

7 Steps in Rejecting a Candidate Politely

[HR planning](#) is a key process in reinforcing the workforce of a company. Specifically, it's the hiring process that does so. In an HR role, assessing the competency of an applicant for a job is a challenge. The recruiter must dissect the attributes of a candidate to determine if he/she can contribute to the company. Otherwise, the recruiter should reject the candidate with professionalism.

As a recruiter in your company, no matter how many [hiring tips](#) you're familiar with, you should know that not every candidate can meet a job position's requirements checklist. That's when it's right to reject their application. However, it doesn't entirely mean that they neither have the skill nor the capability to fill the position. There are just times when candidates—even strong ones, fall short on some areas or qualifications. There are also instances when fully qualified candidates won't make it because every vacancy has already been filled. As a professional courtesy, you have to reject such candidates who didn't make the cut politely. Here are seven steps on how to do it.

Contact the Candidate as Soon as Possible

Most job candidates are unemployed and yearning to earn a living. For sure, you once knew the feeling of being out of a job and feeling depressed about not doing anything productive. So if some candidates didn't make it, inform them soon as possible through SMS, email, or phone call. In doing so, you're allowing them to reassess themselves, giving them more time to look for other job vacancies. And if possible, it would be better if you can inform them right after the [job interview](#) or screening process.

Be Honest and Specific

The Talent Trends report in LinkedIn says that 94% of job candidates are eager to hear [interview feedback](#) from employers and superiors. Once unsuccessful candidates know they didn't make it, they'll be wondering why it came to that result. As a recruiter, you should have the courtesy to tell them why their applications were rejected. It could be because their credentials and experience aren't enough, or they didn't pass the examinations and screening tests for the job vacancies. You can provide them professional criticisms. And you'll be able to help them learn about their shortcomings.

Give the Reason (If Possible)

There may be other reasons why specific job candidates failed in applying. Some of these reasons might even degrade their morale and motivation. But, of course, they will have to understand that it's nothing personal and it's all just business. So as much as you can, explain the reasons why they didn't get the job. At times, the causes of the rejection of their applications are not due to their skills and credentials. It could be due to specific reasons for the company. If such reasons aren't confidential, you can disclose them to the rejected candidates for better transparency.

Keep It Short

In the business world, brevity is one of the essential rules in communicating with one another. Interacting with job candidates is a part of that rule. So when you inform them of their rejection, keep it as concise as possible. Whether you're telling them through text message, email, or phone call, make sure to stick only to the facts of why they were unsuccessful in applying. Keeping information short is for your sake as well, so that you'll have time to do your other responsibilities as a recruiter or employer.

Personalize Your Communication

Establishing personalized communication with employees should be the practice of every company. It enhances [employee relations](#) and promotes a positive work environment. Other than that, personalized communication should also apply when interacting with rejected job candidates. Through this method of communication, they will feel that the company values the time they've invested in applying. When you inform them through email and text, courteously address them with their name and provide them specific feedback. Don't write the SMS or email as if it's an automated message. And most importantly, use a friendly and appreciative tone of voice.

Ask for Feedback

It was expressed previously that through a personalized communication method, the rejected candidates will have the impression that the company appreciates their time. The best way for that to happen is by asking them feedback regarding the hiring process of your company. In doing so, you're giving them a chance to at least contribute something to the company. Plus, their feedback could help in improving your company's employee recruitment campaigns and [selection process](#). For this matter, you can let them answer a survey questionnaire and report their honest comments at the end. It

should be more manageable if this is done in person after the screening process, or through email.

End on a Positive Note

Informing a job candidate that he/she failed to earn the position is certainly not good news on his/her side. For that reason, you should express some sympathy when informing candidates that they didn't make it. We've all been in that situation of being rejected. But most importantly, end your conversation with them on a positive note. You can express your gratitude for their time, tell them that there are other opportunities, and reassure them that they have potential. And if it's within your company recruitment guidelines, make sure to invite a candidate to retry applying after three months or so. For prospective candidates who didn't make the cut simply because there are no more vacancies, inform them that their profiles are now part of the company's [candidate database](#), which will be used as a talent pool for future recruitments. It's one way of making your company's hiring process faster and convenient for the long term.

Giving or sending interview feedback to job candidates is never easy to do, but they're necessary for the employee selection process. How your company rejects job candidates may affect its reputation and degrade its employer branding. And if that happens, your company might struggle to recruit employees in the long run. But that won't be the case if the proper steps in rejecting candidates politely and professionally are followed.