**Application Rejection Letter Guide**

**Overview**

Every applicant that goes through your application and interview process deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Never forget that every communication you make on behalf of your organization sends a message defining your organization in the public’s perspective. Make sure the message you send is consistent with your organization’s mission and values. In crafting the letter, it’s generally best to give a neutral and non-specific reason for the rejection. No employment law requires you to tell employees the reason why they were not hired, and you do not want to get pulled into a debate over your specific reasons.

**Discussion:**

Rejection letters are intended to tell the applicant that he or she was not selected for the position. The rejection letter should be personalized with the applicant’s name, the position and possibly a remark about the interview date. You do not want your applicant to feel as if he or she received a form rejection letter. Make your applicant rejection letter business-like, but gracious, and draft it with respect and consideration.

If you believe that the applicant would qualify for other roles in your company and that he or she appeared to fit your culture and mission, you can encourage the person to apply again in the future. However, never say anything in the applicant rejection letter that you do not mean. For example, do not suggest that the applicant apply for openings in the future if you know the applicant will not fit successfully in your organization.

Remember, the applicant rejection letter is your last opportunity to build a relationship with the applicant that will cause him or her to think favorably or neutrally of your company. It is entirely possible that your reputation as an employer may be negatively affected by this applicant. Think about social media issues and quotes from your letter.

 Always end your applicant rejection letters on a positive note and wish the person success. Make sure you thank your applicant for the time invested in the application and interview process.

**Conclusion**

Following are some tips to assist you in drafting an applicant rejection letter.

* Be candid but gentle. Remember, this is a rejection — be respectful of applicants’ feelings.
* State the reason why they did not get the position. Generally, the reason given is that the position was filled by an applicant whose credentials were better suited to the position.
* Keep the letter brief. This helps avoid creating any legal issues.
* Always thank the applicant for their time, effort, and interest.
* You can send the applicant rejection letter via e-mail or regular mail.
* Personalize the letter with the applicant’s name, position, and your signature.
* While this is a rejection letter, if appropriate and warranted, you can give the rejected applicant a compliment, such as “although your background and qualifications are impressive, we have chosen someone else for this position.”
* Do not say who was hired for the position in question.
* Respond to applicants in a reasonable amount of time.
* Wish the applicant well in their future job search.
* Consider whether a phone call or personal meeting is the best way to tell the candidate, perhaps followed by a letter, especially where the candidate has been formally interviewed.

Written by a Catapult Advisor.