

# After the Interview

Waiting for a response after any job interview can be stressful. After sending a thank-you note to the person or interview panel who took the time out to interview you, reflect constructively on the experience and consider what would happen next if you receive an offer or - if you don't.

## Objectives

- Plan how to negotiate salary and benefits once you are offered a position
- Prepare how to handle a job declination

It's useful to take time and track the process: note the company and when they interviewed you, any personnel you met, and the outcome. Make notes about the questions you were asked and your answers, also noting whether you would answer differently another time. Remember, your "job" of finding a job isn't over until you secure a new position, so be ready to coach yourself all the way.

## If you get an offer

Receiving a job offer is always exciting. However, don't get swept up in the thrill and forget that you don't have to accept the job right away. Consider all the facets of what's offered to you before deciding. You can tell the hiring manager that you need some time to review the offer before making a decision. The recruiter may suggest a time frame and encourage you to ask questions in the interim about the offer package if you need to. Generally, you should come to a decision within two business days. Companies usually need to complete the hiring process as quickly as possible, and they may move on to another candidate if they wait too long for your answer.

If you received an offer and the salary or employee benefits do not match what you consider is fair, research the market, bring forth your selling points, and express the valid reasons why you are requesting a higher salary. It is totally acceptable to request a fair compensation package. When you consider whether your compensation is fair, however, make sure to weigh in the value of the employee benefits package. Consider signing bonuses, moving allowances, stock options, other non-salary compensation offered, and less quantitative benefits like a better commute or flexible work times.

The thought of negotiating a job salary offer may make you uncomfortable, but if the offer is below what you expected after factoring in all of the other considerations, you might want to negotiate a fairer salary. You might respond by phone or email. Begin your response by expressing your excitement and appreciation for being selected. Include points on how you plan to contribute to achieving the company's goals. Base your counteroffer on verifiable research or supporting arguments that there is a higher value to what you bring to the table.

Some legitimate arguments to support a salary negotiation are:

- Commute and relocation expenses.
- Having a university degree that may not have been required to apply but provides an academic preparation that will contribute to exceeding job performance expectations.
- Possessing a skillset or certifications that required extensive or costly training, especially if they were stated as preferred qualifications in the job listing.

However the company responds, make sure you express appreciation for their allowing you to approach them with your request. The company may not be able to accommodate it because of budget or company policies about standard pay scales for certain positions, but it doesn't hurt to ask.

If you are between interview rounds or awaiting an offer from another company when you accept an offer, you must contact them and let them know you wish to withdraw your application for their position. Let them know you appreciate their consideration but have decided to accept another offer. Always ask them to keep your information in case other opportunities arise in the future and treat them professionally and courteously. You'll never know when you'll be in the job market again and want to contact them about another position, so maintain a good reputation.

If you must resign from a current job, you should provide your employer with a standard two weeks' notice whenever possible. Again, always behave professionally and maintain your good reputation in case you need a reference someday or even return for a different job. Try to arrange a start date with your new employer so that you are able to take some time off between jobs. Reporting to your first day at the new job after a few days of rest will help ease your transition and onboarding process, as opposed to jumping right in the day after you left your previous workplace.

## If you are declined

The most important thing to do after learning that you were not selected for a job is to learn from the experience. The job interviews you attend always provide valuable lessons that you can use when you apply for other jobs in the future. Remember, too, that this is no personal reflection on you; there can only be one candidate hired for any job, even if other candidates were excellent and capable. You can never know what exact factors made a manager choose someone else, so don't dwell on it too much.

Contact your interviewers by phone or email and let them know that you appreciate the notification. After all, many companies nowadays don't make an effort to contact the job applicants who weren't selected for an opening. Request feedback! Ask for an honest assessment and keep an open mind, especially if any points in their feedback are unexpected. Maybe the points you overlooked played a big part in not being selected for the position. Also, you may want to ask for advice on what you should work on to improve. Be aware, though, that many companies prohibit their personnel from giving feedback about interviews (often for legal reasons), so you may not be able to get more information.

If you do receive any feedback, reflect on the entire process, from your application packet to the way you prepared and researched for your interviews. Consider the things you can do something about and focus on how you can prepare better for the next interview in the near future. Devise a plan and act on it. Should you spend more time writing better answers? Should you do more rehearsal, so you appear less awkward? Can training, a book, or some coaching from a teacher or professor help?

## Conclusion

Every interview process is a chance to learn, whether you get the job or not. If you weren't selected, consider the interviews and assessments as valuable experience that you needed to land the job of your dreams. If you were selected, that means you prepared well, and your efforts have paid off. Either way, you've gained skills that you can use in your next job search, whether that's a day away or years in the future.

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# Skills Network