

A PAYRULER RESOURCE FOR HR TEAMS

Candidate Communication SLA + Email Template Kit

Ghosting goes both ways, but HR sets the tone. This kit gives you a response-time standard to hold your team to, plus ready-to-send templates for the moments candidates usually get left hanging. Copy, paste, adjust the details, send.

PART 1 · RESPONSE-TIME SLA

Set the standard your team actually follows

An SLA only works if it's realistic. Adjust the day counts to your team's capacity, then hold the line. Consistency matters more than speed.

Stage	Trigger	Target Response Time	Owner
Application received	Candidate submits application	Immediate (auto) + 2 business days for human review status	Recruitment
Post-screening	Initial call or phone screen completed	3 business days	Recruitment
Post-interview (non-final)	Panel or technical interview completed	5 business days	Recruitment + Hiring Manager
Final round decision	Final interview or assessment completed	7 business days, with a status update if delayed	Hiring Manager
Offer stage	Decision made to extend an offer	2 business days to formal offer	Recruitment
On hold / pooling	Role paused, budget freeze, or restructuring	Notify within 3 business days of the change, then monthly check-in	Recruitment

PART 2 · EMAIL TEMPLATES

The five emails that usually go missing

Swap in the bracketed details. Keep the tone warm but brief, candidates can tell when a message is copy-pasted without care versus copy-pasted with intention.

1. Application acknowledgment

Subject: We've received your application for [Job Title]

Hi [Candidate Name],

Thanks for applying for the [Job Title] role at [Company Name]. We've received your application and our team is currently reviewing it.

You can expect an update from us within [X] business days. If shortlisted, we'll reach out to schedule the next step.

Appreciate your interest in joining us.

Best,

[Your Name] · [Company Name] Recruitment

2. Post-interview status update (still deciding)

Subject: Update on your [Job Title] application

Hi [Candidate Name],

Thank you for taking the time to interview with us for the [Job Title] role. We're still finalizing our decision and wanted to keep you in the loop rather than leave you waiting.

We expect to have an update for you by [date]. Thanks for your patience, we know waiting isn't fun.

Best,

[Your Name] · [Company Name] Recruitment

3. Rejection with brief feedback

Subject: Update on your application for [Job Title]

Hi [Candidate Name],

Thank you for your interest in the [Job Title] role and for the time you invested in our process. After careful consideration, we've decided to move forward with another candidate.

For context, [one or two lines on what stood out in the successful candidate, e.g. 'the person we selected had more direct experience managing a similar-sized team'].

We'd genuinely like to keep your profile on file for future roles that may be a stronger fit. Thanks again for considering [Company Name].

Best,

[Your Name] · [Company Name] Recruitment

4. Role on hold / pooling notice

Subject: An update on the [Job Title] role

Hi [Candidate Name],

We wanted to be upfront with you: the [Job Title] role has been placed on hold due to [brief, honest reason, e.g. budget review, internal restructuring]. This isn't a reflection of your application.

We'll reach back out by [date] with an update, whether that's reopening the role or closing it out. If you'd rather not wait, totally understandable, and we wish you well in your search.

Best,

[Your Name] · [Company Name] Recruitment

5. Interview confirmation (reduces no-shows both ways)

Subject: Confirming your interview for [Job Title] · [Date, Time]

Hi [Candidate Name],

Confirming your interview for [Job Title] on [Date] at [Time] ([Time zone]), [format: in-person at Address / video call link].

Please reply to confirm you're able to make it, or let us know as early as possible if you need to reschedule. We'll do the same on our end if anything changes.

Looking forward to speaking with you.

Best,

[Your Name] · [Company Name] Recruitment

PART 3 · NO-SHOW REDUCTION CHECKLIST

Fewer no-shows, both directions

No-shows happen on both sides of the table. These steps make it easier for candidates to follow through, and give your team a clean paper trail when they don't.

- [] Send a calendar invite with a reply-required RSVP, not just an email with the date.
- [] Include a direct contact number or chat channel for last-minute rescheduling.
- [] Send a reminder 24 hours before the interview, and again 2 hours before if it's a video call.
- [] Confirm the format clearly: in-person address, or video link, and which platform.
- [] For panel interviews, name every interviewer the candidate will meet.
- [] If a candidate reschedules more than once without notice, note it in the ATS and flag internally before investing more interview slots.
- [] If your team no-shows a scheduled call, send a same-day apology and a rebooking link, don't wait for the candidate to chase you.
- [] Track no-show rate by stage. A spike at a specific stage usually points to a process gap, not candidate flakiness.

A consistent SLA and a few honest templates won't fix every hiring bottleneck, but they close the loop candidates remember most: knowing where they stand. Systems that track applicant status automatically, like an ATS, make holding this SLA far easier at scale.