Ama-Fie Negotiation

Annotated by Shane Skikne (Ama)

Hi Ama,

I have truly enjoyed this journey through your professional career with you, and want nothing more than to continue on for the years to come. I have put my heart and soul into my job as your Agent and my work with you has become my life. I would love to work out the details of a new contract with you and help you get to where I know you can be as a football superstar.

Please let me know if you would like to work out a deal together, one that we can both be satisfied with!

I look forward to corresponding with you and working with you in the future.

All the best,

Kofi

Hello Kofi,

My friend, I hope all is well in Ghana and please send my congratulations to your brother.

There is nothing I would love more to continue to work with me. There are so many reasons we are better off working together.

That said, there has clearly been some tension between recently. If we’d like to keep our relationship as positive and beneficial as it has been in the past, I believe it is important that we get all our concerns on the table so we can make sure we can fix any issues if we choose to continue working together. How does that sound?

All the best,

Ama

Hi Ama,

Thank you so much for your reply! I am so happy to hear that you still want to work together, we make such a great team. I agree that we need to get our concerns out to one another so we can patch our relationship and move forward together.

I will begin by raising the issue of determining the most appropriate and fair compensation for my services. As a new Agent to you six years ago, I accepted much less compensation than I should have, but I believed so much in you as a football player and wanted to help you get to where you wanted to be. Knowing the multi-million dollar contracts that I have been able to secure you in recent years, I hope I have proven my strong ability to seek out opportunities for you, and my dedication to your career.

Going forward, I am hoping to receive 10% of your compensation for future contracts. I will work even harder than I have in the past to secure high paying contracts for you in return.

Please let me know your thoughts!

Kofi

Hello Kofi,

I guess starting out, I’d love to hear more about why this feels like is fair number. Before hearing that, though, I would like to clear the air and explain what has happened between myself and Lesley McGuire, the American agent. She, as well as other agents, have reached out to me with offers. I told each of them that I appreciate their offers, but I wanted to hear and try work with you first. I guess, when hearing your and their offers, I’d much rather work with you, but I also don’t want to feel like I am giving away such a huge chunk of the money I am earning when there are so many other people asking to represent me for less. As you may have heard, my brother’s medical bills have been astronomical and I’d like to save any money I can to invest in our home country.

If you were unable to live on the money you make from working together, this would be an entirely different discussion, but almost $400,000 per year from just one of your players feels like such a substantial amount of money.

One thing we can discuss first is if there are any creative ways to allow you to be compensated more for your incredible work while allowing me to feel like I am not being taken advantage of my a person I truly trust and respect.

Ama

Hi Ama,

I am so sorry to hear about your brother's medical bills; I hope he is okay! Please send him my best. Additionally, I am glad to hear you want to work with me over Lesley or other agents, and I am certain we can come to an agreement.

I want to begin by explaining why I believe I deserve more compensation for my work. Other Agents who have lots of club connections, can secure high-paying deals, and are experienced in the field typically earn 12% of their Player's compensation. I have been in this field for many years and have proven that I have the ability to secure you multi-million dollar contracts, something not many Agents can do. Additionally, I have changed my life to help you in your profession, something I have not regretted doing, but something that again, not many Agents would not be willing to do. When you first signed with Ipanema, I moved to Brazil to work closely with you, and I have worked much more than a standard 40 hour week. I helped you become the first Ghanaian player to sign a multi-million dollar contract with an international club team. I also secured your first advertising contract and expected no compensation in return. I believe that I have proven my loyalty and dedication to advancing your success, and believe that in return I deserve 10% of all contracts I am able to secure. You know you can trust me and know how well I have taken care of you; there is no telling what a new Agent would be like. I simply want to feel appreciated for my work and feel as though I am receiving fair compensation for all of the work I do.

I would love to hear your take on my stance before discussing more creative solutions for compensation, but I will be happy to discuss those options next.

Thank you, Ama!

Kofi

Hello Kofi,

Thank you for your words. I will pass them to him.

I guess we should just jump into numbers, then. One thought I had was that perhaps we could put your compensation at 3% for my contracts since this is more of a one time negotiation that gets you significant long term payoff. To me, this makes sense, because the work is done upfront while the money is received over the long term. In exchange, though, we could look into increasing the compensation for advertising, since that will take a lot more active work and negotiating on your part. What if that was closer to 10%? What would you think about that?

