



REPLYING TO UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Responding to Unsuccessful Candidates

All unsuccessful candidates represent potential customers, future applicants, or referral sources. Communications should therefore be respectful, professional, and sincere, leaving candidates with a positive impression of your organization. Organizations that do not communicate with unsuccessful candidates' risk creating a poor reputation that may affect future applicants' from applying.

It is important to confirm acceptance before communicating with other candidates, as circumstances may change and alternative candidates may need to be considered. Once the selected candidate has formally accepted the offer of employment, notify the remaining candidates that they were not selected.

For internal candidates who were not selected, consider holding a follow-up discussion to provide guidance on skills, training, or experience that may support future opportunities. Where appropriate, involve their current manager to support development planning.

All interviewed candidates should receive follow-up communication, regardless of the hiring outcome. This reinforces your employer brand and helps maintain positive relationships with candidates who may be suitable for future roles. Candidates who were not interviewed should also be informed of the status of their application.

Declining an Unsuccessful Candidate

When informing a candidate that they were not selected, communicate that all applications were carefully reviewed against the role's requirements and that another candidate has been chosen. Thank them for their interest in the position and the organization and wish them success in their job search.

If the unsuccessful candidate(s) are already employed with your company, you may want to have a separate discussion with them to discuss what they could do to acquire additional training or experience to prepare them for similar job opportunities better should they want to reapply in the future, and where appropriate involve their current manager to gain their support.

High-Potential Candidates Not Selected

For strong candidates who were not chosen after an in-depth interview, a scripted response may not be sufficient. Be prepared to address questions about the decision in

a professional and constructive manner. Avoid discussing other candidates, and instead focus on offering balanced, actionable feedback that may help strengthen future applications. Emphasize that the decision was carefully considered and often came down to minor differences between qualified candidates.

Sample Email to Unsuccessful Candidates

Subject: Thank You for Your Application – [Job Title]

Dear [Candidate Name],

Thank you for your interest in the [job title] position and for taking the time to participate in our recruitment process.

After careful consideration, we have decided to move forward with another candidate whose experience more closely aligns with the requirements of the role at this time. This was not an easy decision, as we had the opportunity to review applications from several qualified candidates.

We appreciate your interest in [Organization Name] and encourage you to apply for future opportunities that match your skills and experience. We wish you every success in your continued job search.

Kind regards

Your Name] \ [Job Title] \ [Organization Name] \ [Contact Information]

Optional Addendum for Internal Candidates

Thank you again for your interest in this opportunity. If you would like feedback or would like to discuss development opportunities that may support future applications, please feel free to reach out or speak with your manager.

We appreciate your interest in [Organization Name] and encourage you to apply for future opportunities that match your skills and experience. We wish you every success in your continued job search.

Kind regards,\

Your Name] \ [Job Title] \ [Organization Name] \ [Contact Information]