Internal candidate rejection email

Tell the employee in person or on a video call first, before the new hire or promotion is announced. Send the email the same day or the next morning as a written summary of that conversation.

FOLLOW-UP AFTER A CONVERSATION

Subject: Following up on our conversation about [Job Title]

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for meeting with me today, and again for putting yourself forward for the [Job Title] role.

As we discussed, we've selected another candidate for the position. The decision came down to [specific, job-related reason, e.g. direct experience managing a team of 15 or more].

The panel saw real strengths in your application, particularly [strength 1] and [strength 2]. To build toward a role like this, we agreed on these next steps:
- [Development action, e.g. lead the Q3 scheduling project]
- [Development action, e.g. shadow [Manager Name] on weekly forecasting reviews]
- [Check-in, e.g. review progress with me and [Manager Name] on [Date]]

The announcement about the new [Job Title] will go out on [Announcement Date]. If you have any questions before then, or later, my door is open.

[Your Name]
[Title]

EARLY-STAGE INTERNAL APPLICANT

Subject: Your application for [Job Title]

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for applying for the [Job Title] opening on the [Team Name] team. It's good to see people looking to grow here.

After reviewing internal and external applications, we've decided not to move your application to interviews this time. The main gap was [requirement, e.g. the advanced Excel modeling the role uses daily].

I'd be glad to talk through what would make you a stronger candidate next time. [Recruiter or HRBP Name] can set up 20 minutes with you, or you can reach out directly at [Email].

Thanks again for your interest.

[Your Name]
[Title]

PROMOTION NOT AWARDED

Subject: Next steps after the [Job Title] promotion process

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for the conversation earlier. I know this isn't the outcome you were hoping for, and I appreciate how you handled it.

To confirm in writing: the [Job Title] promotion has been offered to another team member. Your current role, pay and reporting line are not affected.

We talked about where you're strong ([strength]) and where the gap was ([gap]). I'd like us to set a development plan with a check-in in [Number] months, so that when the next opportunity opens, you're ready for it. I'll send a calendar invite for [Date].

Thank you for wanting to take on more.

[Your Name]
[Title]

SUBJECT LINE IDEAS

- Following up on our conversation about [Job Title]
- Your application for [Job Title]
- Next steps after the [Job Title] process
- Your development plan after the [Job Title] interviews
- Summary of our conversation today
- Thanks for applying for the [Team Name] opening

SMS / WHATSAPP VERSION

Hi [First Name], it's [Your Name]. Thanks for applying for [Job Title]. I'd like to talk with you about the outcome before anything is announced. Are you free for 20 minutes today or tomorrow? Let me know a time that works.

Placeholders to replace: [First Name], [Job Title], [Team Name], [Manager Name], [Recruiter or HRBP Name], [Date], [Announcement Date], [Number], [Email], [Your Name], [Title]