The workplace is where many people spend most of their time, so it’s important to find an organization and a role that fits you well. To determine fit, ask good questions during the interview process, and most importantly when receiving, evaluating, and negotiating job offers. Visit the Career Center for more tips on navigating job offers.

WHAT TO EVALUATE

1. Salary
Make sure the salary reflects how much your skills and experience are worth. Check out web sites such as salary.com or glassdoor.com for insight into average salary bands for your industry, position, location, and company. Salary bands may be on the higher end of the pay spectrum, but they can clarify what range your offer should be within.

   • DON’T expect the biggest paycheck right away.
   • DO expect a fair wage and being valued for what you’ll bring to the company.
   • Consider your future context in that job. The salary on offer might be suitable for now, but keep in mind the guaranteed increase in cost-of-living and what you need to survive and thrive over time.
   • If you’ve been offered a commission-based salary, think about the bonus structures and ask questions! Is the commission based on established clientele or do employees start from scratch? Do employees typically reach their targets? What costs are employees expected to pay out-of-pocket, and what is reimbursable?

2. Benefits and Perks
Benefits and perks can make up a substantial amount of your overall compensation package, so it’s well worth assessing these carefully.

   • The value of benefits is often less obvious than the value of salary. For instance, the salary on offer might be high, but if your potential employer’s retirement plan contributions are low, you could be worse off in the long term.
   • Benefits and perks differ from company to company, so if details of yours aren’t included in the offer letter, ask to see a full list of the contract terms. Find out what benefits you’ll be eligible for (and when), and assess their value for you.

Benefits Package
Items to Consider & Questions to Ask

- **Insurance** What plans are offered? How much will they cost? Are dental and vision covered?
- **Health Savings Account (HSA)** What are the premiums? When are employees eligible to contribute?
- **Leave** What’s the vacation and sick time allowance?
- **Pension** What contributions will the company make to an employee pension and when?
- **Incentives** Is the incentive scheme based on personal achievements or the company’s overall performance?
- **Profit Sharing** Is there a plan to give employees a share of the company’s profits?
- **Stock** What stock options are available? Are stock units given as part of a bonus, or are employees required to work for a set amount of time before becoming eligible?
- **Tuition Reimbursement** Will the company cover tuition fees for relevant educational courses? If so, how much is covered?
- **Company Property** Are a company car, cell phone, or computer provided?
- **Other Perks** Are there any additional benefits? (telecommuting, travel costs, daycare, sabbaticals, etc.)
3. Hours and Travel
   - Be sure you can commit to the company's expectation for number of hours worked per week, as well as any travel schedule for being on the road. If possible, talk to someone who has a similar role in the company to try to understand what your expected workload might be, or how much overtime you might have to work.
   - Consider travel time to and from work. How much of the day will your commute require? How reliable is the transportation that you'll use? What kind of parking fees or metro transit costs will be involved?
   - Your new job might require you to move cities or states. If so, you need to consider relocation costs (and if the company will cover them), and possibly changes to your state taxes and insurance rates.

4. Company Culture
   - Find out about the company's people, working environment, and culture. Will you enjoy working under your potential supervisor? Will this company match up with your workplace preferences (flexibility, collaboration, independence, etc.)? Check out social media and current news stories for public opinion of the company. Ask yourself if you'll fit in seamlessly with the company, or if it'll be a culture shock.
   - Take some time to think about your personal values and those of the company. Do those values align? Is your prospective employer active in supporting the issues that matter most to you? Would you be proud to say that you work there? Revisit the company's mission, vision, and values on their website to see if these resonate with you. Also check out the company's web site for its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report, which outlines what the company is doing to maintain its values.
   - Try to find out how out about the company's stability, market position and prospects. Browse through financial reports from the last few years, paying attention to its profitability to gauge whether it's under financial pressure or if layoffs might be imminent.

5. Your Professional Goals
   - Consider how the job will enable you to grow and to achieve your career goals. Will it challenge you, expose you to new experiences, and/or connect you with new people? Will your role evolve over time to give you upward momentum with opportunities for more leadership and responsibilities?
   - Read the job description and any other information you've received again. Be certain of the expectations, and ask the HR Department for clarification if necessary. You should feel confident that the work is something that will bring you satisfaction.
   - Pause to consider both your immediate priorities (get a job!) and your long-term career prospects. Don't accept a job offer on impulse - if it doesn't work out, you might end up desperate to leave. Repeat the same mistake, and your résumé might become a list of several short-lived jobs. This could make you appear unreliable to potential employers and lead you further away from your chosen career path.

Your decision to accept an offer shouldn't be motivated by anything other than genuine enthusiasm. High salary, cool perks, or prestigious name alone aren't worth it. When you spend about a third of your life at work, make sure you enjoy it as much as possible.