

How to decline a job offer (with examples)

There's no denying that job hunting can be stressful. Between writing cover letters and filling out applications, there are plenty of steps involved in the process. So when an offer comes along, it's natural to get excited. However, many things can change while you're waiting to hear back from a potential employer – you may have accepted a role elsewhere or simply changed your mind.

Whatever your reasons may be, it's important you learn how to reject a job offer professionally to help build relationships, avoid burning bridges and keep things on a positive note. In this guide we outline the key points to consider before rejecting an offer, [when to decline a job offer](#) and how to say no gracefully.

Factors to consider before declining a job offer

[Deciding whether to decline a job offer](#) can be difficult. There are many things to weigh up, like how it would benefit your life now and how it may shape your future.

Considering the amount of hours you spend at work and around your colleagues, it's important that you're going to be happy in the role. Here are some important things to consider before declining a job offer.

Personal and career goals

When considering a job offer, think about what you want for your life one, three or even five years down the track. Do you see yourself in a management role in the next two years? Or perhaps you're looking to upskill. With these things in mind, consider whether the [company will nurture your growth](#) and align with your career goals.

You should also consider your personal goals, like whether you're planning on starting a family and want to work in a company that supports work-life balance. Not having that support may be a reason to decline a job offer.

Company fit

Your job should have a positive impact on your life. For this to happen, your values should align with the company's values and you should feel as if you're a good fit for their workplace culture.

Before deciding on whether or not to accept a job offer, ask about the business's mission and values, and how they support a thriving company culture. You can also check their [business profile on Seek](#) and read employee reviews to see how their people rate working for them. If you don't feel like they're a good fit for you, you might want to reconsider the role.

Salary and benefits

One of the top reasons people change jobs is to increase their pay or benefits. But it's important to weigh up the pros and cons of doing so. For example, you may be willing to take a lower salary if the benefits are worthwhile – perks like fuel cards, a gym membership or health insurance. But it's also important to be paid what you're worth. If the pay is too low and the benefits don't suit your needs, you should think twice before accepting the first offer on the table.

Location and commute

The location of the workplace – or rather the length of your commute – is a major factor in deciding whether or not the job is right for you. While you may be willing to commute for a great opportunity, how long a commute is too long? Whether you spend four or 40 hours at your workplace each week, a one-hour commute quickly adds up. When considering if a job is right for you, carefully consider the commute required and if it fits in with your life now and the future you want.

Job responsibilities and growth

Many people look for a new job because they feel too much is expected of them or that there's not enough career growth in their current workplace. While it's easy to think the grass is greener on the other side, ensure you have all the facts about your new job before taking the leap. Find out what you'll be doing day-to-day in your new role, how

your success will be tracked, as well as what growth opportunities will be available to you. If they doesn't align with your plan, it's better to decline the offer and wait for a more suitable role to come your way.

How to politely decline a job: Crafting your message

Learning how to politely decline an offer from a potential employer is important, because it helps maintain a good relationship with the business. Whatever your reason for declining the offer, you want to thank the employer for the opportunity. Even the most basic of interview processes will take at least two hours of phone and in-person interviews, so showing gratitude for their time will be appreciated.

When [letting the employer know you will not accept the offer](#), be honest and direct. While you don't need to give them the finer details of why you're not taking the role, it's polite to provide a general reason, such as the salary and benefits not being what you had hoped, the culture not being a good fit for you or the location being too far for you to commute. Depending on your reason for declining the offer, the company may start a negotiation process with a higher salary or more flexible working arrangements. Take your time to consider this. You don't need to answer on the spot.

If you decide to move forward with declining the offer, finish on a positive note. Who knows what the future holds? You might want to apply for another role with the company or you could see the employer at industry events. They may even refer you to someone in their network for a position down the track. Your network is invaluable in any industry, so always nurture the connections you make.

Choosing the right time and method to communicate the decision

While it's important to politely decline a job offer as soon as possible, so the company can continue their search for a new employee, you shouldn't make a rush decision. You need to be absolutely sure you want to decline the offer, and be in the right mindset to maintain a positive relationship with the employer.

Here are three ways to decline a job offer:

1. In person, if you were given the offer at the end of the interview
2. by email
3. over the phone.

If you are given an offer at an interview or in person, it's okay to ask for time to think about it and get back to the interviewer. Or, if you have already decided, let them know politely at the time. They may also call you just after an interview to extend an offer, and again, you can ask for time to consider the role. In this case, it would be professional to call them back to decline the job, rather than wait for them to contact you again.

If you have received the offer via email, you can [decline the offer in email](#). You may receive an offer via the company's HR department, in which case you should reply directly to the [HR representative](#), but also personally connect with the interviewer to thank them for their time. This helps you maintain the relationship and leave things on good terms.

Considering and declining a counter offer

When you decline a job offer, it's common for the company to come back with a revised offer. They may offer you a higher salary, more benefits, greater flexibility or conditions of employment more aligned with your goals. If the answer is still no, decline the offer just as politely as you did the first time.

On the other hand, you might be reconsidering the job offer role because your current employer has extended you a counter offer: more money or a promotion to stay. While a counter offer from your current employer may sound good at the time, it's worth noting that [70% of people who accept a counter offer](#) leave their company within a year.

In some situations, a counter offer may work in your favour. But it's important to consider the reasons why you were looking for a new job in the first place, like burnout or commute, neither of which are going to change with a pay rise.

Three examples of decline messages

If you've been communicating with the employer through email, you will need to craft a decline email. It's important your email is clear and concise, uses proper spelling and grammar, and has a positive tone.

