

## HOW TO TURN DOWN A JOB OFFER

By John M. O'Connor, BA, MFA, CRW, CPRW, CCM, CECC  
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Only the use of proper job search etiquette must be emphasized to those who are fortunate enough to turn down a job offer. It remains the classy way to respond to a potential employer. Do most people do this when they receive and want to turn down an offer? They do not. Some of the reasons why jobseekers don't respond or respond with silence to an offer is that they simply don't know what to do.

Even if you feel a job offer is beneath you or somewhat of an insult you must take the high road and respond properly and positively. How you say no does matter in job search. You should never be in too much of a hurry to act in a classy, unique way. In any organization or company one of the most expensive costs are the costs associated with labor. Hiring decision-makers who extend a hand of an offer, whether in writing or over the phone, need to know quickly that you will or will not take the job. By saying no quickly they can move on to another candidate. Remember, someone else may be waiting for an offer that impacts their family and livelihood. Don't let either the employer or the potential candidate hang, wait and wonder. Use the Golden Rule always.

E-mail or faxing your letter to the potential employer works. Sending your letter via regular mail works. The sooner you send the documents and your letter the better. Remember also that your letter should have a very thankful tone. Tell the company how honored you feel. This theme of thankfulness will keep your bridges built to the people associated with the company and/or organization.

You do not have to let the offering company or organization know about any other offer you are considering. Briefly mention why you feel you need to continue to look for a match that suits your career objectives.

James Madison  
Regional Operations Supervisor  
Company  
86 Company Road  
Raleigh, NC 27617

Dear Mr. Madison:

Your organization, its people and the effort you put in to educate me on your goals impresses me. Thank you for extending the offer for the Operations Assistant opportunity. As I deliberate on my career objectives at this time, I must decline your offer so that you can identify another qualified candidate to help your reach your goals.

I will continue to interview and consider other offers that will exactly match my career goals. Your team, focus and positive market outlook impressed me. I hope we continue to network together. I am thankful for your thoughtful comments about me, my career and sensitivity to my entire family's needs in this process.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John M. Smith

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*In 2004, Mr. O'Connor became the first private practice Certified Federal Job Search Trainer (CFJST) in North Carolina. He is also a Certified Electronic Career Coach (CECC). With a unique fiction writing pedigree with fiction publications as well, he obtained a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Bowling Green State University. With over 14 years experience in professional career transition, resume writing and career coaching, O'Connor applies his considerable job market expertise to career transitioners nationally.*

*He has been featured recently (May 2003 and May 2004 feature) in the Raleigh News & Observer, Resume Writers Digest, The Gladiator, Execunet, Career Masters Institute Monthly Newsletter, Monster Career News and other national publications such as JIST. Additionally his diversified experience includes serving as a college professor.*