



THE FORTUNE FOR YOUR CAREER IS IN THE FOLLOW-UP

Why you're missing key opportunities!



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Let's Talk Post Interview Follow-up Skills



The fact about follow-ups is that it's the least-deployed strategy, and the least talked about among career advisers.

Follow-up calls are rarely talked about today, as salary negotiation is talked about more (so it seems). I'll take the shallow-water dive into the follow-up

to discuss why it's so critical. A good part of your job search must include follow-up in all areas:

1. Follow up with the application you submitted online.
2. You are reaching back out to a colleague with an important contact. There are several layers to contacting the right person, so it starts at the bottom of your weak ties.
3. Have a conversation with someone to discuss how they got into their field. Afterward, thanking the person is appropriate, either an email, a phone call or a card.
4. Contacting a former boss who you had a mutually admirable relationship. Former bosses come through at times, especially if they liked you. Even if they since changed industries, it's a valuable relationship.
5. Try to contact your boss' superiors, too, if they know you and you had good communication with them as well.
6. Follow up with other professionals (your hairstylist, etc), who said they wanted to introduce you to someone who could be a reference or a lead.
7. Call a relative who retired from one of your ideal companies to work. Maybe they didn't work for your department, but they know someone who does; or, they can tell you about the company culture.
8. While talking to a former coworker, you found out they're moving on. Find out why (even if they wronged you once).

The one time that's most essential for you to follow up is [after a job interview](#) — this means all the interviews, not just the final before making a decision. The goal isn't just to see if you're hired; it may be the relationship you'll need to get hired elsewhere.

Why don't most people follow up?

I used to think job candidates didn't know it was OK to follow up after [a job interview](#). After all, they need someone for the position. They should call, right? In my early years, employers called back when they said they would, or would let you know they were not interested in hiring you. I think there were times I just knew not to expect a call back, since the interview didn't go well.

Many employers, if not most, expect you to follow up on an interview in some form. The interviewer or hiring manager gives you a timeline and encourages a follow-up call if they don't get back to you by a specific date. Hopefully, you note contact names, phone numbers, and all info you need to follow up effectively.

How to follow up after a job interview.

I don't think you can get job offers without following up these days without one or more of the following:

1. Send a thank-you email to the interviewer for their time and insight into the position.
2. Call to follow up or send a note when an employer says to follow up with them.
3. Send a second follow-up note the next week for an update on the status of the position. Some people send an article to something related to an interview conversation. I suggest several ways to do this [in this article](#).

You are more successful when you follow up.

Getting the job is more than just showing competence. One of the cornerstones of success is the ability to follow up with tact and respect, whether through phone calls or in writing. You might believe that follow-ups are an overly aggressive tactic. However, it might be the difference between resting peacefully at night knowing you were rejected, or never knowing that you were turned down because another candidate followed up after an interview.

Follow-up is to continue the conversation, not to talk about what happened.

If your only goal is to find out if you are hired, you are squandering an opportunity. A follow-up still packs a memorable punch in this virtual-hybrid workplace. I believe that following up has a long-tail benefit when there's a conversation behind it, but if your interview was lousy, it may not help a lot.

I once had an interview I thought went well, but when I called to follow up, I was told by the interviewer they went with someone else. We talked for about 20 minutes longer, and before I knew it, she referred me to someone else hiring for a similar position. She even called the employer as a reference for me before I applied!

My follow-up advice is not only for the job interviews, but for life. It's easy to be forgotten. People are busy, and while meeting many people, you may forget they have their own careers to look after. They are asking for help, helping others, and following up, just like you. Reminders need to be a constant fixture of your job searches.

It's easy to be forgotten. I know it ain't easy. You need to create a strategy around follow-ups.

10 Mistakes to Avoid While Following Up During The Hiring Process



Great follow-up skills during a hiring process are powerful, but mistakes happen. But the worse thing is not following up at all. Employers have short memories, busy

schedules, and splintered interests, especially when five other candidates come across the same. They pick the stand-out candidate, not the one who offered their best effort. If you're on the job interview circuit, follow-up is essential.

As I stated previously, a follow-up is best used to strengthen your relationships with the person interested in hiring you. While reminders are an excellent reason to call, you're missing out on a potential opportunity to jump on other candidates if it's only to remind them of you.

Consider it a charitable performance, no matter how effective your presentation comes across. If you don't follow up with a phone call conversation or, minimally, an email, you are leaving money on the table.

