

The top 10 tips for your salary negotiation

It is the night before your final interview for a role that you are keen to get. Despite your excitement about landing that ideal position, you are apprehensive because you know it is time to talk about an area that is important both short term and long term- salary expectations.

Many people struggle when trying to obtain a salary they deserve and one that accommodates their lifestyle. They worry about appearing unreasonable and greedy or, worse, they do not want to lose the job to someone who is more "affordable." They often forget that for the employer, yours is only one of many negotiations for services and products they depend on. Most employers see it, as a matter of professional debate - so should you.

In our competitive economy, well-informed negotiating skills are often prized. This will be your first opportunity to show you can take and hold a well-informed position in a professional environment. Here are 10 tips for strong salary negotiations:

1. Don't name a figure until the employer has made it clear that you are the choice candidate. Interviews are your only real opportunity to demonstrate your value to the employer. Having a salary discussion too early can distract both you and the employer from learning more about each other. If the employer presses, see Tip #2.

2. Avoid mentioning a figure first. If the discussion is going towards salary, try to get the employer to mention a figure first. If presented with: "What salary do you expect?" A good response is: "You likely have a figure in mind that fits the responsibilities and requirements of the job. I would be interested in knowing what that figure is."

If you are not yet sure that you will be offered the job and the employer asks for a figure, try to delay an answer by using one of these tactics:

- if the employer seems agreeable, reply with: "I would like to wait until you're sure I am the best candidate for this position. Until then I think a discussion of salary is premature." This usually works.

- If the employer persists, offer a narrow salary range you would be comfortable with (see Tip #3).

- Finally, if the employer really wants a specific number, recognize you are making a very real commitment to that number and you had better be sure you could live with that salary (see Tip #4).

3. Do your research. Try to find out what people in your field, and in that particular organization, earn. Resources could include current employees, online salary calculators, the websites and directories of professional associations, government reports and business and industry-specific trade magazines.

4. Know your bottom line. What is the minimum salary you would accept? Before investing too much time and energy on landing the job, figure out if your needs will not be met by the salary offered.

5. Don't forget the benefits. The negotiation is not finished until you have discussed fringe benefits (holidays, insurance, pension). These "job perks" can add the equivalent of 15 to 28 percent to your salary. Before discussing benefits, you should figure out what you need in medical, dental, and vision plans, sick leave, holidays and vacations. As well, you should discuss the company's policy on acquiring future raises. Finally, you should get all of these details summarized in writing as a letter of agreement or an employment contract. Make sure to take personal notes and document the results of your negotiations to check against the final contract.

6. Back up your "reasons." As I mentioned above, this is an opportunity to show you can carry your weight in a negotiation. Part of that includes justifying your position based on the evidence you have been able to gather about the salary you should receive. As well, demonstrate your value by using your résumé to point out quantified benefits you brought to previous employers.

7. Be willing to walk away. It is easy to convince yourself that there is only one "dream job." The truth is that many of the most desirable aspects of work (great colleagues, flexible hours, interesting work environment) can be found within a broad range of opportunities. If you feel pressure to accept conditions you will not want to live with in the future it is perfectly fine to withdraw from the interview process.

8. Do not revisit agreed upon points. Again, this is a chance to prove you are a strong negotiator. Revisiting points you have agreed to suggest you are not able to keep to your word. If the employer insists on revisiting points she has agreed to, it suggests her negotiation has been less than sincere.

9. Use your instincts. Interviews take place on many levels. Questions can be complicated and have multiple intentions. Astute interviewers will observe body language and tone of voice as well as the answers you give. When deep in the complexities of the final negotiation trust your instincts (and your research).

10. Don't rush! At the end of the negotiation you may feel pressured to commit. Take a day to consider your options and make a decision you are comfortable with.

Having to negotiate is difficult. For many, simply recognizing the nature of the discussion is helpful. Recognize that this is an opportunity for you to showcase your value to the company. Also, accept the fact that the employer has the incentive to hire you for as low a salary as possible and will seek justification for every dollar you are seeking.

When put in perspective, the negotiation is a great opportunity for you to show that you can remain professional and clear-minded in a high stakes environment. Plus, if you are successful, your pre-negotiation preparation could be the best investment you will ever make. So use these negotiation techniques and get the salary you really deserve.

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**MARK CHISAMORE, MBA, MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT,
DELOITTE**

" CareerJoy is taking a different approach than traditional mainstream career counseling from in-depth analysis to the honest assessment. This service greatly helped in restoring my self-confidence, unraveling my assumptions and identifying my competitive advantage and value proposition in the job market." □ **Hany Fouda, Director, Product Marketing**

The 60 Second WORKout

Do you need a career autopsy?

Autopsy is not a word that slips out of our mouths that easily in today's world for a variety of reasons, most likely because we don't really want to think that someday we are going to die. Autopsies really came into vogue (if you can say that) in 1761 with a scientific paper published by Dr Giovanni Morgagni who did over 700 autopsies and produced the first modern thinking on cause and effect of disease.

By the early 1950's, autopsies were performed for over 50% of deaths. They played a key role in helping doctors, through trial and error, pioneer heart surgery and better understand cancer and other major causes of death. However, now the autopsy rate has decreased to less than 20% of deaths due to the use of MRI's etc.

Dr George Lundberg points out in his 1998 study that in 25-40% of cases in which an autopsy is conducted, an undiagnosed cause of death is revealed. Dr Lundberg spoke about one particular family that thought their Mom had Alzheimer's disease, when in fact she suffered from a series of strokes. The result is that heir children will now pay more attention to their cardiovascular health, and are not worrying about themselves getting Alzheimer's.

Sometimes you have to get under the knife to get the heart of the matter (no pun intended). It is only when you "dissect" the problem that you can start to understand the big picture and get the proper response. The good news with the work we do is that you do not have to go under the knife. Although you may have to say "Awl"!