After the Interview

A. Thank You Letters

A well written thank you letter is not a hard sell and is not meant to cover for mistakes made in the interview. It simply should serve as a reminder of your strong points while demonstrating an interest in continuing in the interview process. A thank you letter has three purposes. First, thank the employer for the interview. Let him/her know that you appreciate the time s/he spent with you and that you enjoyed meeting him/her. Second, refresh the employer's recollection of you as a candidate. Try to mention something specific about your interview, such as his/her answer to one of your questions. Third, express your continued, or increased, desire to work for the employer. A thank you letter should reaffirm your interest, but not restate your qualifications. The letter should not exceed one page.

1. OCI:

Thank you letters are not required for on-campus interviews. If, however, you choose to send one, you should mail it within 24 hours of your interview as call-back decisions are made very quickly following campus visits.

2. Call-Backs/In-Office Interviews:

Thank you letters are always appropriate after you have interviewed at an employer's office, especially if you are still interested in the position. Typically, you will meet with several attorneys during an in-office interview; you do not, however, need to write to each attorney individually. Your letter will be routed within the firm to each attorney you mention in your letter. If you are not given the names of all the individuals with whom you'll be meeting, or if the original schedule is altered and you're unable to get all names, try something to the effect of, "please thank all your colleagues who took the time to meet with me as well." You may address your letter to the attorney responsible for the call-back, the attorney hosting your office visit or the recruiting coordinator who arranged your visit. Try to mail your thank you letter no more than 48 hours after your office visit.

Finally, remember, thank you letters should:
✓ Be brief (merely a few paragraphs)
✓ Be timely
✓ Thank interviewer/recruiter for his/her time
✓ Re-emphasize specific skills/abilities
✓ Include any post-interview information which would be helpful

Following are some brief guidelines for a thank you letter:

Paragraph One: Thank You + Additional Point
Concise thank you and reminder. Mention a specific detail about your conversation.

Paragraph Two: Re-emphasize Relevant Attributes
Reiterate skills and abilities you have to offer.

*Closing Paragraph*: Reaffirm Interest; Reiterate Thanks
Reaffirm interest in position and thank you. State willingness to supply additional information.

**SAMPLE POST-INTERVIEW THANK YOU LETTERS**

**Format 1**

**CHARLES BRONSON**  
777 Seventh Street  
Los Angeles, California 90041  
(213) 424-2424

October 15, 2005

Lucille Dove, Esq.  
Small, Dove & Clark  
1212 Swallow Drive  
Bel Air, California 90046

Dear Ms. Dove:

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and many of your colleagues on Friday, October 14. The interview provided me with a good overall view of your firm and your summer associate program. I particularly enjoyed our discussion of *The New York Review* decision.

I am excited about the possibility of working for Small, Dove & Clark and look forward to hearing from you regarding a summer associate position. Should there be any additional information that I can furnish in support of my candidacy, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Charles Bronson
October 5, 2005

Carol Peters, City Attorney
Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney
212 Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Ms. Peters:

Thank you for interviewing me yesterday for the position of summer law clerk with the City Attorney’s Office. Please extend my thanks to Mr. Merrill as well.

I enjoyed meeting and talking with you, and I was especially glad to learn of the structured training program you provide for summer clerks. Everything you told me confirmed my initial impression of your office as a challenging yet supportive environment in which to work.

As requested, I have enclosed a short writing sample. Please let me know if you would like me to forward my references or transcript. Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to continuing in the interview process.

Sincerely,

June Allyson

enclosure
B. **Offers**

1. **Receiving an Offer:**

The recruitment committee's decision to hire an individual usually must be unanimous. While personality and fit are important considerations at a call-back interview, the attorneys interviewing a student during a call-back must be convinced of the student's legal ability just as the on-campus interviewer had to be.

The firm may make its offer by telephone followed by a confirming letter, or just by letter. You will generally receive an offer within two weeks of your interview. In some instances, a firm may decide to keep you "on hold" until it determines the number of candidates who have accepted their offer. Do not assume that a rejection will follow. If an offer ultimately is extended, do not reject it assuming that you may be viewed as a second-choice. Most of the attorneys with whom you will be working will not know the circumstances of your offer and will only be interested in the quality of your work.

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**SAMPLE OFFER LETTER**

**AB & C Firm**  
*515 Colorado Boulevard, Santa Monica, California 90022. 310-222-3344*

December 15, 2005

Mr. Aldo Bianci  
56 David Lane  
Los Angeles, California 90024

Dear Aldo:

We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you over the past few weeks, and are pleased to offer you an associate position with our firm.

This offer includes a beginning salary of $83,000 with a six-month review in the first year; three weeks vacation during the first year, and four weeks vacation after your first year; profit sharing, 401K, and benefit plan as outlined in attached Benefits Package.

