



Job Seekers: How to Close an Interview with Class

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Don't leave a job interview wondering where you stand with the hiring manager. There are techniques you can use to professionally close an interview so the hiring manager will know that you want the job, and, so you'll be able to leave knowing the next steps in the hiring process.

After I videotaped "Rebecca" (name changed) during a practice interview, we sat down and watched how she had done. When it was over, I turned to her and asked, "Did you get the job?"

Rebecca raised one eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"You thanked the hiring manager at the end of the interview, shook hands, and then left. But did you get the job?" I asked. "What I mean by that is, do you know how the hiring manager felt about your qualifications for the job?"

"Well, I think I did okay because the nonverbal communication of the hiring manager seemed good," she replied. "And, I remembered to ask three of my pre-written hiring manager questions."

"Great. But did you get the job or find out the next steps in the hiring process so you'd know what to expect when you walked out of the interview?" I asked.

Then Rebecca understood my point. "Oh, I don't know if I got the job and I have no idea about the next steps. Can I really find that out at the end of an interview?"

There always seems to be a big debate on whether or not a candidate should try to "close the sale" at the end of a job interview. My answer is "Yes" – but you need to close the interview with class.

Professionalism is of the utmost importance and my preference is to take an open, honest approach at the end of a job interview. After the hiring manager has asked if you have any questions for him or her and you've discussed those, consider asking one of the following questions:

- "Based on my background and the skills and experience we discussed, how well do I fit the profile of the candidate for which you're looking?" This question will help you find out what the hiring manager thinks of your background and whether or not they believe you're a good fit.
- "Given what we've just discussed during this interview, do you have any concerns about my fit for this position?" This is a reverse question because it tries to uncover any issues that might hold the interviewer back from hiring you and gives you the opportunity to discuss those concerns before you leave the interview.

Once you have the answer to your question, you'll be in a better position to determine your next comments. For example, if the hiring manager brought up any concerns about your fit for the position, this is a good time to discuss those.

After that, find out where the interviewer is at in the hiring process by asking:

- "What are the next steps in the hiring process?" This should help you uncover if they have more candidates to interview (and possibly, how soon he or she will be making a decision).

Finally, at the very end, reiterate your interest in the position. Here are two suggested methods:

- "Based on my research and what we've discussed, I would really like to work for you in this job, how soon until you'll be making a decision?" This closing lets the hiring manager know you believe you're a good fit and confirms that you want to work for them. It may also help you find out where they're at in the process or even uncover any additional decision-makers.





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- "This discussion has made me even more excited about this job opportunity and I would love to be the person you hire. Is there anything else you need from me before you make a decision?" This closing also demonstrates that you want to work for the hiring manager and can uncover anything else you'll need to do to move the process along, such as providing your reference list or letters of recommendation. Choose the most appropriate closing questions and comments, given your situation, and then thank the hiring manager for his or her time and ask for a business card before you leave the interview. That way you'll have their correctly spelled name, title, mailing address, telephone number, and email address to use when you write your thank you note.

After teaching Rebecca the different ways to close a job interview with class, we spent time practicing.

"Now I understand what you meant when you asked me if I'd gotten the job. And I can't believe the difference it makes," she gushed. "This way I leave the interview with a good idea of where I stand with the hiring manager and what to expect for the next steps, instead of wondering how I did."

Exactly!

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