Avoid these mistakes has benefits you won't see an immediate ROI (Return On Investment):

- You'll establish yourself as a great communicator. Good managers appreciate clear coworkers within their team.
- Positive follow-up sends a message that you want to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Follow-up demonstrates reliability and your enthusiasm for the job.
- Good follow-up reminds them of the seriousness of your candidacy.

Here are mistakes to avoid while following up:

1. Not communicating how their time served you.

Most people who meet with you about a position were not trained to interview. Likely, they don't like the process or having to do it several times, especially since it takes away from their vital work. Most candidates don't follow up, but those who do becomes memorable. Thank the interviewer for their time. Share with them what the opportunity means to you at least twice, once right after the interview and in your follow-up communication.

2. Lack of persistence or exerting minimal effort

My colleague and friend Ebony Joyce told me recently, "The fortune is in the follow-up." It's part of the work, and it must count. This means to leave voicemails and sending streams of unresponsive emails aren't enough. The email has become the staple for follow-ups after an interview these days. To ensure someone received your message, you can use an open [email alert tracker](#), so you'll know when the person has read your email.

3. Too long to follow up (later than 24-48 hours)

While late follow-up communication is better than none, a day or two afterward is best. I told the story years ago of two clients calling me the same day stating they didn't hear from the employer after an interview for two weeks. I told them to follow up with thank you notes which one did and the other didn't. Neither of them got the job they interviewed for. The woman who followed up impressed the hiring manager and created a contract position for her. Eventually, the contract position became a full-time job.

4. Lack of thoughtfulness

“You only get one shot” is not just a line from an Eminem song. It is the truth when it comes to impressing an interviewer the first time. You can’t afford to forget what the company wants. You must be clear about how you fit based on the conversations and articulate it persuasively. An effective way to show your thoughtfulness is to share stories of how you’ve done it before or to reimagine it in a way the interviewer never thought of before.

5. No enthusiasm

If you’re not envisioning yourself working for the person you interview, you might as well move on. Showing you care about the company is a fundamental attribute a manager considers quietly. The best follow-up calls for managers are energizing to them. Zeal will appear fake and disingenuous, but enthusiasm and anticipation inspire. It starts with the interview when you ask questions, be mindful with answers, and be clear about your why. The follow-up reinforces it.

6. Lack of confidence

People are more confident when interviewing with several companies than they rely on one potential opportunity. The lack of confidence rears its ugly head if you are thinking about what can go wrong. If you don’t get the job, it’s not the end of the world. But you are what you seem. Even a few words can expose your insecurities about how you feel about your ability to do the job. Keep what you’ve accomplished and your impact in front of you, and leave your doubts behind.

7. Not confirming (or receiving) contact information

Hiring managers have handed me business cards with wrong or outdated information. There are times when the website has incorrect information. It's likely sincere and overlooked, but a correct call back number or email address is essential to follow up. One solution is to read back the information on the card (for those interviewing in person) or read back what's on the website.

8. You added little to no value.

Quality follow-up is an opportunity to add value. If you're checking or confirming you got the job after a final interview is a small part of a follow-up. Even if the job is yours, you add value to grow future coworker relationship(s)—plan on advancing the conversation you had during the meeting. Think of ways to add depth or additional insight as it relates to work. While there are many ways to have a meaningful conversation, positive energy must ooze from the follow-up.

9. Lacking respect for people's time

Follow-up must be focused and strategic. Another opportunity to “shoot your best shot” must be done with the hiring manager's (if not the interviewer's) time. Create a brief outline of what you want to cover, then let it go. Call first, and oblige if the person wants to carry the conversation further. If they got to go, appreciate their time, and let them know you are accessible if they have further questions. If you email the person, keep it short and to the point.

10. Not using LinkedIn to stay connected

Many people share how a hiring manager says no the first time but hires them later. Or, what has happened recently with [boomerang employees](#), they get recruited or welcomed back to their former company a short time after leaving. The LinkedIn

connection doesn't promise a hiring manager will come back to you when they hired and passed on you or keep you top of mind. It has the potential to keep you in mind when they see how you are creating value for your next employer. Many stories of former candidates successfully getting second chances because of their continued connection.

Follow-up is a strategic tool most effective when planned and executed. It doesn't always go exactly as planned, but a plan can minimize mistakes. The follow-up can be your last chance to impact your impression on an employer, a bridge to a working relationship, or the bridge to an opportunity in the future.