As another option, I am also reviewing our contracts to see if there are any places we can add value for both of us. I was wondering about the potential of setting up a simple conditional percentage for your payment? From my research into agent contracts, this looks like a common occurrence. For example, if you could negotiate more than $75 million in advertising revenue, then the percentage is, say, 8%. Similarly if you negotiate less than $75 million, then the percentage is 5%.

I would love to hear your thoughts on those two options.

To your comments, though, a concern I have had that I should put on the table is that I have always been so grateful for your support and hard work, but have sometimes felt like you don’t feel the same appreciation for me and all the work I have put in. I am worrying this negotiation perpuates that, where it feels like you’re seeing how much you can get out of me. The other agents who have contacted me make it sound like they’d simply be so excited to work with me. I wanted to acknowledge the way you felt about my level of appreciation, because I can not emphasize enough how much I appreciate your hard work.

Overall, I do understand that you’d like to feel more appreciated by me in the form of compensation. I am confident we can find a number that makes both of us feel good and we can continue the fruitful relationship we have built.

Ama

Hi Ama,

Yes, it seems like we should jump straight into the numbers. I am not comfortable with 3% compensation, as according to my research, 3% is typically given to inexperienced agents or lesser-known agents. As I know we both agree, I am definitely experienced and therefore deserve more than 3%. Perhaps we can work on a percentage that better suits us both, say 7% compensation?

Additionally, I like the idea of compensation for advertising, that was also something I wanted to talk to you about. Since I have the potential to secure you top-dollar advertising deals, I definitely think it is fair if I am compensated. Perhaps we can also set that to 7%, and keep a standard 7% compensation across the board.

I am also open to the idea of a tiered compensation system, but prefer and would like to see if we can settle a more standard value first across the board, as it will be easier on both of us.

I sincerely appreciate your kind words about your appreciation for my work. I want you to know that I truly do appreciate you so much, and I know how much work you have put in. I know this is not an easy career, and I give you much credit for your work. I value our relationship greatly and am so excited to work out a contract to suit us both, which I believed is embodied in a 7% compensation for advertising and contracts.

Please let me know what you think!

Kofi

Hello Ama,

That argument is certainly reasonable and I obviously know how experienced and valuable you are as an agent. I am sorry to say, though, but, based on what the other agents have been offering, 7% is still more than I am comfortable with for my agent contract. I have offers as low as $200,000 annually. Obviously you would represent me better than this agent, but there is still a question of how much is that better representation worth; at 7% the difference is almost $3.5 million .

How would you feel about 6% for advertising, a place I could see requiring much more work, combined with 4% for contracts. Given the recent trends, that looks like you’d be starting at at least $500,000 from the contracts and likely more than $2,000,000 in advertising. That is quite an annual salary. If you’d accept this, I’d be willing to add that you get a cut of all contracts regardless of whether you facilitate them. As you know, Maccabi approached me with an offer, which was not something we even considered in our contract, because who would have thought we’d be talking to advertisers.

I do hate this feeling of haggling with you so I hope this this, or a similar deal, would be acceptable to you.

Additionally, we should also consider how long we’d want any potential contract to be. If we can come to terms I am more comfortable with, I would love to sign a longer term contract, but if I am hesitant, I might be more interested in a shorter contract to put me at ease. I hope that makes sense.

Ama

Hi Ama,

Thank you for considering my offer. I am however still not comfortable with only 4% of contracts. 4% is only 1% more than my last contract, and I feel that it is not fair to only increase my compensation by that little. I would be willing to accept 5% contract compensation for the contracts, is that something you could agree to? Additionally, I am comfortable with 6% advertising compensation, and would like that to cover any advertising deals that are determined without me as well.

As for the length of the contract, I would love to sign another six-year deal with you! I believe that we grew together in the last six years and can do great things for the next six years to come. I am currently flying around South America and meeting with representatives of top club teams to discuss their interest in you, working on finding a contract with you already!

For sake of convenience, I will summarize my proposed contract above, based on your offer in your previous email:

Length: 6 years

Contract Compensation: 5%

Advertising Compensation: 6% (including deals made without my help, if you are contacted instead)

I hope this is something that works well for you as well!

Best,

Kofi

Hello Kofi,

I wanted to say I have seen your proposal. Since we’re at a potential deal, I am going to sit down and do some thinking and will respond shortly.

