

Job Search: Evaluation & Negotiation

When you are offered a position you are interested in, avoid the temptation to evaluate the offer strictly on salary. Reflect upon your professional and personal goals and consider the following items before accepting an offer.

Think about these elements BEFORE you start interviewing and identify the top 3-5 items that are the most important to you. This will aid you in evaluating the offer.

Evaluating an Employment Offer

Responsibilities & Growth

- What are the job duties and responsibilities? Do you have the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job successfully?
- Will you enjoy performing the work? Does this position align with your career goals?
- What types of formal training opportunities will be provided? *Example: internal training, external training, professional conferences?*
- What career paths for growth are there? *Example: different levels of the same role*
- What is the philosophy for promotions? Does the company typically promote from within, or do they go externally to hire for higher level positions?

Compensation (this includes salary, benefits, incentives, etc.)

- Is the salary fair for the job in the geographic area? Do your research to know what the job is worth.
- What other forms of compensation are offered besides base pay? *Example: performance bonuses, regularly scheduled increases based on performance*
- What benefits are included? What are the costs of the benefits? *Example: health insurance, retirement, life insurance, education reimbursement, wellness program, vacation / sick time, etc.*
- How soon do the benefits begin? Is there a wait period?
- Does the job require relocation now or in the future? What support is provided to assist with relocation?
- What non-monetary perks are offered? *Example: flexible work schedule, fitness center, child-care, etc.*

Work Schedule and Travel

- What is the work schedule (days and hours)?
- How much flexibility is there if you need to take time off for a personal appointment?
- How long will it take for you to commute to work?
- Are there opportunities to work remotely?
- How much travel is required and how frequent will it be? Where will you travel to?

Company Culture

- How do your career goals align with those of the company?
- How interested are you in the products and/or services of the company?
- How comfortable are you with the size of the company? What are the merits of working for a small, medium, or large company?
- How formal is the company culture and can you be at your best in that environment?
- What level of flexibility will you have when performing the job?



Work Environment

- What is the pace of the work environment?
- How is the atmosphere? *Example: Formal, laid back, serious, fun*
- How diverse or homogenous is the organization?
- How competitive is the work team you will be part of?
- How structured or unstructured is the environment and/or work?
- How will this job provide you with work/life balance?
- Do you like the geographic area(s) where the company is located?

Supervision

- What is the style of leadership of your direct manager?
- How closely managed will you be?
- How often does the team meet?
- Does the job require you to work independently or closely with others? What level of collaboration does the job require? Does this align well with how you work best?
- Does the position report to one department or is it matrixed with accountability to multiple departments?

Negotiating an Employment Offer

You do not have to accept the first employment package you are offered; you can negotiate with the employer for a better offer. Use the following tips to negotiate and come to an agreement on an employment opportunity.

- Ask for time to evaluate their offer and know all that it includes (*i.e.: salary, benefits, etc.*)
- Understand the complete offer and which items are negotiable. (*i.e.: salary, benefits, professional development, relocation support, wellness package, student loan assistance, stock options, vacation/sick time, etc.*)
- Research the average market compensation for the position you are considering, take into consideration the location of the position (*i.e.: it costs more to live in New York City than Cleveland*).
- Know the difference between what you WANT (*target salary*) and what you NEED (*minimum salary*)
- Be clear about what you want in a job offer and plan what you want to say/ask the employer. Practice with a friend or family member.
- Thank the employer for the offer, express continued interest in the position, and begin asking questions / discussing areas for negotiation. State your research and preferences.
- Remember...you are not turning down their offer, rather you are starting a conversation to get to a mutually agreeable offer.
- Maintain professionalism and do not take things personally.
- Get the final job offer in writing (*including salary, benefits, etc.*)

The goal of negotiation is to reach an agreement with the employer to maximize potential earnings while meeting employer needs.

Multiple Offers

When fielding multiple offers, it is okay to ask for time to consider their job offer but be mindful and respectful of their timeline. Be sure the position you accept meets all your career goals. Do NOT accept the first offer, then change your mind and accept a second offer. This is a very unprofessional practice.



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