

NEGOTIATING YOUR SALARY CHECKLIST

Prior to the Interview Cycle

- ☐ **Research market salary ranges.** Research salary ranges based on the role, industry, and geographic region, so you will be in a better negotiating position and know ahead of time if a job will pay what you want (since you may not talk about salary until the very end of the interview process). Take advantage of salary surveys published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics or professional associations. Talk with other alumni in your field, search the Internet, and visit the employer's own website.
- ☐ **Evaluate your worth.** You need to be able to provide evidence of why you deserve the salary you require. Consider the typical salary progression of people in your career path, industry, and geographic location, and the demand for job seekers.
- ☐ **Decide on the minimum salary that you are willing to accept.** If asked and you need to give a range, increase that figure slightly when you give the salary range to a potential employer. This will be the low end of your range.
- ☐ **Determine your priorities.** These are the additional benefits and other aspects of a job that are important to you, so that if salary is not negotiable or lower than you would like, you can negotiate other perks.
- ☐ **Determine the strength of your negotiating position.** If you have highly sought after skills or are in a high-demand profession, you have more negotiating leverage. If you are one of many candidates, you'll need to be more careful.
- ☐ **Respond to any request for salary history or salary requirements.** Be honest about your salary history as the employer can research this. If asked for salary requirements in a cover letter or job application, write your requirements and note them as either "negotiable" or "to be discussed during interview."

The Negotiation Process

- ☐ **Respond to any request for salary requirements.** It's best to avoid mentioning salary or negotiating until the employer raises the question or makes an offer. If the employer asks you right away what salary you are looking for, turn the question around and ask, "Based on my qualifications and skills, what salary range were you thinking of?" If they still want an answer, give them a range with your minimum desired salary on the low end of the range.
- ☐ **Evaluate the offer.** Once you receive an offer, take time to think it over before negotiating. Thank the employer and ask when they would like to hear back from you.
- ☐ **Research the organization's benefits package beforehand.** You can often find this information on an organization's website. This will help you avoid asking the hiring manager too many questions about it, which can make you seem unprepared and unprofessional.
- ☐ **Compare multiple offers, if applicable.** If you are deciding between more than one offer, objectively evaluate what each will provide you in terms of work/reward. Use the Offer Evaluation Worksheet to help with this. Determine if you need to negotiate or if you can use one offer as leverage to try to ask for more money or benefits. Compare the total value of the two compensation packages to determine which is better. Create a detailed list of the value of the various aspects of the package including salary, medical, dental, disability, tuition reimbursement, retirement plans, vacation time, and other perks.

- ☐ **Begin negotiations.** Do so in a courteous, professional manner that emphasizes your view of the negotiations as a way to benefit both you and the employer. If you are overly aggressive or greedy, you may damage your image with the employer and may even cause them to rescind their offer. Negotiate on the basis of your qualifications, experience, education, and skills as well as factors like the demand for your skills, the organization's profitability and stability, and its urgency in filling the position. Also, do not discuss your personal financial concerns with the employer.
- ☐ **Ask for a higher salary** (within reasonable limits) than you are willing to accept so that when the organization makes a counter offer, it will be closer to your goal. If you are attempting to ask for more than they initially offer, provide evidence for why you think you deserve more. Highlight transferable skills from previous jobs or other significant experience. If you are changing careers or just entering the job market from school, you can determine how much to ask for or expect by researching salaries in the field.
- ☐ **Negotiate for your other priorities.** If a potential employer tells you the specific salary is not negotiable, creatively think of how you can achieve your objective by negotiating for other benefits that are valuable to you.
- ☐ **Be honest.** Never lie about previous salaries in order to get more money from a prospective employer. Similarly, don't create fake job offers in order to be in a better negotiating position with an employer who has offered you an actual position.

Accepting the Offer

- ☐ **Be flexible.** If the organization's final offer is slightly lower than you hoped, you may want to consider the offer if it is a good strategic move for you and has strong benefits.
- ☐ **Be fair and reasonable.** Be aware of when you've achieved a fair deal and stop negotiation so you don't appear greedy or unreasonable.
- ☐ **Ask for the final offer in writing.** Be wary of organizations that refuse to do this.
- ☐ **Follow through on your commitment.** Do not accept the offer and then suddenly back out of it if you receive a better offer. This can greatly harm your reputation.