These examples of how to turn down a job offer for different reasons will help you start your response. Remember to personalise the email to the job and business, as this

goes a long way in making you look professional and grateful.

1. How to turn down a job offer when the role isn't a good fit

Hi [employer name],

Thank you very much for offering me the position of [job title] at [business name]. I appreciate your time and consideration, as well as the company's interest in me for the role.

After much thought, I have decided not to accept the offer, as I don't feel the role ultimately aligns with my current professional goals.

Wish you all the best and thanks again,

[Your name]

2. How to reject a job offer because you got a better offer

Hi [employer name],

Thank you for offering me the role of [job title] at [business name]. I have enjoyed getting to know you and learning more about the business.

While I am grateful for the opportunity, I must respectfully decline as I have accepted an offer for a role that I feel more closely aligns with my career goals. Given the great reputation of [company name], I have no doubt that you will find the right fit for your team.

Thank you again and all the best,

[Your name]

3. How to say no to a job offer for personal reasons

Hello [employer name],

Thank you so much for the offer to join the team as [job title] at [business name]. It has been a pleasure learning more about the great work you do.

Unfortunately, changes to my circumstances mean I am not able to accept the offer. As much as I would love to join the team, the timing is not right for me to do so.

Thank you again for the opportunity and I hope that in the future we can reconnect.

Kind regards,

[Your name]

Tips for how to turn down a job offer in person

It's possible that an employer may offer you the job at the end of the interview. While this can be flattering, don't let it rush you into a decision. Keep in mind that you can ask for time to consider the position – alternatively, you can accept or decline the offer straight away if you've also made up your mind. Whichever way you go, turning down a job offer in person can be a little different than email, with more to consider to keep things professional and positive.

Monitor your body language

Body language is an important form of communication that can sometimes conflict with what you're saying. While your words can feel positive and happy to you, your body language can give away if you're upset or uncomfortable. When turning down a job offer in person, keep your posture straight and your arms relaxed. Crossed arms can make you appear aggressive or closed off. Stay relaxed and focus on finishing the interaction on a positive note.

Show your appreciation

It can be easy to launch straight into saying no and why the role isn't a good fit for you. Slow down and remember to say thank you for the offer and for the interviewer's time. If they have offered you the role, they see potential in you, so even if you don't feel the offer is a good fit, you should still show gratitude for the opportunity to work with the company. Be as respectful and courteous as you have been throughout the interview process.

Avoid negative comments or criticism

You don't want to burn bridges, even if you're turning down a job that doesn't align with your goals or expectations. If you do share why you're saying no to the offer, keep your response light, direct and positive. For example, if the salary was lower than you'd hoped for, you could say that while you did have higher expectations for your compensation for the role, you understand it may not be in their budget at that time.

Leave the door open for future opportunities

You never know when a great opportunity will open up at a business you previously declined an offer from. At the end of your meeting with the employer and interviewer, thank them again for their time, wish them well on their search for a new team member and let them know you're interested in future opportunities. If you feel the business is just not a good match for you personally, let them know you'd like to stay in touch and to reach out if ever they need something you could help with.

Coping with rejection and moving on

It can be hard to come to terms with [not getting a job](#), even when you were the one declining the offer. But you won't be right for every role, and every role won't be right for you. Take it as a lesson in what you are looking for and how you can improve your job search. Finding the right role and business to work for can take time. Stay positive and go into every interview with an open mind.

Knowing how to say no to a job offer professionally can help you build a strong network, no matter how uncomfortable it feels at the time. Treat the interview process, including declining an offer, like any other business interaction. Your goal should be to maintain a good relationship with the employer and encourage future communication,

especially if you feel you may like to work for the company in the future.

A job offer should tick most (if not all) of your boxes. If it doesn't, it's okay to move on. The hiring company saw great attributes and potential in you, so keep them onside by declining their job offer with dignity and grace.

FAQs

Can I decline a job offer after I've already accepted it?

Yes, you can decline a job offer after you've already accepted the position. Businesses understand things happen, and you may have received another offer or life may have changed for you in some way. If you've already signed a contract, check the fine print first to understand the implications better.

If you're actively [looking for work or a new role](#), you're probably interviewing for several roles at once. So if you receive a better offer from another business, don't feel as if you're stuck with your first choice.

How long should I wait before declining a job offer?

You should decline a job offer as soon as you are confident you do not want the position. Telling the business you won't be accepting their job offer will help them quickly reach out to the next best person for the role. This is very important for businesses hiring to fill a critical role, and will help you be seen as professional.

Should I explain why I'm declining the offer?

While it's recommended you provide at least an idea of why you're declining their job offer, there's no obligation if you don't feel comfortable doing so. However, there are benefits to giving a reason. They might try to negotiate the pay rate or benefits, for example. Your feedback might also help them hone their hiring process or improve their offers when filling future roles.

How do I decline a job offer without burning bridges?

To [decline a job offer without burning bridges](#), it's best to show gratitude for the offer, be transparent with the hiring manager about your decision and express your wishes to

stay in contact with them. You may interview with the company in the future or even end up working with them in a B2B situation, so it's always best to avoid burning bridges when declining a job offer.

What should I do if I change my mind after declining a job offer?

If you change your mind after declining a job offer, you should contact the hiring manager as soon as possible. Ideally, you should give them a call before they have time to hire anyone else – an email might be missed or not catch the hirer's attention in time. Speaking to the hiring manager over the phone will also help you explain why you've changed your mind and would now like to accept the offer. Situations can change, and they may still be happy to offer you the position, depending on the reason for declining and if they're yet to find someone to fill the role.