9 Career Experts Weigh-In On Follow-Up Mistakes Job Seekers Make



Follow-up is one of the vital parts of your job search you control. It is the life support of all of your efforts. During unpredictable job market activity, you'll need to drive results. My focus on a follow-up series is motivated by the opportunities I hear job seekers miss when a follow-up call or email would impress an employer or tell them they hired someone else, along with many other reasons.

The first article in the series focuses on follow-up [after the interview](#), and it's essential to be thoughtful and strategic. Your approach matters; remember, no action dismantles the hard work you spent years building. People fear rejection and don't want to be told no. I mention many other reasons and scenarios other than interview follow-up is essential.

The second article offers [ten mistakes job seekers](#) must avoid for successful follow-up. While getting hired is the ultimate goal, there are many pieces along the way that helps you traction. While the worst mistake is no follow-up, the lack of thoughtfulness will thwart your efforts.

I recently shared some thoughts [on LinkedIn](#) and asked if I missed any common mistakes. Below are responses I received from career experts, and I thought they were so good that I wanted to share them here. I also link to the person's LinkedIn account so you can follow them, their content, and other helpful information they provide job seekers:

Here is quality advice on why and how you should follow up during the job interview process:

[Jim Black](#), Certified Career and Life Coach

“I tell people to show real enthusiasm before, during, and after the interview. It gets you far! So if you like the job, show that you are enthusiastic about it, verbally and in writing. If you aren't enthusiastic, don't go for the job.”

[Dr. Scott Dell](#), Career Educator, LinkedIn Advocate

“Two other questions that I suggest candidates asking DURING the interview (besides the intelligent ones you are asked if you have any further questions). The first is obvious, but the second is more controversial. One, is what are the timeframe for the decision making process, next steps and when would be a good time to follow up – and then make sure to follow up! The second is about the competition, as in “If I may ask, how many other candidates are in the pipeline” and “what are the strongest things you think I bring to the table (and watch for what is NOT said.” This will bring up some of the strengths to emphasize and reinforce with your next communication to help them remember you.”

[Norma Davila](#), Resume Writing & Career Management Expert

“Another follow-up mistake which may be even worse than no follow-up at all: coming across as desperate for the position by sending too many emails or making too many calls and not giving hiring managers or recruiters time to respond.”

[Bill Holland, Ph.D.](#), Principal Founder, College to Career Catalyst, LLC, and Author

“One reason why employers have short memories has to do with the relativeness of what is important to them versus what is important to you. Your job search and candidacy are likely among the highest of your priorities. Your priorities and that of the employer as closer together if, and only if, you happen to be their top candidate or among the top few.”

If you are a top candidate, the value of follow up is easier to understand. If you are not, follow up feels more like busy work. When you allow that feeling to dictate how you respond it leads you to at least one of the nine mistakes listed above. Do not let that happen to you. Toward the end of the interview tell them you would like to follow up but do not want to be a pest. Ask, ” when should I follow up?”

[Virginia Franco](#), Executive Storyteller, Certified Resume + LinkedIn Writer

“There’s literally no downside to writing a thank you note, especially one that expresses genuine interest.”

[Jim Peacock, CCSP, GCDF](#)

“One of the top skills employers are looking for is communication skills. Why not start demonstrating your skills right after the interview?”

[Loren Grieff](#), Career Coach, Founder of Portfolio Rocket Careers

“...for goodness sakes, please create a Non-Generic subject line!!”

[Meg Applegate](#), Award-Winning Resume Writer & Certified Personal Branding Strategist

“A generic follow-up is a mistake. Be specific. Reference something from your conversation and better yet, add even more value around that topic.”

[Farnoosh Brock](#), Empowering STEM Professionals & Students with Essential Leadership Skills

It is simple and easy when you know enough to know if you’re enthusiastic about the job, and yet, I find many just don’t know so much about (1) what they want (2) what excites them (3) what drains them (4) what criteria matters to their job success (5) what their core values are and how the environment fits/misfits it and so on.”

The Slightly Uncomfortable But Necessary Times and Techniques to Following-Up



Follow-up is a staple of [business and careers](#). It's uncomfortable, yet necessary. Your career might be light years behind because you are afraid of being rejected or pigeonholed. We are going to dissect some awkward situations where follow-up is critical. I hope to remove some of the fear of following up and moving past any mistakes. You can feel fearful and deploy courage. Courage will win once you experience the benefits.

We live in an age where constant business moves and decisions exist. You're not an employee anymore who settles into a job for years to come. You are a business of one. As soon as you accept this reality, you will seek clarity about your career more urgently.

