

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

Career Center Tips: **Now That the Interview is Over...**



Imagine spending months of dieting and working out for a race, pushing your body to a strong start and running past the competition on your way to a victory. After so much training and effort, you wouldn't give up and walk through the finish line, would you?

This scenario depicts how many job seekers fail in a critical part of the interview process. They begin doing everything right, like researching the company and preparing questions for the interview. They make a great first impression and dazzle hiring managers with their knowledge and ideas. But too often they fail to finish strong, because they underestimate the importance of following up after their interviews.

Potential employers will be influenced and continually impressed not only by what you did, but what you continue to do, which is why it's imperative to take action immediately after an interview is over to stay on contacts' radar screens. It's your job to sustain their enthusiasm for you over time.

Below are four post-interview steps that are vital for scoring an interview victory:

Write notes immediately after the interview. Reflect on your observations, impressions and conversations throughout the interview. Jot down any information that may be valuable for when you write a thank-you note to your interviewer, move on to the next interview round or start the job.

Key pieces of information include recent projects, professional organizations, park and recreation industry events, upcoming conferences and agency-wide meetings. You'll want to remember personal things about the interviewer, too, such as any pet peeves or hobbies s/he might have mentioned.

2. Send an e-mail to say "thank you" as soon as you can. Be professional throughout your e-mail and mention some specific points from the interview that you noted to demonstrate that you were interested and listening. Answer any questions or issues that may have been left unresolved.

3. Follow up with a handwritten thank-you note. Within 24 hours of the interview, snail-mail a personal thank-you note. This extra, personal touch is something many other job seekers are unlikely to do and gives you another opportunity to stay in the minds of interviewers through very little effort.

4. Follow up with any referrals that were given to you. During the interview, you may be encouraged to reach out to other people or organizations who the interviewer believes might interest you. If so, contact them in a timely manner to demonstrate that you are fearless, passionate and serious about moving your career forward.

This follow-up process will not only help you track your action steps, but will also efficiently and effectively develop your relationships with people who can connect you to great job opportunities.