



WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER & NEGOTIATION

When you are considering a job offer most people wonder when, how, what and how much should I negotiate? Below are some tips and advice to help guide you through the process.

EVALUATE THE JOB OFFER

In evaluating job offers, there are some personal questions one must ask above all else. How closely does this offer match your career goals? What additional information do you need before you make a decision? Are there factors you would want to negotiate which would make you happier about your decision? When making a decision about a job it's important to be aware of your own values, goals and interests.

When evaluating a job offer, it is important to evaluate the entire offer including benefits and actually job duties. More goes into the offer than just the salary even though that is the most exciting part of an offer. Below are some aspects of the offer you may want to consider before beginning the negotiation process:

SALARY

- Research salaries – Career Services Website – Know what the averages salaries are for the position you are offered.
- Signing Bonus/Relocation Allowance

BENEFITS - Benefits packages are generally worth at least 30% of your annual salary.

- Health Insurance
- Vacation
- Sick Leave Policy
- Profit Sharing/Bonuses
- Retirement

SUPERVISION & TRAINING

- Supervisor's management style and personality
- Different types of training methods

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Internal and external training
- Financial support for continuing your education

CAREER PATHS/PROMOTION POTENTIAL

- Past History of Promotions
- Pre-Determined Path
- Age of Employees Ahead of You
- Requirements for Promotion – Additional Training, Degrees?

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE, CLIMATE OF THE ORGANIZATION

- Small vs Large Organization
- Profit vs Non-Profit
- Policies – Business Casual, Family Friendly, GLBT Friendly
- Co-Workers – Age, Diversity

GROWTH POTENTIAL OF ORGANIZATION/INDUSTRY

- Possible Mergers
- Know Projected Industry Trends

TRAVEL

- Percentage of overnight travel
- Reimbursement
- Locations

REQUIRED RELOCATION

- Reimbursements for travel, housing and etc.
- Is there a cap?

COMMUNITY

- Social opportunities for young professionals
- Leisure activities in the region
- School reputation for children

WHEN TO NEGOTIATE

- Negotiation should always take place after an offer has been extended to you – never before!
- Only negotiate with an employer if you are truly interested in the position. Otherwise you are wasting both yours and the company's time.
- Be respectful throughout the process and do not wait until the last minute to negotiate an offer.
- When salary is substantially below typical salary averages for similar positions. Research is important in determining the salary averages.
- You have additional qualification that may not have been considered such as internship experience, outstanding academic achievements or unique technical skills.
- You have other offers and will only accept if a better offer is negotiated.
- When your first offer is not your first choice, contact your preferred employer and inform them that you have another offer but they are your first preference. Ask them what their timeline is in making a decision and inquire if there is any more information you might be able to provide them to help in their decision making.

WHEN NOT TO NEGOTIATE

- Do not negotiate before you receive an offer or you need additional information about the offer.
- It is a major organization and all new graduates are brought into the same position – examples: education, retail, sales, management, bank and claims trainee positions. These companies have done their research and they do their best to offer a competitive salary or have established salary and compensation standards.
- Don't negotiate, just to negotiate. If you are happy with the salary and want to work for this organization, you might want to accept the initial offer.

HOW TO NEGOTIATE

- Make sure to always negotiate with courtesy and respect – consider that you are building a long-term relationship.
- Have as much information available as possible when beginning the negotiation process. Have an understanding of the standard salary and package for the position you are being offered.
- Negotiate with creativity and flexibility. Do not automatically go straight to salary increase – think about other areas to negotiate on as well. Focus on the item that is most important to you. Do not bring a long list of items to negotiate.
- Ask the employer in a tactful way if the salary offer is open to negotiation. It is important that you illustrate you are genuinely interested in the position and you have a realistic understanding of the salary and/or benefits.
 - For example: "I am definitely interested in the position, can we talk about the salary?"
- Be open to compromise. If the employer is unable to negotiate at this time, set a definite time in the future to reopen the discussion. At that time, you will have demonstrated your benefits to the organization.
- If they are unwilling to negotiate, consider the fact that you may have to make an immediate decision. Not all employers are open to negotiation for all positions. This is particularly true for fields where candidates are plentiful and in unionized organizations.
- Create a budget for your expenses and then decide what your minimum amount of salary you will accept. Don't forget to account for taxes taken out of your paycheck.

WHAT TO NEGOTIATE

- Negotiation should be focused on a few key things that are most important to you – do not come in with a large list of requests that you expect to have filled.
- Below are some common negotiable items:
 - Timing – This refers to the amount of time you have to decide whether or not you will accept the offer. It could also refer to the start date of the position if you choose to accept.
 - Compensation – For recent graduates, this is not a largely negotiable area in most cases. Know what the typical compensation is for someone with similar credentials in the field you are entering. If at all possible, have the employer provide a number first. If they ask you for a salary number, provide them with a reasonable range. You may also be able to negotiate for a sign-on or annual bonus, relocation assistance, stock options, or other items.
 - Benefits – Many companies will have a set healthcare/dental package or choice of two for you to select from – make sure to look closely at what is being offered. Some other areas to examine include annual/sick/personal leave, retirement plans, disability and life insurance, travel reimbursement, annual salary review. Also consider tuition reimbursement, special trainings, and other professional development opportunities that may be available to you.
 - Miscellaneous – Think about additional items that may be of interest...cost of hardware necessary for the position (computer, phone, etc.), graduate school timeline, or a non-compete clause.

HOW TO ACCEPT

- Notify the employer, preferably by phone, that you are prepared to accept the offer and that you are looking forward to joining the organization.
- Request an offer letter or email which includes the salary, start date, benefits and all other details outlined in the offer.

- Always reply with an acceptance letter or email outlining all the details of the offer even if you verbally accepted the position.
- Once you have accepted an offer, it is unethical to continue your job search. The employer has made a commitment to you and you need to reciprocate that commitment.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF HAPPINESS

If you find a position you are passionate about and the only thing you can increase is the salary, maybe it is not a bad offer. There is no way to put a price tag on having an enjoyable career.

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