Ama

Hello Kofi,

I would say that my worry remains about those rates a long term deal. What would you say to this: If I were to agree to 5% contract compensation, would you accept 5% advertising compensation if I get under $10 million in advertising, 5.5% if my advertising income is between $10 million and $20 million and 6% if advertising is above $20 million (which it was this past year).

So my offer:

Length: 6 years

Contract Compensation: 5%

Advertising Compensation(including deals made without your help):

If advertising is below $10 million: 5%

If advertising is between $10 million and $20 million : 5.5%

If advertising is above $20 million : 6%

I hope you find these terms agreeable. There is nothing I would love more than to have this behind us.

All the best,

Ama

Hi Ama,

Thank you for your counter-offer. I appreciate you taking the time to consider my proposal.

In response to your offer I believe I can settle with this! I am confident in my ability to secure you high-paying advertising deals, which will benefit both of us. I am excited that you are interested in working with me long term again.

One last request that I have is the potential for bonuses based on my ability to secure you a deal with a top club. If I secure you a deal with one of the three top clubs, can I receive a $500,000 bonus? This would be a one-time bonus. I am so determined to sign you with the best club possible, and hope you understand the great lengths I must go in order to secure that.

As for the remainder of the specifics, shall we agree again to a payment to me of within 15 days of your compensation received? Additionally, I hope we can agree again to not discuss my fee with any potential clubs, and the same reasonable expenses will be covered for me. Were you alright with these terms in our last contract?

Please let me know your thoughts on the final aspects of our contract that we are so close to finalizing!

Looking forward to finalizing,

Kofi

Hello Kofi,

I am very hesitant. I’d be willing to add some sort of bonus to reward your hard initial work, but $500,000 seems astronomical. That basically adds 1-2% to the contract compensation. Your last bonus was $100,000, which made sense, because you were not being paid to get me advertising deals. The highest I would consider, keeping all else equal, would be equivalent to your last bonus, $100,000 if you could get a truly incredible deal. I am happy to hear if this doesn’t sound reasonable. I’d also prefer to tie it to the deal amount and length rather than the team. Since I am already out of my home country I don’t particularly mind where I play, as you know.

I would add this to my previous offer:

$100,000 bonus if my contract is above $15 million per year.

An alternative offer:

Length: 6 years

Contract Compensation: **5%** + **$200,000 bonus if my contract is above $15 million per year.**

Advertising Compensation(including deals made without your help):

If advertising is below $10 million: **4.5%**

If advertising is between $10 million and $20 million : **5%**

If advertising is above $20 million : 6%

I certainly understand the desire for a bonus, but see it as something that would require some changes elsewhere. I hope that makes sense.

Ama

Hi Ama,

I understand my high bonus request, and appreciate your consideration. Since I believe we were both happy with our original agreement, I would prefer to stick with that, as opposed to your alternative offer, though I do thank you for taking the time to create this new offer. I am okay with adding on a $100,000 bonus, but would prefer if it covers contracts $12 million and over, seeing as $12 million was your last contract value, and the highest contract to ever be recorded was $15 million, so the chances of us exceeding that are on the slimmer side. Is the $100,000 bonus on a $12 million or more contract reasonable? I am happy with all other aspects of our original agreement a couple exchanges ago.

Thank you!

Kofi

Hello Kofi,

That sounds good. I am sure we could haggle down to more dollars and cents, but I would rather leave this negotiation with us on good terms and excited to continue our journey together. I am happy with $12 million and hope it would be acceptable to say $12 million and at least 3 years. How does that sound?

So a final offer:

Length: 6 years

Contract Compensation: 5% with a $100,000 bonus if a contract is reached for at least $12 million per year over 3 years.

Advertising Compensation(including deals made without your help):

If advertising is below $10 million: 5%

If advertising is between $10 million and $20 million : 5.5%

If advertising is above $20 million : 6%

To be clear, all else in our original contract remains in effect.

Ama

Hi Ama,

Great, thank you so much for understanding! Yes, 3 years is definitely reasonable, I'm glad we could come to that bonus agreement.

The final offer looks perfect, and yes, everything else in our original contract will remain.

I am beyond happy to be working with you again and for many years to come. Thank you so much for believing in me as you Agent, as I believe in you as Player. I am looking forward to taking the world by storm with you!

I will let you know soon the status of the clubs I am speaking to in South America currently.

Talk to you soon!

Kofi