Hope they make the NCAA Division finals next year!

As we discussed, I have [months or years] of experience with [technology, tools, or activity you have that seemed most important in the interview]. With my background and experience, I believe that I could become a contributor to your team very quickly.

I am excited about this opportunity to join [organization name]. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions or need any additional information. I look forward to hearing from you [whenever they said they would be in touch or in 10 days if they didn't give you a date].

Thank you again for your time.

Best regards,

[Your name] [Phone number -- not your work number if you are employed] {Email address}

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