How to Write a Thank You Letter

Thank you letters are an essential part of your overall career and networking strategy. Whether you are in a job search or simply making new contacts to strengthen your network, the effort you make to recognize the actions of those with whom you network will have a huge impact on the overall impression you leave behind.

When to Write a Thank You Letter

Some instances in which a thank you letter is important are obvious, such as immediately after a job interview. Others may not be so obvious to you. Take the time to write a thank you note at the following junctures in your professional life:

- Completion of an internship
- Obtaining a lead/contact/opportunity from someone in your network
- Meeting a new contact
- Completion of an informational interview
- Completion of a job interview
- Anytime someone does something that benefits your professional life

What to Include in Your Thank You Letter

1. Salutation - Greet your addressee with “Dear (Name),” being sure to address your contact appropriately. If you are unsure whether a first name is suitable, default to Mr., Ms., Dr., etc. and their last name.

   - Dear Mr. Johnson,

2. “Thank you” statement(s) - Express thanks for the gesture or action this person made on your behalf.

   - Thank you for introducing me to Ms. Michelle Smith, director of HR at ABC Corporation at the networking luncheon last week.

3. Detail your appreciation

   - I cannot tell you what a great opportunity it was to meet her. I was able to share with her my interest in a HR career, and we discussed various
internship opportunities within her organization. I have an interview next week!

4. Reaffirm your relationship/connection with your contact

   - Your willingness to help me make this contact was incredibly significant. I will keep you apprised of my progress over the coming months.

5. Conclude your Letter

   - Thank you again for your time and efforts on my behalf.

6. Salutation

   - Sincerely,
     John Phillips

Tips for an Effective Thank You Letter

Although every thank you letter will be unique, there are a few key points that you should consider each time you write a note to someone in your network:

   - Be sincere - The purpose of a thank you letter is to express your appreciation for the efforts of a contact that benefited your professional life. Use language that communicates that appreciation well.

   - Be specific - Recognize the specific actions that this person made on your behalf.

   - Be punctual - Timing is important. Write your letter within a few days of the event that prompted your note. You will express your thanks with more clarity and the contact with remember you more easily while the event is fresh in both of your minds.

   - Be professional - As always, make the best impression you can. Be sure that your thank you note is easy to read, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and is professional.
Email or Snail-Mail?

Electronic communication is widely used for business communication, and is commonly acceptable as a means of saying thank you. In fact, some experts now encourage email for all forms of communication because of its ease.

Sending a letter, however, will make your message stand out. If you decide to send a note in the mail, use your discretion as to whether your note should be printed or hand-written. A handwritten letter is a nice way to provide a more personal touch, but some relationships will call for a more formal approach. In the end, however, it’s the act of actually sending the note that is most significant, regardless of the format.

Conclusion

As you network professionally, there will be many opportunities for you to stop and thank others for their help. Not only will your efforts leave a positive impression with your contacts, they will also help build the relationships that may be crucial to your long-term success.