

Salary Negotiating

Negotiating Tip # 1

Never discuss salary until you have a job offer

If you do, you could price yourself out of a job before the employer is convinced they need you. If pressed by the interviewers, tell them you are flexible and would be happy to discuss salary when you learn more about the job. Waiting until you are offered the job gives you the leverage you need to negotiate for a higher salary.

Negotiating Tip #2:

Don't forget the value of benefits and perks when negotiating a salary.

Sometimes the salary offered may seem low, and you may wonder if you should turn down the job. Don't decide until you figure in the value of potential benefits and perks. They can add up to 40 percent to your base salary. Some benefits are fixed, but others are negotiable. Negotiable benefits include stock options, bonuses, employee discounts, tuition reimbursement, vacation time and sick leave. Perks include company cars, club memberships, parking, expense accounts and use of the company accountants or staff attorneys for personal matters.

Negotiating Tip #3

Research the company before you negotiate.

Gather information about your prospective employer. Learn what the company does, its financial position, its status in the business community, and recent information about its successes and failures. It is critical to research the salary range of the job you are applying for before going to the interview. You can check salary ranges with trade organizations, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics or by asking people who work in the field. Find out whether the company has specific grades and pay ranges they must use or if there is room for negotiation.

Negotiating Tip #4

Be enthusiastic and professional during negotiations

Negotiating is not a competition. Don't put yourself and the employer on opposite sides of the bargaining table. Instead, encourage the impression that you are on the same side working for a solution that will help you both come out winners. A take-it-or-leave-it attitude negates the feeling that you are a team player. Calmly and logically state what you feel you are worth financially, and let the interviewer make a counter offer.

Negotiating Tip #5

Never stop selling yourself.

A job offer is not the time to let your guard down. When negotiating for the best possible package of salary and benefits, it is important to continue showing the employer how hiring you will improve the company's bottom line. Remind the employer of skills you have that will

save the company money. Tell him of contacts you have that will bring the company new business.

Negotiating Tip #6

Ask for a few perks you can do without.

By asking for perks that are less important, you are giving yourself bargaining room. If you look like you are making concessions, it helps the employer feel better about meeting your other demands and encourages the impression that you both have won.

Negotiating Tip #7

Be willing to walk away.

Negotiating for a salary is like a game. You make an offer. The employer counters with an offer of his own, and the game continues until either a consensus or a stalemate is reached. Never go into a bargaining session with the attitude that you must accept the job. The employer will see your desperation and offer you much less than you are worth. You'll be more confident if you are willing to walk away from an offer.

Negotiating Tip #8

Don't say yes to an offer right away.

Be enthusiastic and appreciative when you get the job offer, but ask for at least 24 hours to respond. This gives you time to get over your initial elation at being selected and to determine if the job is the best one for you. If you feel the salary is not sufficient, express your concern to the employer when asking for time to consider the offer. You'll find out right away whether the salary quoted is set in stone or is flexible.

Negotiating Tip #9

Put the offer in writing.

After you have negotiated a salary and benefits package, it is important to put your agreements in writing. Go over the points you covered in the negotiations before you accept the offer. Then write a brief letter outlining the terms of the deal you discussed. List salary, benefits and perks agreed to, job title, starting date and terms of job reviews. This will protect you and your future company from any misunderstandings.