

FLASHPOINT CHICAGO

A CAMPUS OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE HOLLYWOOD

How to Gracefully Turn Down a Job Offer

So, you're looking for a new job, you apply for who-knows-how-many positions, and you interview at a few different places and you find yourself in the fortunate position of having more than one job offer on the table. Awesome, right? Well, except for the fact that you have to turn at least one of them down, and that's not always easy.

Whether you're faced with an offer that you'd never accept in a million years or one that you'd consider, here's how to craft a gracious "thanks but no thanks."

Step 1: Be Prompt & Show Your Appreciation

First and foremost, it's important to thank the hiring manager for the offer and for his or her time as soon as possible. Yes, interviewing potential candidates is part of the job, but this person likely spent several hours reading your résumé, checking out your social media profiles, and sitting down with you for interviews. He or she also may have gone out on a limb to talk you up to other members of the team. So, a heartfelt, and specific, thank-you for that time and effort will go a long way.

For example:

Thank you so much for the offer for the Sound Designer position. I so appreciate you taking the time to consider me and for answering so many of my questions about the company and role.

Thank you again for the interview last week—it was great to meet the team and see the offices. I enjoyed learning about the Assistant Editor position, and I appreciate this generous offer.

Step 2: Give a Good, Brief Reason

Especially if you've spent a lot of time interviewing, it's the right, professional and respectful thing to do. Don't leave a hiring manager in the dark about why you're declining the position. That said, there's also no need to go into detail about the "red flags" you saw in your would-be-job or the amazing perks at the job you did or will accept.

The best approach is to be brief but honest about your specific reason for not accepting the position, saying something like:

- After careful consideration, I've decided to accept another opportunity.
- After much thought, I've decided that now is not the best time to leave my current position.
- While this position seems like a great opportunity, I have decided to pursue another role that will offer me more opportunities to pursue my interests in digital marketing.

You can elaborate to the extent that it makes sense. If the position seems terrible and the only real reason you have is that you'd rather remain unemployed than accept it, a simple, "It's not quite the right fit for my career goals at this time" will suffice.

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Step 3: Stay in Touch

The job search world (especially in certain industries) is very small. So offering small pleasantries before you sign off is always a good idea. Proper etiquette is never a bad idea. If you can reference something you discussed, like an event or conference you're both attending, do so. Otherwise, you can make a simple mention that you wish this person all the best in the future, such as:

- I hope to see you next month at the conference we're both attending.
- It's been a pleasure getting to know you, and I hope that we cross paths in the future.
- Again, thank you for your time and support, and I wish you all the best.

Turning down a job offer or a potential opportunity (no matter how sure you are that you don't want it) never feels great, but remember, it's an inevitable part of the job search and landing the job you really want.