

## From “No” to Next: How to Deal with Job Rejection



An old Japanese proverb tells us “Fall seven times, stand up eight.” Job hunting can sometimes feel like this. Job rejection can hit hard - especially when you're highly qualified and thought the role was a perfect fit. For professionals in finance and other competitive fields, it's easy to fall into the trap of self-doubt or second-guessing yourself.

After taking time to prepare for an interview, not getting an offer can be devastating. Rejection happens and it's an opportunity to regroup and position yourself for future interviews. There are many reasons why you didn't get the job - some which may have been out of your control. No job or company is perfect, so learn from the experience and move forward.

*Here's the truth:* rejection isn't the end of your journey - it's part of it. With the right mindset and strategy, you can bounce back stronger, smarter and more focused than ever.

## ***Here are 7 ways to recover from job rejection:***

### **Realize You're Not Alone**

Recognize that even top-tier professionals face rejection. It's not a reflection of your personal worth. Actors face this dilemma all the time. They may be qualified for a particular role, but just might not be a fit for the specific role the director had in mind. In finance, roles are competitive and timing is also a factor. Hiring might be paused or cancelled as companies figure out their short and long term strategies.

Rejection is a part of the job search and doesn't define your individual worth or abilities.

### **Deal with the Emotions**

Acknowledge disappointment but avoid spiraling into self-doubt. It's OK to feel disappointed, frustrated or sad following a rejection. Give yourself time to process these emotions. Acknowledge your feelings and take a break if needed. Give yourself 24 - 48 hours to feel it, then shift gears. Take a walk, unplug from job boards, or do something restorative before revisiting your job search with fresh eyes.

Consider using journaling or talking with a mentor to process emotions constructively. Focus on what's important to you and take a step back to reflect.

### **Ask for Feedback**

Not every employer will provide feedback, but it's worth asking the question. You might gain insight into what was missing (Was it experience or cultural alignment?) Use wording like, "If possible, I'd appreciate any feedback to help improve future applications." Keep it brief and gracious.

Even if you don't agree with the feedback, think of the 2% rule. What if even 2% of the feedback was true? Use feedback as fuel to supercharge your interviews moving on.

### **Reframe the Narrative**

Don't let a rejection feed a story of inadequacy. Instead, view it as a type of marketing data. It might indicate a mismatch in values, expectations, or timing - not your capability. Resilient professionals know how to extract lessons rather than take rejection personally.

What could have been handled differently and how would this have possibly affected the outcome? Rewrite your story to reflect a happy ending and take the sting out of the rejection.

## **Develop Resilience**

One rejection (or even a few) doesn't predict your future. In finance, the hiring landscape can shift quickly. Roles open up due to new mandates, market changes, or restructuring. Stay ready and stay visible.

The more you're rejected, the more resilient you'll become as you learn to recover from the disappointment. Keep a simple job search tracker to monitor applications, follow-ups and areas where you're gaining traction. Patterns can offer clues to refine your approach.

## **Keep Building Skills**

Job rejections can highlight areas for growth. Use the downtime to build high-value skills - especially ones in demand like Excel, financial modeling, ESG reporting, or even soft skills like public speaking or leadership.

Look into courses through LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, or CPA Canada's professional development program. Micro-credentials can boost your confidence as well as your resume. Refine your LinkedIn profile, as well as resume and cover letters to be sure they're up to date.

## **Stay Active in Your Network**

Job rejections can feel isolating - but the finance world is surprisingly small and interconnected. This is the moment to tap into your network. Share your goals, ask for advice or simply reconnect. Many roles aren't posted publicly, and your next opportunity might come from a conversation, not a job board.

Reconnect with different people every week including former colleagues, classmates or managers. Ask for a quick virtual coffee or chat. To be seen, it's essential to stay in the game.

Job rejection doesn't mean you're not good enough - it just means there's something out there better aligned with your skills, values or timing. Whether you're a finance leader or just starting out in the workforce, resilience in the face of rejection is a skill that pays dividends. Remember that each "no" is another step closer to the right "yes."

So reflect, recalibrate and keep moving. Your next opportunity might just be closer than you think!