Rejection email after final interview

Call or email within two business days of the hiring decision, and only after your chosen candidate has accepted the offer. If a final-round candidate waits more than a week with no news, send a holding update first.

STANDARD

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

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for coming in for the final interview for the [Job Title] role and for the time you gave us across [Number] conversations. I know that's a real commitment.

I'm sorry to tell you that we've offered the position to another candidate, and they have accepted.

The team enjoyed meeting you. [One specific positive, e.g. Your walkthrough of how you rebuilt the onboarding schedule at your last site stood out.] The final choice came down to [brief honest reason, e.g. more direct experience running multi-site payroll].

If you'd like a few minutes of feedback, reply to this email and I'll set up a short call.

Thank you again, and I wish you the best with your search.

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

CLOSE RUNNER-UP (KEEP WARM)

Subject: [Job Title]: our decision, and a request

Hi [First Name],

I wanted to let you know personally that we've made an offer for the [Job Title] role to another finalist, and they've accepted. This was a close decision, and I don't say that to every candidate.

[Hiring Manager Name] and the panel were impressed by [specific strength]. The deciding factor was [honest reason], which matters a lot for this particular team right now.

We expect to open [similar role / roles on the same team] in [timeframe]. With your permission, I'd like to keep you on our shortlist and reach out to you first when that happens. Just reply "yes" and I'll make a note.

I'm also happy to share more detailed feedback by phone if that's useful.

Thank you for the energy you brought to every round.

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

AFTER A PHONE CALL

Subject: Following up on our call today

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for taking my call today. As I mentioned, we've filled the [Job Title] position with another candidate.

To recap the feedback we discussed:
- [Strength 1]
- [Strength 2]
- [Area where the selected candidate was stronger]

I meant what I said about staying in touch. I'll reach out if a role comes up that fits your background, and you're welcome to contact me directly at [Email] in the meantime.

All the best,

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

HIGH-VOLUME FINAL ROUND

Subject: Update on your [Job Title] application

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for completing the final interview for [Job Title] at our [Location] site on [Interview Date].

We filled this hiring class with candidates whose [availability / experience] was a closer match for the schedule, so we aren't able to offer you a position this time.

We hire for this role [frequency, e.g. every month], and your interview results stay on file for [Number] months. If you'd like to be considered for the next class starting [Next Class Date], reply "next class" and we'll contact you before scheduling opens.

Thank you for your interest in [Company].

[Recruiting Team Name]
[Company]

SUBJECT LINE IDEAS

- Your application for [Job Title] at [Company]
- An update on the [Job Title] role
- [Job Title]: our decision
- Thank you for interviewing with us, [First Name]
- Following up on your final interview
- Our hiring decision for [Job Title]
- Staying in touch after your [Company] interview

SMS / WHATSAPP VERSION

Hi [First Name], it's [Your Name] from [Company]. Thank you for the final interview for [Job Title]. We've offered the role to another candidate, and it was a close call. I've sent details and feedback by email, and I'd like to keep you in mind for future openings.

Placeholders to replace: [First Name], [Job Title], [Company], [Number], [Hiring Manager Name], [Interview Date], [Location], [Next Class Date], [Email], [Your Name], [Title], [Recruiting Team Name]