

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR OFFER IS RESCINDED

You applied and made it through all those rounds of interviews! You were excited when you got a job offer from the company, so of course you accepted. Then, the employer changed their mind. How did this happen? And is there anything you can do to fix the situation?

When an organization rescinds a job offer, it is typically because there are no realistic alternatives for the organization. This is more common when the economy is weak, as companies struggle to predict their needed workforce or when the company's financial situation changes drastically, and suddenly the role is no longer available.

Here are a few steps that you can take if you find yourself without a job you expected.

First, take a breath

As the job candidate, this loss is personal. You have lost time and opportunity for earnings. You must restart your job search, often after having declined other job offers. You might feel overwhelmed by a whirlwind of emotions, and you will likely be angry. The temptation to tell the employer off in person, over email or through social media is huge. However, all these scenarios will hurt you far more than the company that rejected you.

How to Follow up on a Rescinded Offer, the Mature Way

It might sound counter-intuitive but consider sending a "thank-you" note to the person who offered you the position. In the note, thank the recruiter for spending time with you and introducing you to his/her organization. You can also mention that while you're disappointed that the offer was rescinded, you understand the difficult position the organization was in. Even though you're probably angry the job offer was rescinded, don't use the letter to vent your frustration. The goal is to keep your options open. You never know when you'll run into that same person again, and your thank-you note might impress him/her enough to keep you in mind for future job opportunities. Be cordial, businesslike and brief.

Present alternative options

First of all, it's important to be aware that from a legal perspective you don't have many rights. That's because most states are employment at will, which means that the company doesn't have to have a reason to terminate your employment. The same logic holds true for prospective employees.

However, you may be able to negotiate other options with the company. You may be able to start part-time, work in a different area, or start later. It can't hurt to see what options might be available. The more flexible you are, the better your chances.

When all else fails, get back out there and interview for more roles

If the organization truly isn't able to offer you a position, then it's time to start your search for an alternative option. Sure, you're probably feeling a bit down. And after doing all that work to get a job offer, you're now back to square one. But, that's just part of the job-hunting life and you can use the experience to become a better interviewee.

Step 1: Start by letting your contacts know that you are once again on the market

If you were interviewing at other companies and dropped out because of your offer, reach back out to their recruiters and let them know that you won't be moving forward with the other offer. You don't need to be explicit. In the ideal world, the doors to past companies — ones whose offers you turned down— have remained open because you graciously declined.

1. *When you reach out to people you haven't contacted in a while, just say "Hello". You can mention that you saw the company in the news or in an ad, and you thought of them. But do not yet ask about hiring opportunities in that first communication because you don't want your first contact to be asking for a favor!*
2. *Research about the new vacancies that are present in the company*
3. *Connect with alumni who are already working in the company: Studies find that you're 10 times more likely to land a job when your application is accompanied by an employee referral. However, you can't get those coveted references without networking. Make it your mission to become an active networker.*

Step 2: Expand your search

Identify a new pool of organizations who are hiring. While some might find it challenging to consider working for employers who weren't on their dream list, it's a starting point on the board game of life. First jobs are great for learning valuable skills — you learn and take those experiences with you on the road to your dream career. Think of your first job as an extension of college, where professors taught you the skills and techniques necessary to enter your desired field. First jobs teach you how to apply those techniques in the "real world."

Utilize job boards such as Handshake @ Illinois and the Gies Career Services Newsletter to find current job openings. LinkedIn also has job postings (see the "jobs" link below the search bar at the top of every page). Once you'd identified new opportunities, do your company research, update your resume, and start connecting.

Step 3: Get Comfortable Networking Online

Events will be cancelled for a while, so you'll need to find a new networking strategy. Plan to attend all upcoming Virtual Career Fairs and virtual company hosted events. Look for professional groups to join on Facebook and LinkedIn. Both platforms offer a wide range of options with groups for every profession. For instance, if you're looking for a job in marketing, you could join LinkedIn's Global Marketing and Communications Professionals group. Join in the conversation, post and comment, and make yourself visible. Once you've mastered the technology, invite your new professional contacts to meet for a virtual coffee.