I've been saying for more than two years now, "[job search is a lifestyle](#)." But when I said it, it wasn't new. "Everyone is a business of one" is not new, either. More acceptance of it is new. You can bet people make perpetual moves because they're [uncomfortable with uncertainty](#). A close friend of mine is one of those [over-employed people](#). He says 70% of time during his recent job searches is spent making follow-up calls.

Here's what makes follow-up tough and time-consuming:

- Calling back to follow up after an interview or conversation for opportunities is humbling. They promise to call you after a date, and the hiring manager or HR didn't contact you. Yet, you'll need to follow up a couple of times to no avail. You don't want to be a pest, yet how many times is too many is subjective.
- There are times the follow-up can be a dud. Not everyone will welcome a follow-up but will appreciate your effort. All of it may amount to nothing. You must be OK with it because you can move on. It's only disappointing if there are no other potential opportunities.
- HR professionals and hiring managers are not always thrilled [to call you back](#). It's one more call of a hundred they need to make, and even though you performed well during your meeting, you may not stand out to them yet.
- Decision-makers say they like persistence if someone calls a few times to get through with an email or phone, yet they don't always reward those who are tenacious. You must be resilient because the "not-rejected-not-hired" tone is painful.

Follow-up is about business.

In business, it takes several contact points to collaborate with another entrepreneur. In most employer/employee situations, the same idea applies. People go into business with whom they know, like, and trust. When hired, the employer trusts their investment in you will bear fruit in an employment situation. In today's job search, you are separate from the company. You are the business. Start treating yourself and your [career that way](#). Employment is a paid collaboration between you and the company that always looks to add talented professionals to their team. People who apply and interview are a dime a dozen. Those who stand out are the contenders. That's the end game with follow-up.

Success: Doing what's uncomfortable

Between me overexplaining and you overthinking it, following up is necessary, especially when it comes to having the conversation rather than just getting a yes or no.

Every interaction is intel for you, including what is said and what isn't. Most people are uncomfortable with the unknown, but uncovering the unknown is the task.

Follow up on good conversations.

Networking takes work to meet people, but the magic is in conversations that initially are unrelated to what you need at the moment. The best conversations I've ever had were where no one asked for anything. Chemistry is a legitimate reason to follow up after a great discussion 24-48 hours afterward in thanking someone for their time. When you don't take these for granted, the return will multiply over time.

Getting constructive direction

For coffee or an informational interview, helpful people will throw a nugget for you to follow. It could be a job lead, someone to call, an event to attend, a course to take, or someone's LinkedIn profile of someone who shares great content. Some people will say, "let me know what you think," and more often than not, the other person misses a follow-up opportunity. I call this "constructive direction." Understand the person wants to know if you'll follow up. They are interested in your success and may give you more help.

One step further in this is to ask, “Can I follow up with you and let you know what I found?” Or, “how did this interaction go?” People will be more helpful than you think, and sometimes a gentle prompt of curiosity on your part can provide more intel for your job search.

Job offers

While this response is the most critical, you still must be strategic in what you’ll say. The basic tenets of responding to a job offer are communicating the time you want to look over the offer, and think thoroughly about the compensation package. The first thing your response should include is to express gratitude for the opportunity.

Graceful in rejection

In my days as a manager, it was rare that I received thank-you letters. Once, I received a thank-you letter from a woman who said, “Whether hired or not, I thought you were thoughtful and respectful of my achievements. Our interaction was rare as most interviews are so impersonal and trite.” I hired her, and she became a rockstar team member.

When you need to provide a more precise answer

Interviews are nerve-wracking and sometimes very stressful. Not everyone is calm under pressure, nor can they offer adequate answers to questions. It’s OK to follow up with the interviewer during or after the interview to clarify an answer. If you’re writing a thank-you note or email, you can take the time to clarify a specific question if you felt your original answer was vague or unclear. You can also call the interviewer to offer a different answer if you think it would impact the outcome.

Epilogue

Every stage of the job search process requires follow-up. As you prepare for a successful job interview, you must put the same energy into the post-interview follow-up. People are busy with many priorities and people who depend on them. Go beyond discomfort and fear. Top candidates who regularly make it to the final stages of the hiring process understand more what happens outside of the interview than during the interview.

Overall, follow-up is the key to successful networking. Treat each interaction and relationship you build as if it will grow and not be final. The opportunities to give are immense compared to what you'll get in a second chance.

