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## How to End a Job Interview

Margaret Steen, for Yahoo! HotJobs, Monster+HotJobs

In preparing for a [job interview](#), you've probably practiced a firm (but not *too* firm) handshake, rehearsed answers to tough questions about your background, and polished up your lucky interview shoes. But many job hunters overlook a crucial part of the interview process: the very end.

(Want tips on answering the trickiest interview questions? Read [interview advice from career expert Liz Ryan](#).)

As you finish an interview, you have one last chance to sell the interviewer on your skills--and get the information you need in order to follow up. Experts offer these tips for successfully closing an interview:

**Don't leave empty-handed.** To be sure you can follow up later, don't leave the interview without getting the names, titles, and contact information of everyone you met. This includes people you may dismiss as unimportant. "You don't know who has pull," says Laura DeCarlo, president of Career Directors International, a global professional association of resume writers and career coaches.

**Know the next steps.** You should also ask what the next steps are in the process: Will the most-promising candidates be called back for another interview? Is the company about to make a hiring decision? How soon does the hiring manager expect to move to this next step?

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"It's totally appropriate for a candidate to ask this," says Peggy McKee, founder of [career-confidential.com](#).

**Lay the groundwork for a follow-up.** Once the interviewer explains how the process will unfold, DeCarlo explains, "you say, 'Thank you. Is it OK if I call you if I haven't heard from you?'" Although you don't need the interviewer's permission to follow up, having the interviewer say it's OK will likely make you less apprehensive if doing so becomes necessary.

**Close the sale.** After you thank the interviewer and briefly summarize why you think you're a good fit for the job, McKee suggests asking straight out, "Based on this interview, do you feel that I could be successful in this position? Will you move me forward in the interview process?"

A positive response doesn't mean you're guaranteed to get the job. But the interviewer will likely remember you as a stronger candidate. "When you answer yes, you cross a line mentally," McKee says.

What if the interviewer expresses reservations? "That's the big fear," McKee says. But even though it may be disappointing, it's better to know. "This is your only really strong opportunity to find out what her objections are, so you can overcome those objections."

For example, if the interviewer says you lack experience in a particular area, you may realize that didn't emphasize your relevant experience enough. You can now clarify, either on the spot or in a follow-up letter.

You may get a noncommittal answer--the interviewer may say simply that there are more candidates to interview, for example. If that happens, use this as an opportunity to ask for more information about how the hiring process will play out.

**Remember the details.** Your thank-you notes will be more effective if you can mention specifics about your interviews. The best way to do this, DeCarlo says, is to write down everything you remember--good and bad--as soon as you can after the interview.

(For tips on what to do next, Read "[After the Interview: 4 Ways to Follow Up](#).")

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