



EVALUATING OFFERS: Getting started

Deciding whether to accept an offer

YOU'VE RECEIVED AN OFFER—congratulations! Not you have to choose whether to accept it or not. This decision is not always easy. There is rarely a “right” or “wrong” choice, but simply an assessment of what is the best fit for you at this time. Remember, you can always change jobs later! Ask yourself a few questions:

- > Do you really want *this* particular job or are you just excited to have a job offer?
- > Do you believe this position will allow you to grow and expand your talents and skills?
- > Will this role help you get the *next* job that you want?
- > Are the salary, benefits and work environment a fit with your values, lifestyle and needs?

When an employer offers you a position, ask for the offer in writing so that you can review all information and make your decision. This should include information about the salary offer and benefits.

If you are choosing between multiple offers, or waiting to hear back from a more desired employer:

- > Call your first choice and inquire about the status of the hiring process. You can mention that you have another offer but really prefer to work for their company.
- > Ask the company that offered you the position if they can give you a few days or weeks to consider their offer.

ASSESSING THE SALARY OFFER

- > How does the offer compare to other offers you've received?
- > What about the other benefits: gym memberships, transportation costs, day care availability, medical, dental, optometric and mental health coverage, retirement, life insurance and long-term disability coverage, number of paid holidays, tuition reimbursement for future degrees, etc.
- > How does the offer compare to industry standards?
- > Do you have special experience or skills that make you worth more?

Salary negotiation tips

EMPLOYERS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS willing to negotiate because they want top candidates to accept their offers. If an employer extends you a job offer, you have leverage. The time between receiving and accepting an offer is your best chance to get what you want. Make sure when negotiating that you talk about what you are *worth*, not what you *need*. Remind employers of your background and skills.

General advice for negotiating:

- > Maintain a professional attitude. The way you negotiate sets the stage for future interactions with your colleagues—you do not want to be perceived as a pushover or a bully.
- > Negotiating in a professional manner indicates that you know what you want and can stand up for yourself, but also can compromise and work collaboratively.
- > Be aware of monetary and cultural cues in the organization.



- > Enter negotiations with a target salary or range based on your research of the organization or position.
- > Generally, the first person to mention a specific number loses the negotiation.
- > Remember, if you don't ask, you will never know if you could have gotten a raise!

If the employer asks you about your salary requirements:

- > **BEFORE THE JOB OFFER...**keep the emphasis on the job match and how you meet the job description. Indicate your interest in the position and how you are sure you can agree on a salary.
- > **AND INSISTS THAT YOU PROVIDE AN ANSWER...**first ask for the salary range before you name any numbers.
 - If they do not give a range, you should be prepared to let them know about the research you've done and what you believe is an appropriate salary range based on your education, experience, skills, the company and geographic location.
 - See online resources for salary research at the bottom of this document.

When the employer names a salary with the job offer:

- > **IF THE SALARY IS BELOW WHAT YOU FEEL YOU ARE WORTH...**keep the conversation going. Focus on the value you will bring to the organization (special skills and knowledge, training from education, related experience, etc.) and ask questions like "How can we make this work?" Do not be afraid to use silence.
 - Ask about other benefits not be included in that number that might make the salary more acceptable (ex. relocation, bonuses, insurance, retirement, transportation, conferences, vacation time, etc.)
 - See about the possibility of modifying the job description to make high pay reasonable
 - If you cannot get the employer to offer a salary increase, consider negotiating for a review and possible raise sooner than is normal for the position
- > **IF YOU FEEL THE SALARY RANGE IS REASONABLE AND YOUR TALENTS ARE FULLY APPRECIATED...**let them know you are interested and begin to discuss where you fall within the industry range. Frame your requests in terms of what you need to be maximally successful at the company

If the employer offers you the job, but no salary has been discussed:

- > Let them know you are interested, but first would like to know what is the salary range for the position. Then see the above tips!

ONLINE SALARY RESOURCES

- > **Salary Wizard** (salary.com)
- > **Salary Calculator**
(<http://www.salary.com/category/salary/>)
- > **Evaluating your benefits package**
(collegegrad.com/jobsearch/21-5.shtml)
- > **Job offer checklist**
(collegegrad.com/jobsearch/jobofferchecklist.shtml)
- > **Wage Project** (wageproject.org)

After it is all finished

- > Ask for the revised offer in writing as well
- > After you verbally accept an offer, write an acceptance letter
- > Once you accept a job offer, do not back out. Stop looking for jobs. Have no regrets.
- > Information other companies that they should no longer be considering your application
- > Thank those who helped you during your job search and provide them with an update