Tips for Maximizing your Thank You Note

Writing a thank you note after your interview is an essential, a given, a ‘you probably wouldn’t get a job without one’ kind of thing. So after you’ve sighed in relief and driven home, writing a thank you note is your next step. To go above and beyond, you need to say more than a simple thank you. You’ll want to capitalize on whatever happened in the interview—good or bad—to impress your interviewers and secure the job offer.

As you prepare to write your thank you note, recall the interview. Was there something you forgot to say? Did you establish good rapport with your interviewer? Did you misspeak, or fail to answer a question correctly? Did you learn something about the company that really makes you a good fit?

No matter what your experience in the interview—if it is one of the scenarios below, or something else—the most important thing is to respond to what happened in the interview, while thanking your interviewers for their time and consideration.

If there was something you forgot to say:
Say it. Don’t make excuses, but say something along the lines of, “I realize I did not mention ‘X’ during my interview and wanted to take this opportunity to...” Then be sure to restate a positive connection that happened during the interview, for example a question you answered well, or a reason you’re a good culture fit.

You established good rapport, so...
Personalize your thank you note. While every note should be personalized, it is especially important when you and your interviewer really connected. Comment on something over which you and your interviewer related so they don’t forget how well you hit it off. Be sure to emphasize your fit for the role and how your skills suit the job as well.

If you erred in answering a question:
First, focus on the positive. Then clarify what you meant to say in that instance. You may want to introduce it as, “In further consideration of the question you asked me, I wanted to express...” That way, it doesn’t become something negative that you are ‘fixing’, but rather something about which you kept thinking, and have more to say.

You don’t have any concerns to address and you know you’re the perfect fit.
Help your interviewer see it too. “When you explained ‘X’ to me today, it became clear to me that I would really be able to contribute and add to the team’s success.”

As a job seeker, a good thank you note will always work in your favor, especially if you use it strategically. This is your final chance to sell yourself to your employer. It can seal the deal, or get you back in the running as long as you take the opportunity to promote yourself for the job. You need to do what you can to set yourself apart. While a handwritten note can be nice, it should always be in addition to an email, as the email can be sent the same day as the interview. Things are moving quickly in IT hiring, so it is always important to follow up right away.

Remember, you know more about the job, the company, and your interviewers than you knew before you interviewed. Use that to your advantage when writing your thank you note.