

The Job Offer

Understanding Your Job Offer

When it comes to getting a job offer, patience is a virtue. Never accept an offer immediately. It takes time to consider the job opportunity and research all the elements of the offer. When you receive an offer, thank the employer, tell them you are excited about the offer, and ask them for some time to think it over.

Things to Consider

Understanding your expenses: Before accepting an offer, determine what your salary requirements are by determining what your fixed expenses will be. If you are unsure of what your expenses will be, research the particular location to find out costs. Consider rent, transportation (gas/repairs/tolls), utilities, student loans/other debt, food, spending money, insurance, clothing, etc.

Understand what you need from a job: When considering an offer, you need to evaluate how the job will meet your needs. For example: Are you comfortable in the office environment? Are you compatible with the organization, co-workers, and pace of the agency? Does the job provide you with professional mobility and long-term benefits? Does the job meet your career objectives? Can you utilize and advance your skill sets? Is the position challenging and stimulating? Is there stability in the industry/organization?

Get answers: Do your homework and get answers to your questions before making any decisions.

- Contact your network sources and Maxwell alumni to ask questions.
- Research salaries of people in the field.
- Look at reviews of the organization on websites like Glassdoor.com.
- Talk to current or former employees.

If you are not committed to working for the employer and plan to continue interviewing for other positions, it is improper to accept the offer. This can have serious personal and professional consequences.

If you are accepting or declining a job, it is appropriate to formally notify the employer of your decision in writing, in addition to a phone call. Furthermore, if accepting an offer, formally notify all other employers you have applied to, telling them to withdraw your application from consideration.

Compensation

Your total compensation package consists of a number of benefits, only one of which is your salary. While some may not appear important now, they may become very important in one or two years. These are just a few of the benefits that, if offered, you might be able to negotiate: Job title, flex time, 401K, stock options, parking, insurance, car allowance, performance review schedule, commissions/bonus.

You will have to make some difficult decisions based on your research. Inevitably, there will be both pros and cons to any job offer. The task will be prioritizing the different components of the offer to make the right decision.

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Salary Negotiations

When a recruiter makes you a job offer and states the salary is fixed, it is likely non-negotiable. However, if you believe that the salary may be negotiable, negotiate based upon the value you can add to the organization. The three most important factors in beginning your negotiations are:

- Knowing your worth. Emphasize unique skills you may bring such as language or technical strength.
- Knowing the competitive salary for the position.
- Being diplomatic and realistic.

In all negotiations:

- Be positive and professional at all times.
- Be prepared with research and relevant knowledge.
- Be aware of the organization's limitations.
- If there is no flexibility in salary, you may make creative suggestions, such as increased vacation days, relocation costs, or temporary housing.
- Be prepared to accept or decline the position soon after negotiations have ceased because it will take time to write up the revised conditions agreed upon during the negotiations. Make sure to get everything in writing.

Sample Salary Negotiation Script

When broaching the topic of increasing the salary offer, it is important to emphasize your continued interest and enthusiasm about the prospect of working for this organization. For example: "I am very excited about the opportunity to work for the organization. Based on my interview experience, it is the kind of place I think I would really thrive. With that, I was hoping to speak with you about the salary."

Some ways you might phrase your request:

- "Based on the salary range of other positions I have interviewed for and what I understand similar organizations to be offering, I would like to request closer to \$55,000. I want to start my career with your organization but also want to ensure I am making the best financial decision."
- "Is the salary offered negotiable? I was expecting a salary range closer to \$65,000 based on the cost of living of the area and my previous professional experience and salaries."

It is a good idea to always ask for more money, though be prepared for the possibility that the salary offered is non-negotiable. Keep in mind how you want to proceed with the offer if they are not able to offer you what you had hoped.