

Handling rejection

Learning from failure

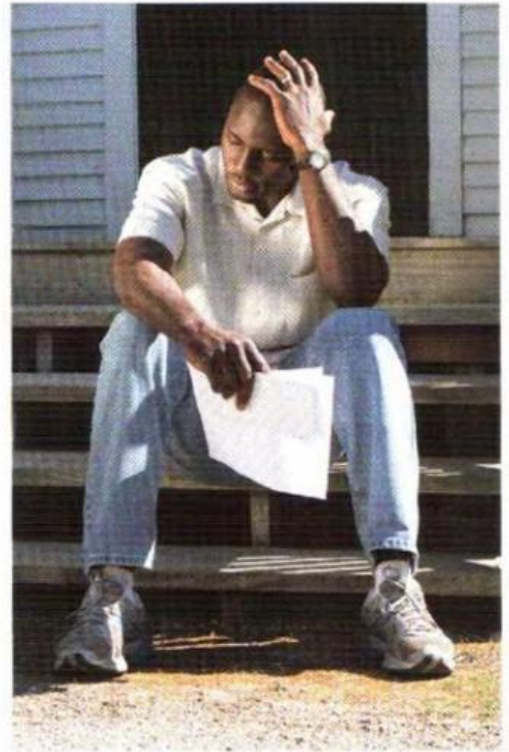
Almost nobody has succeeded in getting every job they have ever applied for. There will almost certainly be times when, despite your best efforts, you don't get the job.

- 2 a ▶ 6.3 Job seeker Paul has just received a rejection letter from a bank he was hoping to work for. Listen to Paul talking to his friend Carmen and mark the following statements True (T) or False (F).

- 1 Paul was rejected because he didn't really want the job.
F
- 2 Carmen thinks Paul was rejected because he wasn't a strong candidate. ____
- 3 Carmen thinks interviewers sometimes already know who is likely to get a job before the interview happens. ____
- 4 Carmen thinks a candidate who already knows the interviewers has a good chance of getting the job. ____
- 5 Carmen thinks that most interviews are open and fair. ____
- 6 Paul has written to request feedback. ____
- 7 Carmen thinks Paul still has a chance of working for the bank. ____

- b In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Have you ever been rejected for a job? How did it feel?
- 2 Think of as many reasons as you can why a candidate may not be offered a job after an interview.
- 3 Some people handle failure by forgetting all about their unsuccessful application and turning immediately to the next one. Others spend a lot of time analysing what went wrong and what they could have done better. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach? Which approach do you use?
- 4 Have you ever requested feedback after an unsuccessful interview? Was it a useful experience?



Requesting feedback

In order for your next job application to be more successful it is essential to know why you didn't get this job. Did somebody else manage to convince the employer that they were the best person for the job? What skills or experience did the other applicant have that you lacked? Or was it you that made a mistake during your interview? Reviewing your performance will help you to answer some of these questions, but it is also perfectly acceptable to ask an employer why you didn't get the job.

3 a Complete Paul's letter requesting feedback about his interview using the phrases in the box.

I am confident
I am grateful
I greatly appreciated the opportunity
I would very much appreciate
Obviously I am disappointed
Thank you very much in advance

Dear Mr Brooker,

Thank you for your letter informing me that my recent application for employment with your bank has been unsuccessful.

(1) I greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and your team.

(2) _____ for the time you took to talk to me about the position. (3) _____ to have been unsuccessful this time, as I felt my skills and experience matched the requirements for the job.

(4) _____ it if you could explain in greater detail why my application was unsuccessful on this occasion.

(5) _____ this information will help me to identify areas which I need to work on in order to successfully gain employment in future.

(6) _____ for your time on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Kristiansen

b Read the letter Paul received from the bank in response. Why was he rejected?

Dear Paul

Many thanks for your letter requesting feedback. As I'm sure you'll understand, we had a very strong field of candidates. Although we considered your application to be very strong, our recruitment procedure enabled us to assess each candidate as objectively as possible, and we chose the candidate who scored most highly in our assessment.

There were many things that impressed us about your application. Your qualifications are excellent, and you have some good experience in this sector. You gave good answers to many questions, particularly our question at the beginning about customer service, for which you gave several excellent examples.

The main reason why your application was less successful was that your work experience is fairly limited, and we felt that you would benefit from some months in a more junior position before you are ready for a job involving managing people and budgets. When we asked you about your leadership skills, you gave a general answer rather than the specific example that we needed. We suspect that you do in fact have such skills, but because you did not illustrate these at the interview, we felt unable to know for certain. This leads us to a more general point: your answers were often short and lacking examples. We would recommend you plan your examples more carefully before your next interview.

You did create a positive impression on us, and have good potential to be a strong and useful member of a team such as ours. If you are interested in applying for a more junior position, I encourage you to consider responding to the job advertisement attached. I realise this might not be your ideal job, but as I mentioned above, we felt you would be a much stronger candidate for a management position after you had such experience.

Thank you again for your application, and we wish you well in your career.

Charlie Brooker

c In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What did Paul do well in his interview? What did he do badly?
- 2 What advice is Paul given? Do you think this is good advice?
- 3 Why do you think the interviewers didn't use his good examples of customer service skills to guess about his leadership skills?
- 4 Do you think Mr Brooker genuinely wants Paul to apply for the junior job, or do all unsuccessful candidates get the same advice?
- 5 What would you do if you were Paul? Would you apply for the more junior position or would you wait for another management position to be available?

d Write a letter requesting feedback for a real job for which you were rejected, or for an invented one. Use expressions from the letter in Exercise 3a.