



# When to Decline a Job Offer

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Sometimes you don't want to accept a job offer. When you are being interviewed and assessed by a company, that company is most likely also wanting to impress you. They want to show themselves in a good light, especially if you have a great CV, and skills and experience that are in demand. So sometimes they don't represent themselves truthfully. Before you jump to accept an offer, an offer you may come to regret after the first week on the job, you need to think about the following.

- Are the current employees happy or unhappy? Whenever there is a job vacancy there is a reason for it. It may be that it is a newly created job in a company that is growing. It may be the previous incumbent was promoted. Or it may be that there is a revolving door as far as that position is concerned. Something about the role may be unpleasant and new hires plan to exit as fast as they join. Before you accept a job offer check out the general morale in the company. Are most people happy or unhappy? You could ask to speak to some people you will work with before you sign on the dotted line. You could ask all your connections if they know people who work at that company and how they find it. Another sign that there is a problem with a position, is when the role is excessively advertised. Check out if employees are asked to perform unethical, immoral, or illegal activities. At the same time, see what the company culture and values truly are.
- Another red flag is a vague job description. Unless you like working in chaos and not knowing exactly what is expected of you, you want a job description that is clear and lays out your role and responsibilities. Ideally you also want a performance contract that is clear about what you are expected to deliver.
- Reflect on the behaviour of the staff and management you have met at the company as well as the hiring process. How respectful were the people? How professional was the hiring process? If you are treated with disrespect before you are hired, it probably is only going to get worse once you are in the employment of the company.
- When you are talking to some people who work in the company, or people who have recently left, find out if there are resources to do the job. Some companies require their staff to perform miracles with inadequate IT facilities, cramped spaces, too few support staff, and a lack of key tools.
- If the salary is not right, you may want to rethink acceptance of an offer. A too low salary relative to the market is often a sign the company is not doing well. Find out, too, what salary increases and bonuses have been like in the past few years. No increases and no bonuses also

are red flags. Do some research in the media to understand how well the company is performing and scan their annual results. You do not want to join a company that is going out of business. You could find yourself in the next few months having to find another job again.

- Go back to the job description and ensure your skills are a match for the job. We hope that during the recruitment process the hiring managers have done that, but sometimes they don't. Some people are not very skilled at hiring the right people for a job. Also check that your goals match, or at least, are in alignment with those of the company.
- And then evaluate the leadership. Usually, this information is on the internet. It is likely to be on the company website, and you can go as far as googling names to see what other information is available on the leadership team. It is not only company results that are defined by leadership. The culture and values are too. Do your homework and make sure the leadership is one you want to work under.

I get that in this economy jobs are hard to come by. Rejection is frequent when you are job hunting, and it is not very nice. Getting a job offer is so satisfying and rewarding. However, you do want to think about the job you move into, as you don't want to be job hunting within a few months again. Some organisations are not going to suit you. Some jobs are truly horrible. You do want to check out the company, the leadership, the culture, and the role you are being given an offer for.