Candidate rejection email

Send it as soon as the decision is final: within a week of applying for screened-out applicants, and within two to five business days after an interview. Never leave a candidate waiting until the role is filled if you already know the answer.

STANDARD

Subject: Your application for [Job Title] at [Company]

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for your interest in the [Job Title] role at [Company] and for the time you spent on your application.

We've decided not to move forward with your application for this position. We had a strong group of candidates and the decision wasn't easy.

We'd be glad to see you apply again for future openings that match your experience. You can find them at [Careers Page Link].

Wishing you the best with your search,

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

AFTER AN INTERVIEW

Subject: Update on the [Job Title] position

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for meeting with [Interviewer Names] about the [Job Title] role. We appreciated the time you put into the process.

After careful consideration, we've decided to offer the position to another candidate whose experience more closely matches what the team needs right now.

[Optional, only if true: The team especially valued your [specific strength, e.g. clear approach to the scheduling scenario].]

If you'd like brief feedback, reply to this email and I'll set up a short call. Thanks again, and best of luck.

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

STRONG RUNNER-UP

Subject: [First Name], about the [Job Title] role

Hi [First Name],

I wanted to let you know personally that we've offered the [Job Title] role to another candidate. It was a close decision, and I don't say that lightly.

You impressed the team, especially [specific strength]. We expect to open [similar role / another position on this team] in [Timeframe], and with your permission I'd like to reach out to you first when it does.

Is it OK if I keep in touch? Either way, thank you for the time and thought you put into this.

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]
[Phone Number]

HIGH-VOLUME

Subject: Update on your application to [Company]

Hi [First Name],

Thanks for applying to be a [Job Title] at [Company] [Location].

We're not able to offer you a position for this hiring class. You're welcome to apply again after [Reapply Date] for future classes. New openings are posted at [Careers Page Link].

Thanks for your interest in working with us.

[Company] Recruiting Team

SUBJECT LINE IDEAS

- Your application for [Job Title] at [Company]
- Update on the [Job Title] position
- Your [Company] application status
- Thank you for interviewing with [Company]
- [First Name], about the [Job Title] role
- Decision on your [Job Title] application
- Following up on your interview for [Job Title]

SMS / WHATSAPP VERSION

Hi [First Name], this is [Company] Recruiting. Thank you for applying for [Job Title]. We won't be moving forward with your application this time, but you're welcome to apply again after [Reapply Date]: [Careers Page Link]. Reply STOP to opt out.

Placeholders to replace: [First Name], [Job Title], [Company], [Location], [Interviewer Names], [Careers Page Link], [Reapply Date], [Timeframe], [Your Name], [Title], [Phone Number]