Just Say No Thanks: Five Things to Know About Declining a Job Offer

After considering a job offer (the job, salary, benefits, etc.) and weighing the pros and cons, you make a decision: You don’t want the job.

The reality is, not every job is right for every person. Remember the purpose of the interview: It gives the company representatives an opportunity to decide if you’re a good candidate for the job and lets you evaluate if the position and company are the right fit for you.

If you choose to reject the company’s offer, here are five things to know:

1. **It’s okay to say no, thank you.** You aren’t the first person to reject a job offer. In addition, the position is going to be filled by another candidate.
2. **A rejected employer may appreciate your answer.** If you know the job or company is not a good fit for you, declining the job offer is the right thing to do. Hiring an employee is expensive. Accepting a job offer you are unsure of—and then resigning a few months later—costs time and money for both you and the organization.
3. **Say thank you.** There must have been something that kept both you and the employer interested through at least two rounds of interviews. Be sure to thank the person offering the job for their interest in hiring you. (Note: Leave a good impression. You may want to work for that company in the future!)
4. **Be professional when you tell other people.** Don’t bad-mouth a company or specific person within an organization. Note: If you believe any interviewers acted inappropriately (asked illegal or uncomfortable questions), speak to someone in your campus career center. While it’s not appropriate for you to speak ill of someone in your rejection letter, you also need not let improper recruiting conduct go unaddressed.
5. **Give them your decision in writing.** It is imperative that you send an e-mail or letter to the person making the offer letting him or her know of your decision. In large organizations, a formal job offer letter may come from a human resources representative. In this case, send a letter to the hiring manager and forward a copy of the letter to the HR representative. As with thank-you letters, rejection letters are professional and concise.

Sample rejection letter
Mr. Connor Orr  
Senior Account Manager  
PPR Public Relations  
224 Smith Street  
Boston, MA 55555

Dear Mr. Orr,

Thank you very much for offering me the public relations assistant position with PPR Public Relations. I enjoyed meeting with you and your staff.

After much deliberation, I regret to inform you that I will be unable to accept your offer. Please know that my decision was a difficult one, as I was impressed with the opportunity presented.

I wish you the best in your recruiting efforts for the position. Perhaps our paths will cross in the future.

Sincerely,
John Stafford

cc: Patti Landish, HR Representative PPR Public Relations

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.