

Trending...



8 Things Besides Salary You Can Negotiate In Your First Job

By Lindsey Updyke

You did it! After countless applications, resume revisions, and unique cover letters you've finally landed a job. Even if it's your first job, before you accept it's important to recognize there are several elements worth negotiating that can benefit you in the long run. When it comes to consulting with employers about potential benefits, there is much more to discuss than a higher salary. Believe it or not, many aspects of the job can be mediated before an offer is accepted.

Learning how to negotiate in life helps build character, confidence, and experience that can be used throughout your professional career. Plus, you may be surprised by what attainable benefits and hidden perks you end up with simply because you had the guts to ask. Not to mention, it will show your employer how seriously you are taking the position – and your career.

So what should you tackle in your negotiation conversation? Here are eight things to negotiate besides salary in your first job:

Your Start Date

Does your employer want you to start working earlier or later than is optimal for you? Maybe you already have a planned vacation during your scheduled first week or you're moving to the city you're working in far before your first day. If this is the case, you may want to consider negotiating an earlier or later start date.

Some start dates are more flexible than others, however. For example, your start date may be more strict if you need to pass a background check or attend a training session first. Explore these options, talk to your employer about different possibilities, and remember to remain flexible.

Flexible Work Hours

Maybe you're a night owl that can't function before 9 a.m. or you know you lose productivity as the afternoon drags on. If you work a standard eight-hour day, see if there's any flexibility to your start or end time. If you like waking up early, ask if you can work every day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. as opposed to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.. Perhaps you like some extra time in the morning to sleep in or work out and would prefer to work from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. instead. You should find out your expected hours before asking for adjusted time, but it doesn't hurt to explore your options.

Telecommuting Options

Do you drive to work or commute on the train every day? Try discussing the ability of telecommuting in a new job when needed. Having the option to work from home can come in handy during inclement weather, family emergencies, or even when you have an afternoon dentist appointment. Think ahead and ask your employer now!

Lunch Hour/Breaks During Day

Certain jobs may require you to take a minimum of 30 minutes for lunch or give you a maximum of 30 minutes to grab your food and eat it. An important question to ask your employer should be if you receive a lunch break or not. Likewise, are you expected to leave the office to get lunch or to stay at your desk and continue working as you eat?

If you're the type of person who needs to take a breather midday to remain productive, discuss this possibility with your boss.

Relocation Bonus/Moving Expenses

If your company wants to move you to a different office or if there is an opportunity in a different state, you may be able to negotiate a moving expense reimbursement or even a relocation bonus. Study your company's relocation policy and make sure to negotiate anything you think your job should cover. Often employers are willing to cover moving costs and transportation expenses to make the move easier for you.

Additional Vacation Days

If you know you need to attend your Grandma's 90th birthday at the end of the month, do not be afraid to let your boss know as soon as possible. Being upfront about planned vacations or events you have already committed to will show your employer you are taking your position seriously. Your team will appreciate the heads up so they can better prepare for your absence ahead of time.

It's also smart to schedule some time with your boss or Human Resources to discuss the amount of vacation you are entitled to, and how exactly the policy works. If you're offered unlimited vacation time, for example, what are the typical expectations? If your company is strict about the amount of days you can take off each year, they may be more flexible about accepting rolling vacation days from the year before. If vacation time is important to you, consider asking for an extra day or two in lieu of a higher salary.

Technological Perks

Depending on the type of job you get and what is expected of you, you may qualify for some awesome technological perks. For example, if you're expected to be on call at all times, you can ask for a work phone or for your employer to cover your phone bill so you're not stuck with a hefty data bill every month. Likewise, if you're expected to take potential clients out weekly, you may qualify for a company credit card so you don't need to pay for the meals yourself and get reimbursed later.

Opportunities for Professional Development

Are you still in grad school or planning on going in the future? Is there a class you want to take to help strengthen your skills? If so, see if you can negotiate for professional development opportunities in your first year. Employers are often willing to cover the cost of opportunities (like classes) so employees can learn new skills, and as a result, become better at their jobs and more valuable to the company. In fact, employers often encourage taking classes to refresh on certain things and learn new strategies to help you excel in your job. Not only is this a great perk to ask about, it will show your employer you are willing to go the extra mile to continue to develop and improve your skill set.

Salary is just one of the many policies up for discussion when you receive a job offer. There are often many hidden perks available to you if you just ask for them. By doing a little research into your contract and company policies, you may find that your job can be extremely accommodating – and you'll gain confidence from negotiating in the process.

Original [article](#) published on [Ripplematch](#)

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