

Salary Negotiation

Before you begin speaking to potential employers and interviewing, it is critical that you prepare for salary negotiation. Don't be caught off-guard by salary questions. If you wait until you have an offer in hand, you have waited too long!

1. Clarify Your Priorities

Understanding your priorities lets you drive negotiations around your preferences and identify things you'd be willing to sacrifice if necessary. Rate each column below in order of importance from 1 (most important) to 7 (not important); you may only use each number once. Use these rankings to make salary negotiation decisions later.

Financial Compensation

- ___Base pay
- ___Ongoing Bonuses & Incentives
- ___Commissions
- ___Insurance Benefits
- ___Stock Options
- ___Retirement Plan
- ___Paid Time Off

Non-Financial Compensation

- ___Alignment with Strengths
- ___Room for Advancement
- ___People You Work with including boss
- ___Aligned with Values
- ___Aligned with Interests
- ___Schedule/Time Commitment
- ___Work Environment/Engagement

2. Uncover Your Worth

Your worth is what the market will realistically pay for your background and skills, regardless of what you were paid previously. To define this number, conduct research:

TALK TO RECRUITERS Utilise conversations with staffing agencies to ask about the average salary or 'going rate' for someone with your experience and education.

CONDUCT ONLINE RESEARCH Research salary averages using these resources: Glassdoor, Payscale and Indeed.

SCHEDULE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS Connect with people who hold similar positions to the one you are looking for (title, geography, and company type). Ask them what they think is a fair salary range. Do not ask what their salary is, but rather for their opinion.

ASSESS YOUR UNIQUENESS If you have a very unique skill set, extensive industry contacts, or an unblemished record of being a top-performer, you may be able to achieve the higher end of the salary range.

KNOW YOUR BOTTOM LINE It is important to know your "bottom line," the lowest possible number you would accept for the type of position you are targeting. Having this number will allow you to negotiate more effectively and also know when to turn down an offer that doesn't meet your needs.

3. Skilfully Handle Salary Discussions

REDIRECT SALARY DISCUSSIONS WHEN POSSIBLE You have the most leverage once a company has decided you are the one they want to hire. Whenever possible postpone discussing your previous salary or salary expectations until then. If asked what your salary expectations are in an initial conversation, consider using these responses. You should always be prepared to discuss what you expect a salary range to be for a role based on your research; however this is best shared after you have an offer.

- » "Let's discuss the details of the job first, so I can understand exactly what you need."
- » "This position is not exactly like my last one; let's discuss what my responsibilities would be here and then determine a fair salary for this job."
- » "I am interested in finding a job where I am a good fit and can make an impact. I'm sure whatever salary you're paying is consistent with the rest of the market."
- » "I'm sure you pay a fair market value and salary will take care of itself when it's time. Let's concentrate on whether you think I'm right for the job first."

LET THEM GIVE A NUMBER FIRST If the interviewer remains persistent about you sharing your salary expectations, you might say, "Could you give me the range you have in mind? I'll tell you if we're in the right ballpark."

BE PREPARED WITH RESEARCH Sometimes a recruiter or hiring authority may force you to provide your salary history or expectations in order to move forward in the process. If so, provide a wide range from your salary research and ask them if that is in line with their budget, saying something like "from my research I understand the salary range for this role to be between X and Y. Is this accurate?"

4. Evaluate Your Offer

Once you have an offer, it's time to evaluate it and begin to plan your strategy.

GET YOUR OFFER IN WRITING Always get your offer in writing, including all benefits costs and logistics. Never accept an offer verbally; always thank the employer, let them know you're excited about possibly working for them, and ask for time to review the offer.

SUBMIT OFFER CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS If you have any questions after reviewing the offer details, ask for clarification and time to consider the offer. Two days to a week is typical.

COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER IN-PROCESS OPPORTUNITIES Let other employers you're interviewing with know that you have an offer in case they would like to speed up their process and also submit you an offer. Comparing offers gives you more negotiation power and options.

DEFINE YOUR NEGOTIATION GOALS Choose what you want to negotiate carefully to avoid overstretching your power. Use your values from the first exercise to choose important target negotiation items as well as acceptable sacrifices.

5. Negotiate Your Offer

After you've had any necessary questions answered and thoroughly evaluated your employment offer(s), it's time for action.

PLAN YOUR STRATEGY It is always best to negotiate your salary in person or on the phone as opposed to using email. Secure a date, time, and method of response with the company representative, keeping in mind it is perfectly acceptable to require a few days for review. As you develop your strategy keep in mind your negotiation has to be a win-win-the employer has to see the benefit to them in compromising just as you want to get the best possible offer.

DEVELOP YOUR COUNTER OFFER AND HAVE THE CONVERSATION Depending on the company and level, your counter may be in the form of a conversation or a letter. Either way, document your counter offer in case you need it, outlining which items you'd like to negotiate. Focus on how you can add more financial benefit than you cost and be able to concretely explain your worth with data, not your emotional connection to your previous salary or perceived worth. Also, avoid countering an offer more than once; decide exactly where you want to negotiate and make the first time count.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE Don't try to 'break silence' because you are nervous of the other party's response. Be patient, but also be mindful of the fine line between standing your ground and being too firm. You need to be willing to walk away from an offer that doesn't meet your needs, but you also need to be willing to compromise.

THINK ABOUT MORE THAN JUST SALARY Remember you can negotiate benefits and perks other than salary during this

process. Don't forget about annual review raises, sales compensation, performance bonuses, insurance packages, cars and expense accounts, professional memberships, vacation and personal days, relocation expenses, pension plans, health club memberships, severance packages, signing bonuses, profit sharing, education and training, and even the job title itself. Sometimes a hiring manager or recruiter might have their hands tied on the salary but have flexibility elsewhere.

MAINTAIN POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS Whether or not you accept an offer, build positive relationships and always remain professional. You never know where the professionals you're speaking with today may be in their careers down the road.

When you accept a position, show excitement and enthusiasm. And, remember, if you made the choice not to negotiate, you may be leaving money on table, but you will also have future opportunities to prove your worth and negotiate increases once on the job.

If you choose to reject an offer do so with appreciation and tact. Make the conversation positive and diplomatic, focusing on the fact that you really enjoyed meeting them and learning more about the opportunity. Thank them for their time and keep your reasoning simple such as it wasn't the right opportunity for you at this time.

NEXT STEPS

- » Rate and understand your compensation values
- » Uncover your current worth in the market through salary research