I hope you will accept this offer. We feel our organization would greatly benefit from your experience and skills. I would like to have your decision by January 12th. If you have any questions, feel free to call me. I am looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

AB &C Firm
C. **Considerations in Selecting Legal Employment**

The following lists and questions are designed to help you identify issues you should consider before choosing a firm, corporation, government agency or public interest job.

1. **Generally, consider the following:**
   a. **Structure and Management** (size of organization, growth history, client base, form of management, your potential involvement in decision-making)
   b. **Training and Responsibility** (assignment and distribution of work, type of supervision, degree of responsibility, evaluation of feedback, expectation of performance, promotional track, billable hour requirements)
   c. **Work Atmosphere** (attorney mentor relationships, co-worker relationships, diversity of workplace, attorney attrition, lateral hiring)
   d. **Reputation in the Community** (professional reputation, community involvement, political involvement, pro bono programs)

2. **Law Firm:**
   a. **Character**
      
      (1) What is the firm's general character? Culture?
      (2) What are its specialties and major areas of practice?
      (3) What is the firm's partner to associate ratio?
      (4) Does the firm have a friendly atmosphere? Is there a sense of camaraderie and enjoyment or stiffness and formality? Do the lawyers cooperate with one another or do they compete to the detriment of the firm and its clients?
      (5) Is the firm diverse?
      (6) Would you enjoy working with the firm's lawyers? Do they have sufficiently varied backgrounds to make the office interesting?
      (7) What is the relationship between younger and older lawyers in the firm? Are the channels of communication formal or informal? What is the degree of contact and formality in the firm?
      (8) What is the firm's reputation among its peers, clients, and the general public?
      (9) What are the firm's prevailing attitudes and practices on such matters as ethics, pro bono work, community service, government service, diversity and continuing legal education?
      (10) What are the firm's billable and non-billable hour requirements?
      (11) Does the firm have other work related requirements for its lawyers?
b. Stability

(1) Is the firm financially and professionally stable?
(2) Are the firm's lawyers of a uniformly high caliber with solid and able people at all age levels and in all important legal areas?
(3) Do you have confidence and pride in the firm's lawyers, their legal ability, ethics, judgment and standards? Do you trust, respect and admire these individuals?
(4) Has the number of the firm's partners and associates grown significantly in the past 15 years?
(5) Have they suffered any major defections of partners, associates or staff?
(6) Has the firm gone through any significant split-ups or mergers in its history?
(7) Is the firm’s organization and administration systems sound and running smoothly? Are there signs of cliques or dissidence?
(8) What is the firm's future? Is it getting and keeping new people of high caliber? Has it acquired important new clients in recent years?
(9) Are the firm's clients solid, varied and of different sizes? Do the clients have important and interesting concerns?
(10) Does the firm have an active local practice with substantial clients in its metropolitan area?
(11) Does the firm have an active national practice with substantial clients and offices around the United States?
(12) Is the firm's success tied to many clients or a few? How is the firm affected by business cycles of boom and recession?

c. Professional Development

(1) What do new associates do? How does the firm determine and assign work to associates? How do these work assignments and responsibilities change over the years?
(2) How does the firm train new associates? What members of the firm are responsible for training? Does the firm have a formal training program for new associates?
(3) Must an associate become a specialist in a particular area of the law? When do associates specialize? Who decides on an associate's area of specialty? How do the firm and the associate resolve issues of specialization?
(4) What emphasis does the firm place on ability of associates to attract and retain new or existing business? Does the firm train associates in business development?
d. Evaluation

(1) How does the firm judge an associate's performance? What form of evaluation does the firm use? Who is responsible for evaluating associates?
(2) How does the firm evaluate associates?
(3) What are the firm's criteria for associate advancement?
(4) What emphasis does the firm place on associate's ability to develop new clients and business when it makes evaluation decisions?
(5) Who has access to an associate's evaluation? Is the evaluation put in the associate's permanent file? Does the associate get a written copy of the evaluation? Does the associate have an opportunity to discuss the evaluation?

e. Compensation

(1) What is the firm's policy on compensation, bonuses and raises?
(2) What fringe benefits does the firm offer to associates?
(3) Does the firm financially reward associates who generate new clients and business when it makes compensation decisions?
(4) When does an associate actually become a partner in the firm?
(5) Do business cycles significantly affect partnership opportunities in the firm? Has the firm admitted fewer associates to partnership during periods of business contraction in the local or national economy?
(6) What criteria does the firm use in deciding to admit associates to the partnership? Does the firm use a "competitive standard" that places a predetermined restriction on the number of partners to be admitted in a given field? Does the firm use a "meet the firm's standard of performance test" and admit all associates who meet it?
(7) What does partnership entail in terms of compensation, legal and financial responsibilities, monetary contribution to the firm and work load?
(8) What happens to associates who are not admitted to the partnership? Does the firm have opportunities for associates who are not admitted to the partnership? If there are no opportunities within the firm, does it help place associates in other jobs? Does the firm have many prominent and successful alumni?

