



Chapter 6 Resource

Seeking Feedback

You interviewed with a top-notch firm. For the next few days, you replayed the interview in your mind, and each time you came to the same conclusion—you nailed it.

And then, you received the rejection letter.

Been there? Done that? I have.

What Happened?

Wouldn't it be nice if accompanying the rejection letter there was a note with a few suggestions about how to become a stronger candidate?

Discovering if there was something lacking in your interpersonal skills, academic achievement, work experience, or writing skills, for instance, that prevented you from obtaining the position can be quite helpful in improving your performance at subsequent interviews.

But, no such note was enclosed with the rejection letter. Uncovering that information is up to you.

Reach Out to the Employer

Employers have no legal obligation to explain why you weren't selected.

Additionally, interviewers are busy. Providing feedback to you takes time. And, providing you with meaningful feedback requires the interviewers to review the notes of the interview, which takes more time. Time for which there is no return on investment. Understandably, they are not eagerly awaiting for your request.

Many interviewers are simply uncomfortable giving negative feedback. So, they might say something like, "We chose another candidate who had more practical experience." That sort of feedback is of little or no value.

Make It Easy for the Employer

You might be tempted to call the interviewer. If you were lucky enough to get the person on the line, he or she would not be prepared for your questions. So, start with an e-mail. The message should be clear that you are not questioning the hiring decision, but only seeking information that would help you become a better candidate in the future.

Here's a sample request:

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for taking the time to interview me for the associate position last Tuesday.

I wonder if I may ask a favor.

While I was disappointed that I was not selected for the position, I would welcome any feedback you could give me about my academic achievement, work experience, or interview that would make me a stronger candidate in the future. Are there specific weaknesses I should work on?

I am always looking to improve and any feedback or specific advice you could provide in response to this e-mail would be very much appreciated. If you're open to a brief phone call, I'm all ears. I can be reached at (555) 123-4567.

Again, thank you for taking the time to consider me for the associate position. I would appreciate it if you would keep me in mind if a position for which you think I'd be a better fit were to become available.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

If you're lucky enough to have the interviewer respond with a phone call, listen attentively to what he has to say. Ask for elaboration and specifics on suggestions you find helpful. Your job on the call is to take in information, not debate or dispute it...even if you don't agree with it. Keep the conversation short and thank the interviewer for his time.

Whether the interviewer responds with an e-mail or a phone call, send a handwritten "thank you" note to show your appreciation.