

JEN'S 10 FOLLOW-UP

- 1 Begin before you stand up to shake hands.** It is your right as a candidate for the position to inquire – politely and professionally – about when you might expect to hear about next steps in the selection process. At the conclusion of the interview, you might consider something to the effect of, “Thanks so much for your time, it certainly sounds like a terrific opportunity and I think I could be a good fit. When will you be making a decision? Or, When could I expect to hear from you?”
- 2 Cover your bases.** My motto is “be gratuitous in your gratitude” – send an immediate e-mail to the main contact, or, if appropriate, to others who participated in the interview. The e-mail should be brief, but express excitement and perhaps include one reflection on a specific “feel-good” moment from the conversation (Know anyone in common? Is the contact an alum? A Cubs fan?). Follow-up that e-mail with a more thoughtful, detailed and error-free handwritten thank-you note (which you put a stamp on and is delivered through the US Postal Service), a day or so later – don’t delay.
- 3 Play up the “uniqueness” of you.** Be as specific as possible in your handwritten note. Anyone can be thankful for the opportunity and comment how great it is to be a candidate, but that’s just not compelling, memorable stuff. So – say exactly what it is about the job that makes it a perfect fit for YOU. Demonstrate how smart YOU are by making keen, complimentary observations about what the company does. Mention the “what” and “how much” that YOU learned from this experience.
- 4 Visual expressiveness:** Your handwritten thank-you note gives you one more opportunity to leave a strong, lasting impression, so think carefully about your intentions as you select your notes – pink ink, dotting the “i”s with hearts on Hello Kitty cards will leave an entirely different impression than ecru Crane monogram notes will – even if the content is the same. So choose wisely.
- 5 Review meeting notes:** Be sure to promptly follow up on any and all “loose ends” or recommendations that came up during your discussion – perhaps you still need to file your references, or the contact suggested you check out a competitor’s website, or you need to schedule a time to take a writing test. Don’t delay on this stuff either.
- 6 LinkedIn – eventually.** Use your best judgment about the timing on this one, but your goal here is to formally connect with viable, professional contacts via LinkedIn. In the case that you don’t get hired – despite a great conversation – at least you will walk away from the experience having connected with a quality contact, potentially to engage with again.
- 7 Seek balance while walking the fence.** As with most efforts in the job-search, you need to walk those fine lines – in this case, it’s tenacity with regards to follow-up vs. worrisome, stalker-like behavior. E-mail or Twitter shout-out everyday? Too much. Once a week/every 10 days? Just right.
- 8 Elegant excuses.** Make those follow-up e-mails really count by passing along something of substance to accompany your nudge – an article you “happened” to have run across in an industry blog; a new piece of work that’s now part of your portfolio; a recent paper you published.
- 9 Crickets.** Of course, despite best efforts, that’s sometimes all you’ll hear. Until you receive a definitive “no” there’s no need to read too much into the radio silence – keep on your regular follow-up – in all likelihood, the e-mails are being read and noted.
- 10 Be gentle.** If you decline the offer or accept another before the company gets back to you, be classy: pick up the phone and call your contact. This gesture takes guts, but it will not go unnoticed. Be gracious, and stay in touch with everyone you interviewed with.