f. Location

(1) Is the firm located in an area with strong and active associates, continuing legal education programs and interesting professional groups?
3. **Government Agencies:**

   a. How have the government lay-offs of the past affected this agency?
   b. How will current budgetary concerns affect the future of the agency?
   c. What kinds of budget constraints does this agency have?
   d. Has the agency been able to replace attorneys when necessary or must it work with smaller staff than is needed?
   e. What is the agency's reputation in the community?
   f. What has happened to attorneys who have left this agency? Have they moved into private practice, corporations, lobbying, the legislative branch, or other agencies?
   g. Is the agency doing work of declining significance to the current administration?
   h. Will the agency pay, or assist in paying bar fees, advanced degrees, continuing legal education?

4. **Corporations:**

   a. How many recent law school graduates work on the staff?
   b. Is the corporate counsel departmentalized or does each attorney handle any matter of concern?
   c. Is it possible for attorneys to move into management?
   d. How are attorneys viewed within the corporation?
   e. How often and for what matters does the corporation use outside counsel?

5. **Public Interest Groups:**

   a. Do the matters that this organization handles interest you?
   b. Does the organization have severe budget constraints?
   c. Is the size of the legal staff adequate to handle the matters at hand?
   d. How much staff turnover has their organization experienced?
   e. What types of positions do attorneys take after leaving this organization?
   f. Is this a legislative, advocacy, or litigation-oriented organization?
   g. Will you be working with individual clients or groups?
   h. Are the organization's staff members dedicated to the organization's goals?

D. **Responding to an Offer**

   Once the firm has made you an offer, it is important to acknowledge its receipt. Call and let the firm know of your interest and, if the offer has not included one, inquire about the firm's timetable for an answer. NALP standards for the timing of offers and decisions require that all offers be reaffirmed within 30 days or the offer may be retracted.

   All offers require a response -- whether positive or negative. Whether accepting or rejecting an offer, call the organization and speak with the individual who extended the offer. The telephone call is important even when rejecting an offer as it leaves the firm with a more positive feeling about you. It is then advisable to follow up the telephone conversation with a letter.
1. **Acceptance Letters:**

Once an offer is extended, you will want to respond in writing. An acceptance letter serves not only to verify your acceptance of a job offer, but also to clarify any details of which you may be unsure. Your acceptance letter should thank the employer for the offer and state that you are accepting it. You should also mention the material facts surrounding your employment (e.g., start and end dates, salary) to ensure that your understanding of those facts is the same as the employer's. Finally, let the employer know that you are looking forward to working with them. In your acceptance letter, you should include:

- Confirmation of the conversation in which offer was accepted
- Your understanding of the terms of employment
- Any other arrangements
- A thank you for the offer

Following are some brief guidelines for an acceptance letter:

*Paragraph One: Confirmation Acceptance*
Confirm conversation and acceptance. Express enthusiasm regarding position.

*Paragraph Two: Terms of Agreement*
Set forth terms as you understand them (i.e., salary, start date, benefits).

*Closing Paragraph: Reaffirm Interest and Reiterate Thanks*
Reaffirm interest in position and express thanks for opportunity.

2. **Decline Letters:**

When you decline an offer of employment, thank the employer for the offer and express your regret at not being able to accept. You may, if you choose, explain briefly why you are declining. If you have future interest in the employer and want to leave the door open for future possibilities, be sure to express such interest in your letter.
December 15, 2005

Carol Peters, City Attorney  
Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney  
212 Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Ms. Peters:

I am writing to accept your offer [or "to confirm my acceptance of your offer"] to work as a law clerk in your office next summer.

It is my understanding that the program runs from May 26 until August 8, and that the salary is $450.00 per week. Please let me know if any of this information is incorrect.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I am truly looking forward to working with you and to learning a great deal during the summer.

Sincerely,

June Allyson
October 15, 2005

Lucille Dove, Esq.
Small, Dove & Clark
1212 Swallow Drive
Bel Air, California 90046

Dear Ms. Dove:

I regret that I am unable to accept your offer to join Small, Dove & Clark as an associate upon graduation.

I was truly impressed by all the attorneys with whom I spoke, as well as by the caliber of work your firm does, however, I have decided to begin my career in San Diego. Should I decide to return to Los Angeles, I hope that you would be receptive to my contacting you in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

Charles Bronson