

EFFECTIVELY HANDLE THE TOPIC OF SALARY

Whether you are working or unemployed, the topic of salary will be discussed numerous times throughout your job search. How you handle the topic of salary greatly impacts your ability to find your next job.

Most companies have an established salary range that they have budgeted for each position. They don't want to start a new employee at the top of their range because this would not allow them to reward great performance with a raise.

Most employers will not pay a new hire more than the person who left the position, unless they have added additional responsibilities to the position. You don't want to request a salary that is too high because you will be eliminated from consideration. You also don't want to quote a salary too low and leave money on the table.

When you are told you are *overqualified* a majority of the time the hiring authority feels you are above their salary range. They worry you will accept their job only until you find something that pays a higher salary.

ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

It is always best to list *open* or *negotiable*, if the online application form does not require numbers.

The other options are:

- List your current salary followed by a plus sign (+)
- If you know the salary range, quote somewhere in the middle of the range
- You can list all zero's, which can eliminate you from consideration
- You can list what you really want to earn, which could eliminate you from consideration. In this case, the theory is you can always negotiate down, but never up
- You can leave this area blank, except when the online application requires you to fill in the information

APPLICATION FORM GIVEN TO YOU BY AN EMPLOYER

The same information just shared about online applications holds true for an application form given to you by an employer. The only exception is that you can easily list *open* or *negotiable* on a paper application given to you by an employer.

COVER LETTER | RESUME OR CV

You should never list salary on your Resume or CV. The basic rule is whoever quotes a number first stands to lose. The same rule holds true in your cover letter. Your Resume or CV and cover letter should be your ticket to an interview and you don't want to list anything that could possibly screen you out.

INTERVIEW

The topic of salary will be discussed during your interview process. This is true whether your interview process is in person, or a telephone interview. The individuals who interview you first are given a list of requirement which must be met in order for them to advance you to the next person in the interview process. Salary is something you must learn to discuss with confidence while maintaining eye contact.

It is important to prepare your answer and not act like you were caught off guard by the question. Expect to answer this question and prepare your answer in advance. The best answer is to quote your current salary and express that you are looking for an increase. Also mention that you will consider the entire compensation package.

FOLLOW UP CONVERSATIONS

You must remain consistent in your salary demands throughout the entire interview process. It is almost impossible to quote a higher salary demand than the number you originally wrote on your application form.

If your salary demands appear inconsistent, that could be misinterpreted by a prospective employer as being dishonest. Keep very accurate notes after every application form is submitted, interview is completed and conversations are held.

OFFER IS EXTENDED

The time for you to know what offer you will accept is at the beginning of your job search process. The way you accept an offer is the hiring authority's first impression of your decision making capabilities. When they extend an offer they want to hear an enthusiastic acceptance and confirmation of your start date.

Take time today to complete a budget and know what offer you can accept. When an employer is confident that you can hit the ground running with no training, they will often offer a higher salary. If they feel you will need some training, the salary offer will be lower. Employers don't know exactly what they will offer until after the interview process is completed.

You must know what offer you will accept without hesitation. The time to discuss a potential offer with your spouse or significant other is before you receive a job offer, not after.

If you have more than one offer, it is wise to draw a T-square on a sheet of paper and write down the pros on one side the cons on the other side. When you force yourself to write things down vs. trying to make a decision in your mind, you will end up taking the emotion out of your decision and make a decision made on facts.

Bottom line is that you want to obtain the best offer possible. If you follow the advice in this session that is exactly what will happen.