

Thanks but no thanks

How do you politely decline a job offer?



In today's competitive job climate, it seems preposterous to say no when a job has been offered to you. It's likely that you've sent out several resumes, attended countless interviews to increase your chance of employability but when more than one offer rolls in, you find yourself picking the job which suits you most. Sometimes when a job is unsuitable, you just have to say, "Thanks but no thanks". The trick is to do so without burning bridges? Here are some tips:

A) Be truthful

Never lie to the company as the truth will always surface in due time. You might be blacklisted by the company or job agency if they found out. When that happens, you end up narrowing your opportunities in the near future.

B) Be firm

Never give an impression to the prospective company that you are holding up for a better offer or give them false hope that you might join them at a later date. No company likes to be fooled and played around with. If you are not interested, take a stand and be firm with your final decision.

C) Be graceful and grateful

Always be graceful and grateful that the company chose to offer you a job

out of a multitude of candidates. Thank them and be apologetic for not accepting the offer. A common mistake people make is to be conveniently absent on the first day of work or avoid calls from the prospective employer.

D) Be tactful

Always be tactful to the company when you turn down or refuse a job offer. Some companies may not take it too well when a candidate backs out. You should maintain your cool at all times and offer them a valid reason for rejecting the offer.

Here are some possible reasons:

1. The big picture

Although the job offer is attractive, the job doesn't really suit your long term plans and goals. You may reason with them by saying that you don't want to be in a situation where you quit the job after few months of work to search for another that's more aligned to your long term plans. You want to be fair to them and not treat the job as a temporary stop-gap solution. Most employers will better understand your situation and perhaps even wish you well in your future pursuits.

2. The family card

After much discussion with your family members, you may find that it is not an appropriate time for you to make a job switch at this juncture.

3. Counter offer from current company

Your current company got wind of your intention to leave your job and they have lured you back into the company with a more attractive package and greater responsibilities. Be careful not to focus too much on the financial lure because that could make you appear shortsighted.

4. Accepted another job

You simply found your desired job which is a better fit with your skills, knowledge and personality.

5. Location concerns

After much consideration, you feel that the location is too inconvenient for you. You may also state your preference of location.

6. Referrals

You may have some friends who are also looking for jobs and that their skills, knowledge and personality appear to be far more suitable for the role. You might want to refer them to the company so that it proves that you are sincere in helping them find a replacement.

No one likes confronting unpleasant situations and it does take courage and maturity to reject a job offer. It pays to prepare beforehand to assist with the discomfort of declining a job offer and the best way to do it is to weigh the consequences, decide what you want and handle it as professionally as you can.

How do you choose the best offer? Consider these factors:

1. Job content
2. Salary
3. Benefits
4. Schedule/ hours
5. Location
6. Working environment/ corporate culture
7. Advancement opportunities

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Dave Wong, *trainerpreneur*
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